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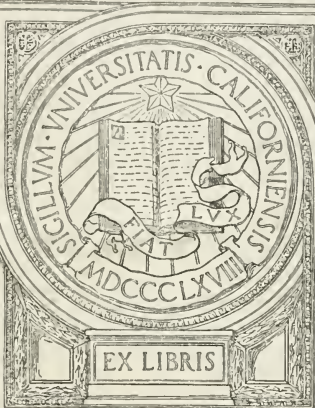


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A large, intricate decorative border in a dark green color, featuring a complex pattern of leaves, vines, and flowers. It frames the central text area.

THE EMPEROR
—
SERAPIS

IN MEMORIAM
Dr. Emil G. Beck
1865-1932



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THE EMPEROR.

A ROMANCE.

BY GEORGE EBERS.

AND

SERAPIS.

AN HISTORICAL NOVEL.

BY GEORGE EBERS.



NEW YORK:
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PREFACE.

FOURTEEN years ago I had planned the story contained in this volume to follow a series of lectures on the Roman dominion in Egypt. But scientific labors kept back for a time this desire for poetic creation, and when its wings began again to flutter I felt obliged to take up other material. This explains why the reign of Hadrian becomes the background of a romance, following one laid at the earlier epoch of the Anchorite movement.

After finishing that romance, my old wish to bring together, in the style of fiction, the most important periods in the history of that venerable race, to the study of which I have consecrated a quarter of a century, found its realization.

The brilliant epoch of the times of the Pharaohs I have tried to depict in "Uarda;" the subjection of Egypt to the youthful sovereignty of Persia in the "Egyptian Princess;" the epoch of Hellenic control under the reign of the Lagides (Ptolemies), in "The Sisters;" the Roman dominion, and the early upspringing of Christianity in "The Emperor;" and the Anchorite movement through the deserts and rocky regions in the neighborhood of Egypt, in "Homo Sum."

So "The Emperor" is the last of which the scene will be laid in ancient Egypt. This series of romances will not only have made my readers acquainted with the history of civilization among the Egyptians, but ought to facilitate their understanding of a few specially mighty ideas that moved antiquity. How well I have succeeded in representing these epochs in their true colors, and giving an air of reality to the pictures, I may not venture to judge. For since present things appear differently to different minds, the same must be more strikingly true of those long past and half forgotten.

How often I was obliged, when denied the means of certifying something of remote date, and claiming counsel and assistance from imagination, to remember the remark, that the poet is only a prophet looking backward. I have dared to

allow Fancy quietly to unfold her wings, for I was her master, and knew the limits beyond which her flight could not be permitted. And while maintaining the right to use my inventive powers, I have introduced nothing which would have been impossible at the epoch represented. Considerations of probability have everywhere fixed the limits of imagination. Where the existing sources were full and reliable, I have not exceeded them; and this my fellow-students in Germany, England, France, and Holland have more than once testified. I scarcely need to state that fictitious verity is quite another thing than historic verity; for the one must remain unaffected by the subjectivity of its discoverer, while the other can only exist by the use of the artist's imaginative power. I leave "The Emperor," as I have my two later romances, without notes. I do this in the happy consciousness of having won, through other and more profound works, a right to the confidence of my readers. Nothing has more inspired me to undertake fresh works of imagination than the fact that, through their reading, some young minds have been drawn to a study of the profounder works, whose names are already mentioned with honor among Egyptologists.

Those familiar with the time of Hadrian will recognize by minute indications from which author, inscription, or monument my details have been gathered; and I need not disturb the course of the story among the larger circle of my readers.

It would make me unhappy should this romance deserve the name of a genuine work of art, whose chief object must ever be to please and elevate; and he who receives, at the same time, any enlargement of knowledge will scarcely notice that he has been instructed.

Those familiar with the history of Alexandria under the Romans will be surprised that I make no mention of the Therapeutæ, on Lake Mareotis. I had originally intended to have a chapter on this subject, but the latest researches of Lucæ decided me to leave it unwritten.

I have devoted years of study to the infancy of Christianity, especially in Egypt, and it gives me especial satisfaction to testify that in the time of Hadrian the pure doctrines of the Redeemer, with few human additions, had taken possession of the hearts of men, as they could not fail to do.

Beside this triumphant faith I have set that noble blossom of Greek development—art—which, in later centuries of Christianity, became so closely associated with it, in order to enrich herself with its beautiful forms. The busts and statues of Antinous, which date from the time of my story, prove that

under Hadrian the withering plant was destined to send out fresh shoots.

The romantic attributes I ascribe to my world-wandering hero, who ascended the mountains to rejoice in the rising sun, are true to fact.

One of the most difficult tasks I have ever attempted was that of constructing a character from so many contradictory statements, which I could myself believe to be true; but how gladly I have attempted it!

In the surroundings of this fiction there was much to be considered, but it has been written out of the very heart of its author.

May it also find its way into the hearts of my readers!

GEORGE EBERS.

LEIPSIK, *Nov.* 2, 1880.

THE EMPEROR.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

THE morning twilight had passed; the sun of the first day of December, A. D. 129, had risen, though veiled in a white sea fog. It was cold.

The Kasius, a mountain of medium height, rose from a tongue of coast-land between Southern Palestine and Egypt, and was washed on its northern side by the sea. To-day it did not shimmer and gleam in ultramarine light. The distant waves were dark, but as they rolled nearer, changed into a greenish-gray color, which looked against the horizon like dusty sod on a dark lava surface.

The north-east wind which had sprung up since sunrise was steadily increasing in violence, and milk-white foam tipped the waves, though as yet they did not dash strongly against the foot of the mountain, but rather rose in long, heavy swells, as if made of molten lead. Yet clear drops spirted upward when the sea-gulls, flying in restless troops backward and forward, uttering their shrill cry, touched the water with their wings.

Three men came slowly along the mountain path that led from the summit to the plain below, but only the oldest of them—who walked in advance of the others—looked at the sky, the sea, the gulls in flight, and the desolate surface of the wilderness. Now he stood still, and both his companions did likewise, with a mechanical motion.

The landscape, spreading out below, seemed to chain his gaze, and a slight inclination of his head gave expression to his interest.

A narrow strip of desert, divided by two bodies of water, stretched westward as far as the eye could reach. Upon this natural dike a caravan was moving. The feet of the camels fell silently upon the yielding sand. The riders in their white mantles seemed to sleep, and the drivers to dream. The gray eagles beside the path were not disturbed by their presence. To the right of the low ground, along which the road from Syria to Egypt ran, lay the lusterless sea, enveloped in gray

clouds; on the left was that strange expanse, whose end toward east and west the eye could not discover, and which seemed sometimes a snow-field, sometimes a pool, or from some other point a thicket of reeds and rushes.

The oldest of the three travelers kept his attention constantly directed to the heavens and into the distance; the second, a slave, who bore the wraps and the packages, did not turn his glance away from his master; while the third, a free youth, walked with eyes upon the ground as if in a dream.

A broad road, crossing that from the mountain summit to the coast, led toward a stately temple, and into this the bearded traveler turned.

But he had proceeded only a few steps when he stopped, turned his head involuntarily, murmured a few unintelligible words, and rapidly retraced his steps to the narrow path leading into the valley.

His young companion followed without raising his eyes, or seeming to disturb his dreams, as though he were a mere shadow.

But the slave lifted his closely shorn head, and a smile curled his lip when he saw an old shepherd-wife bending over the dead body of a kid beside the path, who hastily drew the blue-black veil over her wrinkled face at the approach of the strangers.

"That explains it," murmured the slave to himself, throwing a kiss to a black-haired maiden who crouched beside the old woman. But the child did not notice his dumb salute, for her eyes followed his superior's, especially the younger man. As soon as the three had passed, so far that her voice could not be heard, the maiden asked, in repressed voice, and trembling as if touched by a spirit from the wilderness:

"Grandmother, who was that?"

The old woman laid her finger on the lips of the child, and whispered timidly, as she lifted the veil from her face: "It is he."

"The emperor?"

She answered by an emphatic nod; but the maiden pressed with passionate eagerness against her grandmother, and stretching her head forward for a better view, asked:

"The younger?"

"Fool! The first one, the gray-beard."

"He? I would rather the younger were the emperor."

It was in truth the Roman Emperor Hadrian who walked silently in advance of his companions, and his coming seemed to animate the desert, for at his approach the plovers flew up-

ward out of the reeds with their shrill cry; and from behind a sand-hill on the broader road where Hadrian turned appeared two men in priestly garments. They belonged to the Temple of Baal, of Mount Casius, a small structure of stone which the emperor had visited on the previous day.

"Has he mistaken the path?" asked one priest of the other, in the Phœnician dialect.

"Scarcely," was the reply. "Mastor tells me he can find any path over which he has once passed, even in the darkness."

"And yet he looks more into the clouds than upon the earth."

"But he promised us yesterday—"

"He did not speak positively," interrupted the other.

"I think he did. In taking leave, I distinctly heard him say: 'Perhaps I shall come again, to consult your oracle.'"

"Perhaps—"

"I think he said, 'probably.'"

"Who knows what token he may have seen in the sky that directs him onward. He is going toward the encampment by the sea."

"But in our banqueting-hall the meal stands ready for him."

"He will also find in the camp what he needs. Come, it is a disagreeable morning. I am very cold."

"Wait a little—look."

"For what?"

"He wears no hat over his gray hair."

"No one ever saw him traveling with covered head."

"And his gray mantle is not imperial."

"At a banquet he always wears the purple."

"Do you know of whom his gait and his general appearance remind me?"

"Of whom, then?"

"Of our late high-priest Abibaal; he walked with the same majesty and thoughtfulness, and wore his hair like the emperor."

"Yes, and the deep, searching eye."

"He also looked often upward. They have the same broad forehead; but Abibaal's nose was more bowed, and his hair less curly."

"Our master's mouth was grave and earnest, while the lip of Hadrian curls as if he were always on the point of expressing ridicule."

"Look now, he turns to his favorite."

"Antonius, I believe they call the handsome fellow?"

“Antinous, not Antonius. He picked him up in Bithynia, I have been told.”

“He *is* handsome.”

“Yes, without a parallel. What proportions! What a countenance! Yet I would not like him for my son.”

“The emperor’s favorite?”

“Even the same. He looks as if he had tasted every pleasure, and could find no more joy.”

* * * * *

Several tents occupied a level space directly on the shore of the sea, protected by the broken cliffs from the east wind. A fire burned in the middle of the inclosure, and around it were gathered Roman soldiers and servants of the emperor.

Half-naked boys, children of the fishermen and camel drivers ran busily back and forth, feeding the flame with dry reeds and desert shrubs; but in spite of all their efforts, the wind blew it sideward in little clouds near the ground. It was as if the flames feared to venture into the gray, damp, unfriendly sky.

The largest of the tents, before which four Roman soldiers kept guard, alternating in pairs, stood wide open toward the sea.

The slaves, who came out, bearing upon their shorn heads trays containing gold and silver vessels, plates, wine-tankards and goblets, with the remnants of a feast, were forced to hold them fast with both hands, to guard them from its violence.

The interior of the tent was without ornament. Upon a cushion near the storm-shaken canvas wall reclined the emperor. His bloodless lips were compressed, his arms crossed over the breast, and his eyes half closed.

But he was not sleeping, and often moved his lips, as though tasting food. Sometimes he opened wide the blue-veined and deeply lined lids, glancing upward, or looking downward toward the middle of the tent, where Antinous was stretched on a bear-skin.

The head of a bear had been artistically arranged to serve as a pillow, and on this rested the handsome head of the youth. His right leg played freely in the air, supported by the left, and his hands were busied with the Molossian dog of the emperor, which now rested his head on the naked breast of the youth, now stretched it toward his mouth, to testify his affection by a canine caress. But when he attempted the latter, Antinous playfully pinched his snout or wrapped him in the white pallium that fell from his own shoulder.

The dog seemed to enjoy the sport; but once, in failing to

free himself from the pallium, he howled, which attracted the attention of the emperor, who cast an annoyed look downward toward the bear-skin—only a look—not a word of fault-finding. But the expression of his eye changed as it rested on the beautiful figure of the youth. It was as if he contemplated a noble work of art. And truly it was godlike—wonderfully soft, and yet vigorous was every muscle of neck, breast, limbs. The features of a human face were never more regularly chiseled.

Antinous saw that the attention of his master was attracted by his sport with the dog. So he gave him his freedom, and turned his large languid eyes to the emperor.

“What are you doing?” asked Hadrian.

“Nothing,” was the answer.

“No one does nothing. Whoever believes he is unoccupied *thinks*, and thinking is much.”

“I can not think.”

“Every one thinks, and if you were not doing it then, it was because you were at play.”

“Yes, with the dog.”

And with these words Antinous let his legs fall to the ground, drove the dog away, and placed both hands under his curly head.

“Are you tired?” asked the emperor.

“Yes.”

“We have watched the same portion of the night, and I, who am so much older, feel myself fresh.”

“You said yesterday old soldiers were worth more for night service.”

The emperor nodded, and said:

“At your age, one lives three times as fast as at mine, and needs a double amount of sleep. You have reason to be tired. It was three o’clock when we climbed the mountain, but how often a banquet continues later than that.”

“It was cold and disagreeable up there.”

“Only after sunrise.”

“You did not notice it before, because you were busy with the stars.”

“And you only with yourself, that is plain.”

“I thought also of your health when the air grew so cold before the coming of Helios.”

“I must await his appearance.”

“Do you learn of the future from the manner of the sunrise?”

Hadrian glanced strangely at the questioner, shook his head

as in denial, looked upward at the tent roof, and, after a long pause, said, in rather disconnected sentences: "The day is simply present time, and future things come forth out of darkness. Out of the clod comes the grain, and rain from the black cloud; from the womb spring new races—the freshness of the members is renewed in sleep. Who knows, then, what may follow the darkness of death?"

When the emperor had been some time silent the youth asked:

"If the sunrise teach you nothing of the future, why do you so often deny your nightly rest, and climb the mountain to see it?"

"Wherefore? Wherefore?" said Hadrian, slowly, in reply, thoughtfully stroking his gray beard, and adding, as if speaking only to himself: "There is no answer to such a question, and, if I could express it, who would understand me? One comes nearest to it through a figure. We are all actors on the stage of the world. Now he that will be tall in the theater wears a certain style of boot. And is not a mountain the highest uplift a man can put under the soles of his feet? The Casius yonder is a mere hill, but I have stood on higher points and looked upon the clouds far below, as Jupiter from his Olympus."

"You need not ascend a mountain to feel yourself a god," cried Antinous.

"Men call you the godlike. You command, and the world must obey. One is always nearer heaven on the top of a mountain, but—"

"Well?"

"I can not trust myself to utter the thought."

"Speak."

"There was a little maiden; when I lifted her upon my shoulder she would stretch her arm upward, and say: 'I am so great!' She thought herself then taller than I was, and yet she was only the little Panthea."

"But, according to your illustration, she was great, and that is the point, since for each, all things are only what he believes them. It is true they call me godlike, but I feel a hundred times every day the limitations of humanity, beyond which I can not pass. On the top of a mountain I am less conscious of them. Then it seems to me that I am great, for nothing earthly rises above me. And when, standing there, the night flies away, and the dawn of a new day breaks upon the world, my breast heaves, and my lungs joyfully inhale the pure and rarified atmosphere. Alone, in the deep silence, dis-

turbed by nothing that goes on below, I feel myself one with broad nature. The waves of the sea swell and break; the trees of the forest bend their crowns, vapor and clouds roll beneath and scatter themselves hither and thither, and I am so dissolved into the creation without that it often seems to be my own breath which moves them. I soar through the distance with the crane and the swallow, and get a glimpse of that unattainable limit which the soul seeks to win. My whole being expands, and that longing disappears which oppresses me in the tumult of life and among the cares of the state. But you do not understand it, my boy; these are things I can share with no other mortal."

"Do not scorn to show them to me," cried Antinous, who had turned himself fully toward the emperor, and with wide-open eyes, had lost none of his words.

"To you?" asked Hadrian, and a smile not free from ridicule flew to his lips; "I have no more secrets from you than from the Venus of Praxitiles, in my library at Rome."

The blood flooded the cheeks of the youth until they were purple. The emperor saw this, and added, in kindly tone: "You are more to me than any artist's work. The marble can not blush. Beauty governed life in the time of the Athenian; but you have proved to me that the gods are still pleased to incorporate it. Your countenance reconciles me to the discords of being, and blesses me, but how can I expect you to understand me? Your brow was not made for profound thought. But did you comprehend any of my words?"

Antinous half rose, supporting himself upon his left arm. He raised the right, and uttered a decisive "Yes."

"Which of them?" asked the emperor.

"I know the longing."

"After what?"

"After many things."

"Name to me one."

"Enjoyment which no disappointment will follow. I know none."

"This desire you share with all Roman youth; they enjoy themselves without any regard to the consequences."

"Go on."

"I dare not."

"Who has forbidden your speaking frankly to me?"

"You yourself."

"I?"

"Yes, you; for you forbade me to speak to you of my home, my mother, my kindred."

The emperor's brow darkened, and he replied, sternly:

“I am your father, and your whole soul belongs to me.”

“It is your own,” answered the youth, as he let himself sink back upon the bear-skin and drew the pallium closer about his shoulders; for a gust blew cold through the open door of the tent, as Phlegon, the private secretary of the emperor, entered, followed by a slave bearing many sealed rolls under the arm.

“Is it agreeable to you, Cæsar, that we deliver the letters and dispatches which have just arrived?” asked the officer, whose carefully arranged hair had been disturbed by the sea-breeze.

“Yes; and then we will learn what is to be observed in the heavens to-night. Have you the tablets at hand?”

“They are spread out in your working tent, Cæsar.”

“Has the storm become heavy?”

“It seems to come from both north and east. The sea runs very high. The empress will have a rough passage.”

“When did she embark?”

“The anchor was raised about midnight. The ship which carries her to Alexandria is a handsome vessel, but she rolls disagreeably from side to side.”

Hadrian laughed aloud at these words, and said:

“That will turn both heart and stomach upside down. I could wish I were there! But no; by all the gods, no, I would not. To-day she will certainly forget to paint. And who will build up her hair, since the same calamity will overtake her women? We will remain here to-day, for should I meet her soon after her arrival in Alexandria, she would be truly vinegar and gall.”

Hadrian rose with these words, and went out with the secretary, giving a parting salute to Antinous.

A third person had been present during the conversation between the emperor and his favorite. This was Mastor, a native of Jazyes, and a slave; so no more recognized than the Molossian dog or the cushion upon which the emperor reclined.

For some time he tried by various motions to attract the attention of Antinous, who, having covered his face with his hands, had buried both in the bear's-head pillow. He did not venture to speak, because the youth was unequal in his manner toward him. Sometimes he listened with evident pleasure, and spoke as a friend, but at others he repulsed him with more harshness than the veriest upstart manifests to his lowest servant.

At last the slave gathered courage—for it seemed less pain-

ful to receive the rebuke than to shut within himself the sympathetic thought—and called him by name.

Antinous raised his head, and asked: "What do you wish?"

"I only want to say that I know what maiden you spoke of. It was the little sister of whom you told me."

Antinous nodded, buried his face again in his hands, and the movement of his shoulders told that he wept.

Mastor was silent a few moments, but then he stepped nearer to Antinous, saying: "I have a son and a pet daughter at home, and I love to hear of little maidens. We are now alone, and if it would lighten your heart—"

"Why, man, I have told you ten times already of my mother and the little Panthea," replied Antinous, trying to seem undisturbed.

"So do it then for the eleventh," begged the slave. "I can speak of my own as often as I please in the tents and in the kitchen. But you— What did you call the little dog for whom Panthea made the red cap?"

"We called him Kalliste," said Antinous, wiping his eyes with the back of his hand. "My father had no patience with him; but we won over the mother. I was her favorite, and when I hung about her with imploring glances, she always said 'yes' to all I asked."

A happier light gleamed in the eyes of the youth, for he had been recalled to the memory of joys, after which followed no satiety.

CHAPTER II.

ONE of the palaces built by the Ptolemaic princes in Alexandria stood on a land-spit called Lochias, which ran out toward the north like a white finger pointing over the blue sea. This formed the eastern boundary of the large harbor. Always filled with sea-craft, it was to-day especially populous, and the stone-paved quay which led from the sea-washed quarter of the city—the so-called Bruchiom—to the land-spit was crowded with carriages and foot-passengers pressing toward the private landing-place for vessels belonging to the emperor. All were curious to see the magnificent triremes, galleys, and ships of burden which had brought the wife of Hadrian, with a crowd of nobles and attendants, to Alexandria. One large vessel, with a very high cabin on the rear deck, and the head of a she-wolf at the beak-head, excited the greatest attention. It was made of cedar, elaborately ornamented with ivory and bronze, and named "Sabina." A

young citizen, pointing to the gilded letters on the stern, nudged his companion, saying, with a laugh, "'Sabina' has the head of a she-wolf."

"A peacock's would have been more fitting. Did you see her as she rode into the *Cæsareum* yesterday?" was the reply.

"Unfortunately—" began the first speaker, but became suddenly silent when he noticed a Roman lictor standing close behind with a bundle of elm-rods on his shoulder—his *fascēs*—who, with his companions, were trying to divide the crowd and make room for the chariot of the Imperial Prefect Titianus, which was slowly advancing. This high officer noticed the unguarded speech of the citizen, and, pulling the toga of his neighbor with a rapid motion, said:

"A strange people this. I can not show myself displeased with them, but I would rather ride on a knife-blade from here to Canopus than on an Alexandrian tongue."

"Did you hear what the stout fellow here said of Verus?"

"The lictor would have seized him, but one gains nothing by severity. If they had to pay one sesterce for every poisonous word, I assure you, Pontius, the city would be beggared, and our treasury as full as that of the old Gyges of Sardis."

"Let them keep their money," replied the other, the chief architect of the city, a man of about thirty, with deep-set, searching eyes and a bass voice, as he gathered up the roll in his hand more firmly; "they know how to work, and sweating is briny. Active in labor, in their play time they bite one another like high-spirited horses harnessed together. The wolf is a splendid beast, but if you break out his teeth he is only a filthy dog."

"You speak my very soul," answered the prefect. "But here we are. Eternal gods! I did not think that thing could be so shabby. From a distance it appeared magnificent!"

Titianus and the architect left the chariot, the former ordering a lictor to call the overseer of the palace, and then turning with his companion to inspect the gate. At a distance its appearance, with the double row of columns and high arched gable, was quite imposing; but the stucco had fallen from the wall, the capitals of the marble pillars were mutilated, and the bronzed doors hung awry.

The sharp eye of Pontius marked all these things, as he followed the prefect into the outer court, where, during the reign of the Ptolemies, had stood tents for the ministers, scribes, and active officers of the king. Here they met an unexpected obstacle in lines of rope stretched diagonally from the house of the gate-keeper across the old pavement, where now the grass

was growing and thistles were in bloom. These lines were covered with newly washed garments of every size and shape.

"A nice location for the emperor," sighed Titianus, shrugging his shoulders and restraining the lictor from striking down the clothes-line with his fasces.

"It is not so bad as it looks," said the architect. "Door-keeper! Hey, door-keeper! Where has the good-for-nothing fellow hidden himself?"

While he called, and the lictor hastened within the palace, Pontius picked his way among the wet clothes to the little house of the gate-keeper. His countenance expressed impatience and vexation since he had crossed the threshold of the gate, but now he began to laugh, and with a whisper he called to the prefect.

"Titianus, take the trouble to come here!"

The elder dignitary, who was a whole head taller than the architect, did not find it quite so easy to bend under the ropes. But he maintained his good humor, carefully avoided the wet clothing, and cried to Pontius:

"I begin to respect the childish garments. Under them one can pass without breaking his spine. Ah, this is charming!"

The front of the gate-keeper's house was overgrown with ivy, even to door and windows. Among the leaves hung cages containing starlings, thrushes, and other singing birds. The door stood wide open, giving sight of a roomy, gayly painted apartment. In the background one might see the clay model of an Apollo, of excellent workmanship. On the walls, near to it, hung lutes and lyres of varied form and size.

A large bird-cage containing nests full of young goldfinches stood on a table near the door. Here, also, was a wine-tankard and cups of carved ivory. The arm of an elderly woman, who had fallen asleep in her chair, rested on the marble surface. In spite of an upper lip bearded with gray hair, her face was kindly and agreeable, and its expression suggested pleasant dreams. A gray cat was sleeping in her lap, and close beside it, as if to prove that harmony reigned in this apartment, lay a little shaggy dog, whose fleecy white hair showed the best of care. Two others of the same sort lay stretched on the stone floor.

The architect pointed to this picture of still life as soon as the prefect reached him, whispering: "A rare scene for an artist!"

"Inimitable," replied Titianus, "only it is natural to asso-

ciate the deep carnation of the old woman's face with her close proximity to the wine-tankard."

"But did you ever see a kinder, more serene countenance?"

"So might Baucis have slept during the absence of Philemon, or was this dependent husband always at home?"

"Probably. But now the peace is broken."

The approach of the strangers had wakened one of the dogs, whose barking roused the others to competitive effort.

The pet of the mistress sprung from her lap, but the old woman and the cat slept on, undisturbed.

"She ought to be a good watcher," laughed the architect.

"And this phalanx of dogs, which guard the palace of an emperor," added Titianus, "might easily be killed at a blow. But take care. The worthy matron is wakening."

She had been, in fact, partially roused by the barking of the dogs, had raised her head, and began a sentence, half singing, half speaking, but sunk back again into her easy-chair.

"That is charming," exclaimed the prefect. "If she cries out 'always cheery' from her sleep, what must she be when awake!"

"I should be sorry to drive this old woman out of her nest," said the architect, opening his roll.

"Do not touch this little house," exclaimed Titianus, with zeal. "I know Hadrian. He is fond of peculiar things and people, and I'll wager will like this old woman. There comes at last the overseer of this palace."

As he approached one could hear him striking down to the ground the clothes-lines, with their wet contents, before Titianus could hinder the action. After the curtain had fallen he bowed as low before this representative of the emperor and his companion as the excessive size of his body permitted; but surprise and embarrassment made all expression difficult. Titianus left him a little time to recover; then after expressing regret for the fate of the wash, he introduced Pontius, and made known to him the wish of the emperor to dwell in this palace. Also, that knowing it to be greatly in need of repair, he had come with his friend, the architect, to confer with him as to what might be done in the few days before the emperor's arrival to make the building habitable, and finally requested him to conduct them through the apartments.

"Immediately—instantly," replied the Greek, whose many years of inaction had made him immensely corpulent; "I will run and fetch the keys."

As he withdrew, bowing, he hastily curled over his finger the right side of his locks. Pontius, noticing this, said:

“Call him back, Titianus, he was summoned while curling his hair. I wager my head he will curl the other side before he returns. I know my Greeks!”

“Let him alone,” answered Titianus. “How can you expect him to answer questions correctly if his hair be only half arranged? I know the Greeks also—”

“Better than I do, that is plain,” said the architect, in a tone of conviction. “A statesman works with men as I with my lifeless materials. Did you notice how that fat fellow grew pale when you spoke of the emperor’s intention to come here in a few days? This old building must be fine! Every hour now is valuable, and we have already delayed too long.”

The prefect motioned the architect forward, and followed him into the interior of the palace.

How vast, how harmonious the pleasure-grounds of this immense structure, through which the no longer half-curled overseer Keraunus led the Romans! The palace stood upon an artificial elevation in the midst of the tongue of land called Loehias; and from its many windows and balconies overlooked the streets and squares, the houses, palaces, and open structures of this great cosmopolitan city, and its harbor, crowded with vessels. Rich, varied and brilliant was the outlook toward the west and south; from the balconies on the east and north one could see only the vaulted sky and the boundless sea.

When Hadrian had sent a messenger to Titianus from Mount Casius directing him to superintend the preparations for his reception in this neglected palace—unoccupied since the fall of Cleopatra—he knew very well what its location offered. Eight or nine days was the utmost time allowed—scarcely more than a week—and the perspiration ran down the cheeks of both Titianus and Pontius as they reckoned up all that was necessary to do in restoring this neglected and despoiled building to splendor.

The columns and staircases of the interior were in tolerable condition, but the rain had fallen into the uncovered feast and council halls, and the lordly mosaic pavement was warped asunder in some places; in others weeds were growing. The finest of these had been carried away by Octavius Augustus, Tiberius, Vespasian, Titus, and a long row of prefects, to Rome, or into the provinces, to ornament their city houses or their country villas.

The handsomest statues, with which the art-loving Lagides had adorned this and a larger palace on the Bruchiom, a few hundred years before, were also missing.

In the midst of one broad marble hall was a fountain connected with the admirable city aqueduct. The wind, in stormy days, had driven the water over the mutilated floor, and now wherever the foot was placed it came in contact with a thin, dark-green and slippery coating of mold.

In this hall Keraunus leaned, gasping, against the wall, wiping the perspiration from his forehead, struggling with the words: "Here we are at the end!"

These words sounded more as if he were thinking of his own end than that of the palace, and there was a certain contempt in the tone with which the architect replied:

"Very well; then we will begin our explorations anew from this point."

Keraunus did not object, but as he thought of the repeated flights of stairs to be climbed, looked as one might who had received sentence of death.

"Is it necessary that I remain with you during the work?" asked the prefect.

"No," answered the architect, "provided you give me full authority over the men, and the means, after examining my plan."

"Agreed," said Titianus. "I am sure Pontius will employ no more of either than the case demands." The architect bowed silently, but Titianus went on:

"Above all things, can you accomplish the work in eight days and nights?"

"That which is absolutely necessary, perhaps; but we ought to have four days more for the finishing touches."

"It would be well to delay Hadrian's coming four times twenty-four hours."

"Send people to meet him at Pelusium who know how to persuade; such, for instance, as the astronomer Ptolemaeus, and Favorinus, the sophist, who are here waiting for him. They will detain him."

"That is not a bad idea—we will see. But who can calculate the mood of the empress? In any case, do not expect more than eight days."

"Good."

"Where do you propose to arrange Hadrian's quarters?"

"There is really but a small part of the old building that can be made habitable."

"Unfortunately, I see that for myself," said the prefect, with emphasis; then turning to the overseer, not sharply, but in a tone of regret, said: "It seems to me, Keraunus, that it

was your duty to let me know earlier the condition of this palace."

"I presented my complaint," returned the overseer, "but only received for answer that there were no means for its restoration."

"I knew nothing of this," said Titianus. "When did you send to the prefecture?"

"Under the rule of Haterius Nepos, your predecessor."

"So"—answered the prefect, relaxing. "That was long ago. If in your place, I should have presented my petition again with the coming in of a new prefect. But we have not time now to talk of this. During the presence of the emperor, perhaps, I will send an officer to your assistance."

Turning his back upon the overseer, he asked:

"Now, my Pontius, what part of the palace do you propose to put in order?"

"The inner rooms are in best condition."

"But those are not to be thought of. The emperor is easily satisfied in camp; but where it is possible to gain space and a free look into the distance, he must have them."

"Then we will choose the western suite. Hold the diagram, my stately friend."

The overseer did as he was requested; the architect seized his pencil, and, making a vigorous flourish over the left side of the draught, said:

"This is the west front of the palace, which one sees from the harbor. From the south one comes directly into the lofty peristyle, which is the proper place for the sentinels. It is surrounded by rooms for the slaves and body-guard. The smaller halls near the main entrance are for the officers and scribes. In the spacious hypæthral hall—that of the muses—Hadrian can hold audience, and assemble the guests he invites to his table. The small, well-preserved rooms on the right of the long passage leading to the overseer's dwelling, will be devoted to pages, secretaries, and other personal attendants of the Cæsar; the large hall, wainscoted with porphyry and green marble, with the handsome bronze frieze, I think Hadrian will choose for work and rest."

"Excellent!" said Titianus; "I must show your plan to the empress."

"In that case, I need eight weeks instead of days," answered Pontius.

"You are right," said the prefect, laughing. "But tell me, Keraunus, where are the doors belonging to these best rooms?"

“They were built of costly thyine-wood—and were wanted in Rome.”

“I think I have seen one or two of them there,” murmured the prefect. “Your joiners must bestir themselves, Pontius.”

“Say, rather, the tapestry merchants can rejoice. Where there is a draught we must hang heavy curtains.”

“What shall we do about the frogs, who, if I am not mistaken, will throng in this damp dining-room?”

“Arrange a garden with growing plants.”

“That will do. But the broken statues?”

“The worst must be taken away.”

“Are not Apollo and the nine muses in the room designed for an audience-hall?”

“Yes.”

“I think they are in a state of tolerable preservation.”

“So, so.”

“The Urania is missing,” remarked the overseer, still holding the diagram.

“What has become of it?” asked Titianus, not without irritation.

“Your predecessor, Haterius Nepos, liked it especially, and took it to Rome.”

“Why must it have been the Urania?” cried Titanus, in a vexed tone. “That must not be wanting in the audience-room of this astronomical emperor. What shall we do now?”

“It would be difficult to find another of exactly that size, and we have no time to search. Another must be placed there.”

“In eight days?”

“And the same number of nights.”

“But I beg you to consider. Before the marble—”

“Who would think of marble? Papias will make us one out of straw, and canvas, and gypsum. I know his magic; and that the others need not appear so different from this newborn sister, they must all be white-washed.”

“Excellent; but why choose Papias, when we have a Harmodius?”

“Harmodius is too serious an artist, and before he had even finished his designs the emperor would be here. Papias has thirty assistants, and does whatever is ordered, if it only bring him the gold. His last work, especially the Hygeia, for the Jew Dositheos, and his bust of Plutarch for the Casareum, surprised me, they were so graceful and vigorous. No one can tell whether the work is his own or that of his assistants. But that is no matter, he knows how it is done, and if well paid,

could furnish a whole marine battle in marble within five days."

"Then give Papias the commission. But the poor, mutilated pavement—what can they do with that?"

"Gypsum and paint must heal those wounds," answered Pontius. Where that will not answer we must spread a carpet, after the fashion of the Orient. But how dark it is here! Give me the diagram, Keraunus, and provide lamps and torches, for the coming eight days will have each twenty-four full hours. I beg you also, Titianus, for half a dozen reliable slaves to serve as messengers. But why do you stand there, man? I called for light. You have had half a life-time in which to rest, and you can devote as many years again to the same purpose, after the departure of the emperor."

With these words the overseer slowly withdrew, but the Pontius called after him:

"If you do not get lost in your own obesity. Is it blood or Nile mud that flows in the veins of that monster?"

"I care little," answered the prefect, "if that restless fire glow in yours to the end of the work. Be careful of doing too much in the beginning, and do not attempt impossible things, for Rome and the world expect still greater things from you. I shall write now to the emperor, quite satisfied that all will be ready for him, upon the Lochias. And in taking leave, I say, faint-heartedness were folly when Pontius is at hand."

CHAPTER III.

THE prefect commanded one of the lictors in waiting near his chariot to hasten to his own house and conduct to the architect certain trusty slaves whom he specified, also to bring food and wine for his nourishment. Then he ascended the chariot and drove through the Bruchiom, along the sea front, to the magnificent building known as the Cæsareum. His progress was slow, for the further he went the denser became the crowd. Upon the high towers of the gates of the Cæsareum, opening toward the sea, were pans of burning pitch, which threw a clear light far over the water. To the left and right of these gates rose two stately obelisks, upon the tops and sides of which lamps had also been hung. "In honor of Sabina," thought the prefect. "Whatever Pontius undertakes is thoroughly done, and there could be no more superfluous work than to oversee his arrangements."

Occupied with such thoughts, he approached the illuminated gate which led into the Temple of Julius Cæsar, founded by

Octavius, and ordered the charioteer to halt at the Egyptian portal leading to the imperial palace. This palace had been built for Tiberius by the Alexandrians, and during later reigns had been much enlarged and ornamented. A sacred hedge separated it from the Temple of Cæsar, with which it was connected by a colonnade. Many chariots stood before the entrance, and a host of black and white slaves waited near the litters of their masters. Lictors pressed back the eager crowd of sightseers. Officers leaned against the pillars, and the Roman guard gathered close behind, with much rattling of weapons and clang of trumpets, waiting release at the end of their watch. All drew back respectfully from the chariot of the prefect, and as he walked through the lighted colonnade to the Cæsareum, glancing at the countless masterpieces of sculpture and mural painting, and passed the library, he recalled the months of labor and anxiety spent with the assistance of Pontius in preparing this palace, unused since the departure of Titus for Judea, for the residence of Hadrian.

The empress was now occupying the apartments designed for him and adorned with the choicest artistic collections, and Titianus said to himself with regret that Sabina would allow their removal most unwillingly to the palace upon the Lochias. Before reaching the splendid hall, designed as an audience-room for the emperor, he met the chamberlain of Sabina, who conducted him at once to his mistress.

This hall was uncovered in the summer, but now, during the rainy season, and because Sabina always complained of the cold, even in the warmer parts of the year, was protected by a copper roof shaped like an umbrella. As Titianus entered, he perceived an atmosphere of agreeable warmth and fragrance. The warmth came from stoves of most peculiar construction which had been placed in the middle of the apartment. One of these represented the forge of Vulcan—glowing coals were laid before the bellows, which moved automatically. The god and his companions surrounded the fire, holding tongs and hammers.

The other stove was a great silver bird's nest, in which charcoal was also burning. Over the flame was suspended a bronze bird, much like an eagle, which represented the soaring phoenix. Besides these, countless lamps of artistic design were burning, and the apartment contained lounges and tables, vases and statues, but the space was altogether disproportioned to the number of persons assembled. The prefect and Pontius had arranged a room of smaller dimensions for the ordinary receptions, but the empress had given this the preference.

This high-born and dignified statesman felt displeased and chagrined when he saw the little scattered groups and heard the repressed sentences and the unintelligible murmur of voices, but not one hearty and natural outburst. Loud talking hurt the empress, a clear tone was her abhorrence; and yet few men possessed a more vigorous voice than her husband, or were less accustomed to constraint.

Sabina was in a reclining posture. Her feet were buried in the woolly skin of a meadow-ox, and her limbs protected by a down coverlet.

Her head was stiffly erect. It was difficult to conceive how such a thin neck could support the lofty fabric of reddish blonde hair, with its strings of pearl and chains of precious stone. Her meager face appeared still more meager under this mass of natural and artificial ornament, covering crown and forehead.

Even in youth she could not have been beautiful; but the features were regular, and the prefect said to himself as he looked at the finely wrinkled, but red and white-painted face, that the artist who had received the commission a few years before to sketch her as Venus Victrix had opportunity to preserve a certain likeness to the original.

Titianus seized, while bowing profoundly, the ring-encumbered right hand which she extended to him, but drew back quickly and thrust beneath her drapery, as if she feared this carefully nursed plaything—this mere toy—might suffer harm. She had returned the greeting of the prefect with all the warmth at her command, for in former times he had been a daily visitor at her house in Rome, and she was now meeting him for the first time in Alexandria. For yesterday, exhausted by the voyage, she had been brought from the ship in a closed litter to the Cæsareum, and this morning, busy with physicians, bathing-women, and hair-dressers, had declined receiving his visit.

“How do you endure this country?” she asked, in faint, exhausted voice, as if conversation were a burdensome and quite fruitless occupation. “At noon the sun scorches, but in the evening it is intolerably cold.”

And she drew the drapery closer about her person, but Titianus, pointing to the stoves, said:

“I thought we had broken the never-mighty sinews of the Egyptian winter’s bow.”

“Still young and imaginative, still the poet,” answered the empress, wearily. “I met your wife two hours ago. Africa

does not seem to agree with her. I was shocked to see the handsome matron Julia so changed. She does not look well."

"Years are the enemies of beauty."

"Certainly; but genuine beauty sometimes resists their power."

"You are the living proof of your own assertion."

"That means I have grown old."

"No, but that you understand how to preserve beauty."

"Romancer," murmured the empress, and her thin under lip contracted.

"The muses do not show favor to business of state."

"But he who sees things fairer than they really are, or gives them more striking names than they deserve, I call him a poet, a fanatic, a flatterer, as best befits."

"Modesty always finds fitting words to turn off well-deserved admiration."

"What means this foolish skirmish with words," sighed Sabina, sinking back into her chair; "you have been learning that here, in the Museum; I have not. Yonder sits Favorinus, the sophist. He is, perhaps, proving to the astronomer Ptolemæus that the stars we think in the heavens are only flecks of blood upon the eyeball. Florus, the historian, is discussing the lofty theme; the poet Panerates versifies the great thoughts of the philosophers, and what weighty subject absorbs the grammarian of the party you probably know better than I. What is his name?"

"Apollonius."

"Hadrian calls him the mystic. The harder it is to understand his words, the higher he ranks."

"One must dive for that which lies in the depths; what floats on the surface every wave carries forward, and the children use it for a plaything. Apollonius is very learned."

"Then my husband should leave him with his books and his pupils. He wished me to invite these people as guests. I like Florus and Panerates well enough—but the others!"

"I can show you how to be rid of Favorinus and Ptolemæus; send them to the emperor."

"For what purpose?"

"To entertain him."

"He has his playthings already," said Sabina, her lip expressing bitter scorn.

"His artistic eye rejoices in the wonderful beauty of Antinous, whom I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing."

"You are eager to behold this wonder?"

"I will not deny it."

“And yet you are seeking to put off the meeting with the emperor,” asked Sabina, while a searching, distrustful expression gleamed in her small eyes. “Why do you wish to delay the arrival of my husband?”

“Do I need to say,” answered Titianus, “how much I long to see again, after four years’ separation, my master, and the friend of my youth, the best and wisest of men? What would I give were he already here! Nevertheless, I wish, that instead of eight, he would delay fifteen days.”

“What is the matter?”

“A messenger has brought to-day a letter in which the emperor expresses the wish to reside, not here in the Cæsareum, but in the old palace on the Lochias.”

At sound of these words, the brow of Sabina contracted, her eyes fell, and drawing the under lip between her teeth, she hissed:

“Because *I am here.*”

Titianus did not appear to notice her words, and went on, in a light tone:

“Yonder there is a wide outlook, which from youth up he has loved to find. But the old structure is mutilated, and though I have already begun repairs, with the help of our efficient architect Pontius, which will make a part of it habitable, still the time is too short to arrange things properly.”

“I wish to see my husband here, the sooner the better,” broke in the empress, emphatically. Then she turned toward the right side of the hall, and called: “Verus!” But her voice was so weak it was not possible for him to hear, and turning to the prefect, she asked: “I pray you, call to me Verus, the Pretor Lucius Aurelius Verus.”

Titianus instantly obeyed her request. He had already exchanged a friendly salute with this man on entering, but had received no further notice. Titianus found Verus the center of a group of men and women, who were all listening to him. That which he was saying must have been very amusing, for one could see that all his auditors were shaking with laughter, yet dared not utter a sound which was so annoying to the empress. As the prefect reached the group, a young woman whose handsome head was crowned by a very mountain of little curls, touched Verus on the arm, saying:

“That is too much. If you go on after that fashion I shall close my ears, as surely as my name is Balbilla.”

“And a descendant of King Antiochus,” added Verus, with a profound bow.

“Always the same,” laughed the prefect, nodding to the story-teller. “Sabina wishes to speak with you.”

“Instantly,” answered Verus. “My story is true, and you should all be thankful for it, since it has delivered us from the tedious grammarian, who is fastened upon my worthy friend, Favorinus, yonder. Your Alexandria pleases me, Titianus, but it is not a great city like Rome. The people have not yet forgotten how to wonder. They stand in astonishment. As I have been out driving—”

“Your footmen should go before you with roses in their hair and wings on their shoulders, heralding you as the God of Love.”

“In honor of the Alexandrian ladies.”

“As of the Roman ladies in Rome, and the Attic women in Athens,” interrupted Balbilla.

“The footmen of the pretor are swifter than Parthian steeds,” cried the chamberlain of the empress. “He calls them the winds.”

“Which they deserve,” added Verus. “Come now, Titianus.”

He laid his arm confidentially in that of the prefect, who was a kinsman, and whispered in his ear, as they approached the empress:

“In the interest of the emperor I let them remain.”

The sophist, Favorinus, who, on the other side of the room, was conversing with Ptolemæus, the astronomer, Apollonius, the grammarian, and Pancrates, the poet, looked after the two men, exclaiming:

“A handsome pair! One the very personification of sovereign, majestic Rome, the other with the figure of Mercury—”

“The other,” broke in the grammarian, “is the image of haughtiness, and carries extravagance and luxury to madness, and to the shameful ruin of the city. This foolish woman-hero—”

“I do not wish to judge his conduct,” interrupted Favorinus with a loud voice, and a fine accentuation of the Greek which charmed the ear of the grammarian. “His actions are disgraceful, but you must allow that he bears the charm of true Hellenic beauty, that the Charities kissed him at his birth, and that, though he may be condemned by the strictest laws of virtue, his beauty deserved laudation.”

“For the artist who needs a model he would be a toothsome morsel.”

“The Athenian judges made Phryne free because she was beautiful.”

“In that they did wrong.”

“Not in the estimation of the gods, whose most perfect works deserve respect.”

“One may find poison in the costliest vessels.”

“But body and soul correspond to a certain extent.”

“Would you venture to call the handsome Verus, also, the excellent?”

“No; but the dissolute Lucius Aurelius Verus is also the most cheerful and gracious of all the Romans, and far from any malice, though unrestrained by severe virtue, expects to gain whatever he desires, and at the same time succeeds in making every one pleased with him.”

“He might have saved himself the effort so far as I am concerned.”

“I give him the credit he deserves.”

This conversation was carried on in a louder tone than was usual in presence of the empress. Sabina, who had just been telling the pretor of her husband's desire, shrugged her shoulders and moved her lips as if in pain; but as Verus turned his face toward the speakers, his eyes met the hostile expression in those of Apollonius. Personal dislike was intolerable to Verus, and instead of answering the question of Sabina as to his opinion of the emperor's residence while in Alexandria, he said:

“This logomachist is a very disagreeable fellow, and has an eye that threatens us all, and his trumpet-toned voice is as unpleasant to you as to me. Must we have him at the table daily?”

“Hadrian wishes it.”

“Then I shall return to Rome. My wife has been wanting to return to the children without me, and as pretor, I am better off beside the Tiber than the Nile.”

These words were spoken as lightly as though having reference simply to the meal of the present evening, but they seemed to excite the empress, for she shook her head—which had been motionless during all her conversation with the prefect—so positively that the pearls and gems rattled in her head-gear. Then she stared for a few seconds into her lap. While Verus bowed to pick up a diamond which had fallen from her hair, she said quickly:

“You are right. Apollonius is quite unendurable. We will send him to meet the emperor.”

“Then I shall stay,” said Verus, satisfied as a pleased child who has gained his point.

“Whirlwind!” ejaculated Sabina, and threatened him playfully with the finger.

“Show me the stone: it is one of the largest and purest. You may keep it.”

When Verus left the hall in the company of the prefect, an hour later, he said:

“You have unconsciously done me a service, cousin. Can you not arrange to send Ptolemæus and Favorinus with Apollonius to Pelusium?”

“Nothing could be easier,” was the answer.

On the same evening, the steward of the prefect brought word to the architect Pontius, that instead of eight or nine days, he might count upon fourteen for his work.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE light after another had been extinguished in the Cæsareum, the residence of the empress; but in the palace on the Lochias they burned brighter and brighter. It was the custom, on all festal illuminations of the harbor, to burn pans of pitch on the roof, and light long rows of lamps, arranged with architectural skill; but since one could remember, no such light had been seen in the interior. The harbor watchmen looked anxiously toward the Lochias, fearing a fire had broken out in the old palace. But they were soon relieved by a lictor of the prefect, who brought an order to allow all in the employ of the head architect Pontius ingress and egress through the gates on this and every following night until the arrival of the emperor. And not a single quarter hour passed until long after midnight, in which those whom Pontius had summoned or sent out were not passing through the gates, which, though not closed, were well guarded.

Lights were also burning in the little house of the gate-keeper. The birds and the cat belonging to the old woman whom the prefect and his companion had found fast asleep near the wine-cup were again asleep, but the little dogs plunged barking into the court with every new arrival.

“But, Aglaia, what will they think of you? Loveliest Thalia, do behave yourself like a good little beast! Come here, Euphrosyne, and be reasonable!” cried the old woman, who, now fully awake, had been folding her clothes from the wash, and stood behind her table, with kindly but authoritative manner. The barking dogs, who bore the names of the Graces, gave little heed to the friendly call; to their own disadvantage, certainly, for each of them had more than once occasion—when they met the foot of a new-comer into the court—to run crying and whining into the house, and nestle up to their mis-

dress for comfort. She took them up every time, and quieted them with caresses and coaxing words.

The old woman was no longer alone, for stretched on a lounge behind the Apollo lay a tall, lank man, dressed in a red chiton. A hanging lamp cast a feeble light upon him and the lute he was playing. He hummed an accompaniment, repeating the same strain, two, three, four times. Sometimes he sung in loud and not unpleasant voice a few sentences, with artistic expression and execution. Sometimes, when the dogs barked too loudly, he would spring up and rush into the court with lute in one hand and a long pliant reed in the other, screeching the names of the dogs, and with apparently murderous designs; but skillfully avoiding their bodies, he let his blows fall on the pavement. When he returned to his resting-place, the old woman would cry, pointing to the lamp which his head had disturbed in the mad rush:

“Euphorion—the oil!”

He invariably answered, with the same threatening motion of the hand and a rolling of the eyeballs:

“Wretched little beasts!”

The zealous musician might have been devoted perhaps an hour to his instrument, when the dogs again rushed into the court, not barking, but with expressions of delight. The old woman laid down her work and listened attentively, but the lute-player said:

“The emperor sends as many birds in advance as gulls before a storm; if they would only leave us in peace!”

“Take care, that is Pollux; I know the dogs,” exclaimed the woman, hastening over the threshold.

There stood the expected one, lifting each of the four-footed Graces by the hair of its back, and giving each nose a tweak. When he saw the old woman he seized her head with both hands, and kissed her forehead.

“Good-evening, little mother.” Then he waved his hand to the singer, and cried, “Be saluted, great father!”

“Not much smaller than I am,” answered the man, drawing the youth toward himself, and laying the palm of his hand, first on his own gray hair, and then on the brown locks of his first-born.

“Made after the same pattern,” cried the youth. And in truth he strongly resembled his father; but it was as a noble steed can resemble a poor horse, as marble the rough limestone, or a fir-tree, the cedar. Both were of stately figure, had dark eyes and thick hair, and noses of similar shape; but the cheerfulness which irradiated the face of the youth he had not in-

herited from his father, but from the little woman who looked up into his face while she caressed his arm.

But whence came that air of nobility, that indescribable something in his eyes, and the noble arch of his forehead?

"I knew you were coming," said his mother. "I dreamed it this afternoon, and will prove that you did not take me by surprise. Yonder, on the chafing-dish, is the stewed cabbage and sausage waiting for you."

"I can not stay now; truly I can not, in spite of your smiling face and favorite dish. My master Papias has gone onward, and wonders are to be accomplished in the palace within a very short time."

"Then I will take the cabbage to you into the castle," said Doris, holding a sausage to the mouth of her son.

Pollux eat vigorously, and said, while chewing:

"Excellent! I wish the thing I have to shape up there would as surely be a good statue as this soft cylinder, which has just disappeared, made a good sausage."

"Will you have another?" asked Doris.

"No, mother; and you need not bring anything to me in the palace; a moment must not be lost until after midnight; and even if I can stop then, you will have been long dreaming all sorts of things."

"I will bring the cabbage," said his father, "for it will be long before I can go to rest. The hymn to Sabina, which Mesomedes has written, is to be sung by the choir the first time she visits the theater, and I have to take the highest part among the old men. The rehearsal comes to-morrow, and I do not yet know it. Every note of the old tune sticks in my throat, but the new, the new—"

"That will come later," laughed Pollux.

"If you could only put your father's guitar-playing and his 'Theseus' on exhibition," cried Doris.

"Wait a little, and I will recommend him to the emperor, when—as the Phidias of his time—he will be proud to call me friend. Then he will ask: 'Who brought you up?' and I shall say: 'It was Euphorion, the godlike poet and musician; my mother also is a worthy matron. She is Doris, who keeps the palace gate and bleaches the linen.'" These words the young artist sung in a fine, vigorous voice, after the style of his father.

"If you had only been a singer!" cried Euphorion.

"Then I would have the prospect of spending the evening of my days in this little house as your successor."

"Now you are planting, for a petty reward, the laurels with which Papias adorns himself," answered the old man.

"But his hour will come, and he will be recognized," broke in Doris. "I saw him in my dream, with a great wreath over his locks."

"Patience, father, patience," said the youth, seizing his father's hand. "I am young and vigorous, and whatever I am doing, here, behind my forehead, swarm the good ideas. What I have ventured to bring out have at least made others famous; and although all is yet very far below the inward ideal, yet I look forward to a time when I shall be something more than the pitifully paid right hand of Papias, who, up there now without me, does not know what to do."

"Only be always cheerful and diligent," cried Doris.

"That will help little, without luck," murmured Euphorion, shrugging his shoulders.

The young sculptor said farewell to his parents, and was hastening away; but his mother detained him to look at the tiny goldfinch which had burst its shell only the day before. Pollux delayed willingly, not alone to gratify her, but because he felt pleasure in looking at the pretty bird which guarded and warmed its young. Near the cage stood the wine-tankard and the cup which he had himself adorned for his mother. His look fell on these vessels, which he silently moved back and forth. At last, gathering courage, he said, laughingly:

"The emperor will often pass here, mother. Give up the celebration of your Dionysian revel. What if you limit yourself to one part wine and three parts water? It is very palatable thus."

"It is a shame to neglect the good gifts," answered the old woman.

"One quarter wine, to please me," begged Pollux, seizing the shoulders of his mother and kissing her forehead.

"To please you, great boy?" asked Doris. "Yes, to please you, I will drink only miserable water! Euphorion, you can have the rest of this wine!"

* * * * *

The architect Pontius had begun his active labors, assisted at first only by those who had followed him on foot. Measuring, planning, sending out orders, making estimates, jotting down his calculations on wax tablets. Not one moment was lost.

He was often interrupted by the agents of factories, whose activity he had claimed. They came at a very late hour, having been summoned in the name of the prefect. Among

the latest came the sculptor Papias, although Pontius had written with his own hand that he had a remunerative work for him in the interest of the emperor, which needed instant attention, and might perhaps be commenced that very night.

This was a statue of Urania, to be finished in ten days, after the style of one he had prepared at the late feast of Adonis, but of a size that he, Pontius, would prescribe, and that must be done on the Lochias. Also, there were other restorations which must be as quickly done, and the price was to be agreed upon between them.

The sculptor was a circumspect man, and brought with him his best assistant, Pollux, the son of the gate-keeper, and many slaves, who transported upon wagons and carts the tools, boards, clay, gypsum, and other materials. Upon their way to the Lochias, Papias had described the affair to Pollux, and proposed, in a condescending tone, that he should have opportunity to display his skill in the restoration of Urania. At the palace gate he suggested a call upon his parents, while he should go on alone to make the arrangements with Pontius. The apprentice understood his master. He knew that he would lay upon him the burden of the work, and then, after a few unimportant changes, claim it as his own. The same experience had been gone through more than once within the last two years, and he accepted it to-day without opposition, for with his master there was no other way; and besides, this creative work was to him the highest of all enjoyment.

Papias, to whom he had gone for instruction, and to whom he owed all he had learned, was no niggard; and Pollux needed the wages—not only for himself, but to support a widowed sister and her children. He enjoyed, too, making the home comfortable for his parents, and helping his brother Teuker, who was learning the art of gem-cutting, through his apprenticeship. Sometimes he thought seriously of saying to his employer that he would stand on his own feet and earn his own laurels; but the fear of what might become of those dependent on him, in case of failure, always deterred him from relinquishing his present stipend.

Of what use his ability and his honest purpose, if no opportunity should offer to begin with costly materials, which he could not procure out of his own means?

While he chatted with his parents, Papias was negotiating with the architect. Pontius pointed out what must be done. Papias listened attentively, stroking a beard and face already as smooth as a wax mask, and laying the folds of his costly

toga—which he wore after the style of a Roman senator—in new folds.

When Pontius came to the last—a statue which needed a new arm—Papias said, decisively:

“It can not be done.”

“That is a rash conclusion,” said the architect. “Do you not know the maxim, uttered by more than one shrewd man, ‘that it is as unwise to call a thing impossible as to boast of being able to accomplish what is probably beyond our skill?’”

Papias laughed, stared at his gold shoe buckles, and said:

“It is more difficult for sculptors, who always handle unwieldy masses, to enter into a Titanic conflict with the impossible. I do not yet see the means which might give me courage to undertake this work.”

“I will enumerate them,” said Pontius, quickly and firmly. “On your side, good will, many assistants and vigils; on ours, the approbation of the emperor and plenty of gold.”

After these words, the negotiation took a more successful course, and Pontius was compelled in most cases to assent to the clever plans of Papias.

“I am now going home,” concluded the sculptor. “My assistant will begin the work immediately. It must go on within an inclosure, to avoid disturbance and comments which would delay us.”

Half an hour later a frame-work had been erected, within which the Urania was to stand. This was covered with strong linen, through which one could not look, and behind it Pollux was already busy forming a model in wax, while his master went home to hasten preparations for the work of the next day.

It wanted only an hour of midnight, and still the meal sent to Pontius from the house of the prefect stood untouched. Pontius was hungry; but before allowing himself to partake of the tempting provision, felt it his duty to make another round of the apartments, to see if the slaves occupied in cleaning the rooms were properly directed and had everything needful for their work. More light was everywhere requisite, and while those cleaning the floor of the hall of the Muses were complaining of this need, a head appeared above the frame-work surrounding the Urania, and a voice cried:

“My muse, with her celestial globe, stands beside the stargazer, and would sing her best in the night-time, but not until she is finished. In order to do this, one must have light, much light.”

“And if it were brighter here, the noise of those below

would not be so disagreeable. Create light, oh man, for my goddess and for thy needy fellow-beings!"

Pontius was amused, and answered:

"Your demand is just, my friend. But do you really think light would have power to deaden sound?"

"Where light fails," replied Pollux, "*i. e.*, in the darkness, every sound seems doubled."

"That is true, but I think we must seek some other ground of explanation. In the morning we will talk it over at some leisure moment. Now I must seek the lamps and candles."

"For that will Urania, who watches over the fine arts, thank you," cried Pollux after the architect. He went on his way to ask the head workman if he had carried his orders to the overseer for an abundant supply of light.

"Three times," was the reply, "I have been to him, but he only puffed out like a frog and said nothing, leaving me to his daughter—whom you ought to see, for she is charming—and a miserable negro slave led me into a little room, where I found the few lamps which are burning."

"Did you give him my order to come?"

"Three hours ago, for the second time, while you were talking with Papias." The architect turned, and unrolling the plan of the palace, found easily the dwelling of the overseer, seized one of the small lamps of red clay, and made his way in that direction. Through a door that was not locked he entered a dark vestibule, which led into a small apartment, and through that into one larger and well furnished. From this, evidently the sitting- and dining-room of the establishment, passages without doors and protected only by curtains, led in different directions. Pontius could overlook the table without being observed, and on which stood a few dishes and a three-armed bronze lamp. A corpulent man with a flushed face sat facing the entrance, through which the indignant architect would have entered with little ceremony had he not been arrested by the sound of sobbing. This evidently came from a girl of slender figure, who entered by an opposite door, bearing a plate of bread, which she placed on the table near the overseer.

"Don't cry, Selene," said he, breaking the bread slowly.

"Why should I not weep?" answered the girl. "Please let me buy a piece of meat only for you. The physician forbade you to eat bread alone."

"One must satisfy his hunger. Meat is costly. I have nine mouths to fill without counting the slaves. Where shall I get the means to feed them all with meat?"

“ We do not need it, but you must have it.”

“ It will not do, child. The butcher will give no more on trust, the other creditors threaten, and by the end of the month we will have no more than ten drachmas left.”

The girl turned pale, and said, anxiously: “ But, father, you showed me three gold pieces this morning as your share of a gift the empress had made the citizens.”

The overseer chewed a piece of bread in an embarrassed manner, and replied:

“ With that I bought this buckle with the carved onyx—ridiculously cheap it was, too. When the emperor comes he must see who I am; and if I should die, any one will give twice as much for it as I paid. I assure you the gift of the empress has been well invested.”

Selene did not answer, but she drew a heavy sigh, and her thoughts ran over many useless things which he had bought because they were “ cheap,” while she and her seven brothers and sisters were wanting absolute necessities.

“ Father,” said the girl, after a short silence, “ I do not like to speak of it again, but I must, even though you may be angry. The chief architect who directs the work in the palace has already sent twice for you.”

“ Be silent,” said he, striking his fist on the table. “ Who is this Pontius, and who am I?”

“ You are of noble Macedonian origin, perhaps even connected with the kingly house of Ptolemy, and have a seat in the assembly of citizens—but for this time, please be condescending and gracious. The man has his hands full and is tired—”

“ Neither have I been able to sit still to-day. It is as hard for me as for him. I am Keraunus, son of Ptolemæus, whose father came into Egypt with the great Alexander, and helped found the city; that everybody knows. Our patrimony has diminished, but for that very reason I insist all the more that our noble blood shall be acknowledged. Pontius summons Keraunus! If it were not revolting, it would be ridiculous, for, who is this man? Who? I have told you already. His grandfather was a freedman of the late Prefect Claudius Balbillus, and through the favor of the Romans his father came here and grew rich. He descended from slaves; and do you think that I shall act the part of an obedient servant whenever he chooses to call?”

“ But, father, father, he did not summon the son of Ptolemæus, but the overseer of this palace.”

“ All subterfuge. Be silent—I will not take one step toward

him." The girl hid her face in her hands, sobbing piteously. Keraunus visibly shrunk, and cried out:

"By the great Serapis, I can not bear this. What is the use of whimpering?" Then the girl took heart, and coming nearer, said, her words more than once interrupted by tears:

"You must go, father, indeed you must. I spoke with the head workman, and he said in a cold, decided way, that Pontius was here in the name of the emperor, and if you did not yield to him, he would put you out of office. And if that should happen! Oh, father, think of the blind Helios and the poor Berenice. Arsinoe and I can earn our bread, but the children!" With these words, she fell on her knees and raised her hands to the stubborn man.

The blood had risen to his head and eyes, and with fingers rambling over his forehead, he sunk into his chair as if under a stroke of paralysis. His daughter sprung up and gave him the cup of wine and water that stood on the table, but Keraunus waved her off, and exclaimed, with a visible effort in breathing:

"Put me out of my office! Drive me away from the palace! Yonder in the ebony chest lies the written testimony of Energetes that this office was a hereditary dignity in the family of my ancestor Philip. The wife of this Philip had the honor of being the mistress—some said she was the daughter of the king. The document is on yellow parchment, written in red and black ink, and bears the seal and autograph of the second Energetes. All the princes of the house of Lagus have confirmed it; it has been honored by all the Roman prefects; and now, now—"

"But, father," broke in the girl, addressing the man, who was wringing his hands in despair, "you are still in office, and if you only accommodate yourself—"

"Accommodate myself!" shaking his fat hands over his flushed face. "I will accommodate myself. I will not plunge you into misfortune. I will go at once, and for the sake of my children let myself be trodden upon and abused. Like the pelican, I will nourish my children with the blood of my own heart. But you ought to know what it costs me thus to humiliate myself. It is unbearable, and my heart will burst, for this architect has reviled me as if I were his servant—he has uttered the villainous wish that I might be drowned in my own fat—me, whom the physician threatens with apoplexy. Let me alone—let me alone. I know that all is possible to the Romans. Well, bring my crocus-colored pallium that I

wear in the council, and my golden fillet. I will adorn myself like an offering for sacrifice, and show him—”

Not a word of this conversation had escaped Pontius, which had vexed, amused, and stirred him to pity. His own vigorous nature resented the drawling and indolent existence of the man whose tardy indifference had excited the utterance of words which he now regretted having spoken. The foolish and beggarly pride had made him angry; and who ever likes to hear boast of an origin to which the speaker adds no glory?

But the wail of this wretched man's daughter had touched his heart. He knew that a single word from his lips would displace the poor simpleton, and bring him lower than ever. But he chose to follow the kindly impulse of his better nature, and spare the unfortunate family.

So he knocked vigorously on the door-post, coughed loud, and said, as he stepped over the threshold:

“I came, noble Keraunus, to pay my respects, as is becoming. Forgive the lateness of the hour, but you scarcely know how busy I have been since we parted.”

Keraunus was at first frightened, then bewildered. And then stepping nearer, and stretching out both hands, as if freed from an Alpine weight, such a shimmer of hearty enjoyment spread over his face, Pontius wondered at its really good expression.

“Take a place at our modest table,” he begged. “Go, Selene, and call the slaves. Perhaps we can find a pheasant in the larder, a roast fowl, or something of the sort; though the hour be late.”

“I thank you,” said the architect smiling; “my supper waits in the Hall of the Muses, and I must go back to the workmen. I should be glad to have you accompany me, as I want to consult you about the lighting of the palace, and we can better discuss the subject over a juicy roast and a swallow of wine.”

“I am entirely at your service,” said Keraunus, bowing.

“I will go in advance,” said Pontius. “Please have the goodness to give all you possess of lamps, candles, and cressets to the slave who will wait your order in a few moments.”

As Pontius left, Selene said, drawing a deep breath:

“Oh, this anxiety! I will go and find the lamps. How frightfully all this might have ended!”

“It is well that things have so happened,” murmured Keraunus; “this architect is really a fine fellow, considering his origin.”

CHAPTER V.

PONTIUS had sought the dwelling of the overseer with a frown upon his brow, but returned smiling. To the foreman, who met him with an inquiring look, he said: "The overseer was a little sensitive, naturally; but now we are friendly, and he will do what he can to light the building."

In the Hall of the Muses he stopped before the partition, and cried: "Friend sculptor, listen to me; it is high time for supper."

"Certainly," answered Pollux, "else we must call it breakfast."

"Then, quarter of an hour hence, lay aside your tools, and help me, in company with the overseer of this palace, to annihilate the provisions sent me from the house of the prefect."

"You will need no other assistance, if Keraunus is there. All food disappears before him as ice before the sun."

"Then deliver him from the temptation to overload his stomach."

"Impossible; for I have just made a mereless attack on a dish of cabbage with sausage. My mother has prepared this food fit for the gods, and my father brought it to his eldest son."

"Cabbage with sausage," exclaimed Pontius, in a tone that suggested how gladly his hungry stomach would come into closer relations with such a dish.

"Come in," cried Pollux, "and be my guest. The cabbage foreshadows what impends in this palace. It has been warmed over."

"Warmed-over cabbage tastes better than fresh; but the fire at which we seek to make this palace habitable is too hot, and must be poked too vigorously. The best things have been carried away, and can not be recovered."

"Just like the sausage, which I have fished out of the cabbage," laughed the sculptor.

"I can not honestly invite you to be my guest, without flattering the provision when I call it cabbage with sausage. I have treated it as if mining, and since the sausage digging has nearly exhausted it, there only remains the ground stuff, in which two or three harmless fragments remain, to remind one of the former riches—another time my mother will cook the dish for you; she prepares it with inimitable skill."

"That is a good thought, but to-day you must be my guest."

"I am already surfeited."

"Then you shall season our meal with your good nature."

"Forgive me, sir, and allow me to remain in my cupboard. In the first place, I am in excellent condition to press forward with the work to-night—"

"And to-morrow also."

"Hear me through."

"Very well."

"You would render your second guest a poor service by inviting me."

"Do you know the overseer?"

"From a child; I am a son of the gate-keeper of this palace."

"So, then, you are from the pretty little house with the ivy, and the birds and the cheery old woman?"

"She is my mother, and so soon as her favorite butcher prepares another sausage, will cook us another dish of cabbage."

"That is a pleasant prospect."

"There comes the mill-horse, or, on nearer view, the overseer Keraunus."

"Are you at loggerheads with him?"

"I with him, no; but he with me, yes. It is a stupid story. Do not ask for it at our anticipated feast, if you want a jolly companion. Do not tell Keraunus that I am here—it will lead to nothing good."

"As you wish; but here come our lamps."

"There are enough to illuminate the under world," cried Pollux, making a parting salute to the architect as he disappeared behind the screen, to work with renewed diligence on his model.

* * * * *

It was long after midnight when the slaves, having finished their work in the Hall of the Muses, were at liberty to sleep on straw spread for that purpose in another part of the palace. The architect also wished to refresh himself by a short nap for the duties of the following day; but between this wish and its fulfillment stood the corpulent figure of his guest.

He had invited this man, whom he found eating bread to spare the meat, to dine with him, in order to satisfy his appetite, and had found him entirely responsive to the opportunity. After the last dish had been removed, he sought to impress upon his host the honor conferred by his own presence. The good wine of the prefect loosened his tongue and made him speak too freely of personal matters. Pontius, seeking to divert conversation to other topics, inadvertently mentioned

the council of citizens. This turned the stream of his eloquence, and, while he emptied cup after cup, he expatiated on a measure attempted among his own particular friends to take away the rights of citizenship from the Jews of Alexandria, and drive them from the city. His zeal was so intense that, quite forgetting the well-known origin of his host, he declared it necessary to include all descendants of slaves in this edict. Pontius knew, from his glowing cheeks and eyes, that the wine was speaking through him, and made no answer. But he determined not to curtail any longer the sleep he so much needed. So, excusing himself, he left the table and sought the apartment in which a bed had been prepared for him. After he was ready for sleep, he sent his slaves to look after Keraunus, and they reported him as fast asleep and snoring.

"Listen," said one of them; "you can hear it from here. I put a cushion under his head, for so fat a man might hurt himself."

Love is a plant that grows for the use of many who have neither sowed or nurtured it, and for whom it becomes a shady tree.

How little had Keraunus done to win the heart of his daughter—and how much that could not fail to make her young life unhappy!

Selene sat by the three-armed lamp, watchful and anxious over the prolonged absence of her father, though her nineteen-year-old body needed sleep to refresh her for the cares and burdens of another day. One week before, her father had suddenly lost consciousness; and though it was only for a few moments, the physician had told her it was necessary that he follow strictly his directions, and that he must avoid all excesses. A single imprudence, he had assured her, might snap the thread of life. After her father went out with the architect, Selene had seated herself to mend the clothing of the younger children. Arsinoe, the sister two years her junior, was fully able to share this task, but had gone early to rest, to watch over the little ones through the night. The old slave, who had served her family since the day of her grandparents, would have assisted gladly, but her feeble eyes could no longer see the stitches; so Selene sent her to rest, and undertook the work alone. For an hour she sewed without looking up, calculating the chances of making the few drachmas on which she could depend last to the end of the month. As it became later she grew more and more tired, and though her head often sunk upon her breast, she still tried to keep on with the work. She

must wait her father's return to give him the drink prescribed by the physician, or he would surely forget it. At the end of the second hour sleep overcame her, and it seemed to her that the chair on which she sat fell apart, and she began to sink, slowly at first, but then faster and faster, into a deep chasm. Seeking help, she looked upward, but could see only the face of her father, gazing indifferently upon her. In the course of her dream she called him again and again, but for a long time he did not seem to hear. Finally, he looked down, and laughed when he saw her; but instead of helping her up, gathered stones and bits of sod from the side of the chasm and threw them down upon the fingers with which she was clasping the blackberry vines and the roots growing in the clefts of the rock.

She begged him to give up the sport; she implored him to help her, but not a muscle of his face moved. The features seemed stiffened into that empty smile; truly his fatherly heart was dead, for he continued pelting her pitilessly with pebbles and bits of earth, until her hands lost their grasp, and she was sinking into the abyss. Her own cry roused her, but she did not at once waken fully. As she came out of the dream, she seemed to see clouds parting behind a soft meadow, covered with high grass and starred with flowers, on which she was lying; and near it shimmered a sea, and beyond this rose mountains with red-tinted rocks and green forests in the clear sunshine. A fair sky, over which floated silvery clouds, was above all. It was but for a moment, and the picture vanished, which was utterly unlike anything she had ever seen. She had slept but a short time, but as she rubbed her eyes it seemed that the dream had lasted for hours. One flame of her lamp had well-nigh gone out. She trimmed it, put in fresh oil, then ran to her father's room. He had not yet returned. Now she was really distressed. Had the wine of the architect destroyed his senses? Had he been seized with dizziness on the way home? In fancy she saw the corpulent man unable to rise, and perhaps dying on the ground. There was no choice. She must go to the Hall of the Muses, and see what was the matter; help him up if he had fallen; or if still at the banquet, persuade him to return home. The interests of all hung in the balance—the life of her father, support and protection for eight helpless beings.

The December night was raw. The air in the poorly protected passages was bitterly cold; but Selene tied a scarf over her head, and wrapped a mantle which had belonged to her dead mother about her shoulders. She held the lamp in one trem-

bling hand, and with the other guarded the flame from the strong draught. The heavy sandals bound under her feet woke loud echoes in the empty spaces, and excited her timidity, especially under the cupola where Ptolemy Euergetes, "the Fat," was supposed to have murdered his own son, many years before. Still she did not forget to look on all sides for her father, and she breathed more freely when she saw light stream through the cracks of a side door opening into the hall, and falling brokenly on the pavements and the walls of the last space she must pass before reaching it. Now she entered the hall, which was dimly lighted by the lamps within the sculptor's inclosure, and a few well-nigh expiring candles, which stood on sawing trestles and the boards of the table behind which her father was asleep. The deeply sonorous notes from the chest of the sleeper echoed through the empty spaces, and made her still more anxious; and the long shadows of the columns which her path must cross seemed strangely weird. She stopped in the midst of the hall to listen, and, recognizing the familiar snore, hastened onward toward the sleeping man. She shook him, she called him, she sprinkled water on his forehead, she addressed to him the most endearing epithets, such as she had heard from the lips of Arsinoe when caressing and flattering her father. As, in spite of all, he did not move, she threw the lamp-light into his face, and fancied a blue shimmer spread over his bloated countenance. Then she broke into that pitiful sobbing which had so touched the heart of Pontius a few hours before. Now there was motion behind the sculptor's screen. Pollux had worked diligently for a long time, but at length the snoring of Keraunus disturbed him. The body of his muse had already taken shape, but he needed daylight to form the head. So he let his arms drop, and drawing his bench near to a chest filled with gypsum, leaned his head upon it. But he was too much excited to sleep easily, and when he heard Selene's footfall he rose and looked out. When he saw the tall figure, with a lamp in its trembling hand, move through the hall and stop suddenly, curiosity led him to notice carefully. As Selene looked around, and the lamp-light revealed her face, he recognized the daughter of the overseer, and understood at once what she sought.

There was something touching in her efforts to waken the sleeper, but at the same time irresistibly ludicrous. Pollux was tempted to laugh. But when Selene broke into sobbing, he burst asunder a part of his frame-work, and called her by name as he approached. He begged her not to fear, as he was no ghost, but very decidedly a mortal, and, as she could see,

only the good-for-nothing but now improving son of Euphion, the gate-keeper.

“You Pollux?” asked the girl, surprised.

“I myself. But you? Can I give you help?”

“My poor father!” cried Selene. “He will not stir. He is quite stiff, and his face—oh, ye everlasting gods!”

“He who snores is not dead,” answered the sculptor.

“But the physician said—”

“He is not at all sick. Pontius has given him stronger wine than he is accustomed to use. Let him be. He sleeps, with the cushion under his head, as soundly as a child. When he began to snore I whistled as loud as a plover, for that will sometimes bring a snorer to silence; but I could as easily make the stone muses dance as waken him.”

“If we could only get him into his bed.”

“Had you four horses at hand—”

“You are just as bad as ever.”

“A little less so, Selene. You must only get used to my way of speaking. This time I only meant that both of us together are not strong enough to carry him.”

“But what am I to do? The physician said—”

“Don’t speak of the physician. I know the disease which has attacked your father. It will all be gone in the morning. Only let him sleep.”

“It is cold here.”

“Then cover him with my mantle.”

“You will freeze without it.”

“I am used to it. How long since Keraunus had anything to do with the physician?”

Selene told him of her father’s accident, and what reason she had to be anxious. Pollux listened silently, and said, in a changed tone:

“I am heartily sorry. We will put cold water on his forehead. There is a basin, and here is a cloth. Good! That is settled. I will change it every quarter of an hour, until the slaves return. Perhaps this may waken him, but if not, they can carry him home.”

“That will be disgraceful,” sighed the girl.

“Not in the least. Even the high-priest of Serapis can be unwell. Let me do it.”

“It would irritate him again should he wake. He is so very angry with you—”

“Powerful Jupiter, what great injury have I done? The gods themselves forgive the sins of the wise, and shall not a man forgive the follies of a stupid youth?”

“ You mocked him.”

“ I put in the place of the broken head of Silenus, near the gate, a head of clay which resembled him. It was my first independent work.”

“ You made it to insult my father.”

“ Truly not, Selenc; I did it for sport, and nothing else.”

“ But you know how sensitive he is.”

“ Is it fair to hold over a boy of fifteen the consequences of his wanton mirth? Had he only taken the cudgel to me, his rage would have passed off in thunder and lightning, and the air would have been clear again. But no! he cut the face from my image with his knife and crushed it slowly to pieces on the ground. He gave me one single snap of his thumb, which I honestly feel to this day, and then he scorned me, and has treated me and my parents with coldness and hardness and bitter contempt from that day to this.”

“ He is never violent, but I have seldom seen him so consumed with anger as on that occasion.”

“ Had he only reckoned with me alone, but my father was present, and that roused sharp words; then my mother added hers, and after that the hostility was complete between the little house and yours. It hurt me most that you and your sister were forbidden to come to the house and play with me.”

“ That also spoiled many pleasant hours for me.”

“ It was nice when we dressed ourselves in father’s old theater rubbish and mantles.”

“ And when you made us dolls of clay.”

“ Or when we had the Olympic games.”

“ I was always teacher when we played school with the children.”

“ Arsinoe gave you most to do.”

“ And the fun when we went fishing!”

“ When we brought home the fish my mother gave us flour and raisins to cook with them. Do you remember the feast of Adonis, and how I thrust back the plunging horse of the Numidian knight?”

“ That horse had already thrown Arsinoe over; and as we came home, mother gave you almond cakes.”

“ But your ungrateful sister took a large bite of it, leaving me only a fragment.”

“ Is Arsinoe as pretty as she then promised to become? It is two years since I have seen her. We are never discharged from work until dark. I had a job for the master in Ptolemais, which lasted eight months, and I frequently saw my parents but once in a month.”

"We go out very little, and never dare enter your house. My sister—"

"Is she very pretty?"

"I think so. When she gets a new ribbon she braids it in her hair, and then the men on the street stare at her. She is sixteen now."

"The little Arsinoe sixteen years old! How long is it since your mother died?"

"Four years and eight months."

"You remember the time well. It is hard to forget such a mother. She was a good woman, and I never met a kindlier. I know that she tried to soften your father, but did not succeed, and then she must die."

"Yes," said Selene, sadly. "How could the gods take her? They are often more cruel than the hardest of men."

"Your poor little brothers and sisters?"

The girl nodded sadly. Pollux, too, looked for awhile sadly on the ground; then he raised his head and said, cheerily:

"I have something that will make you happy!"

"Nothing can make me happy since she died."

"I know," said Pollux, "how that is. I have never forgotten the good woman; and once in a leisure hour made a bust of her from memory. I will bring it to you to-morrow."

"Oh!" exclaimed Selene; and a glance of real joy lighted her large, earnest eyes.

"That makes you happy, does it not?"

"Yes, indeed, very happy. But if my father should know that you have given it to me—"

"Do you think he would break it to pieces?"

"Though he might not break it, he would not suffer it to be in the house, when he knew it to be your work."

Pollux took the compress from the head of Keraunus, wet it, and said, as he laid it back:

"I have an idea. It is not certain that my bust would remind you of your mother. And it does not need to stand in your house. Upon the bastion which your balcony overlooks are the busts of the Ptolemaic women. Some of them are injured, and are to be put in repair. I will undertake that of Berenice, and put this head there. Then whenever you go out you can see it. Would that please you?"

"Oh, Pollux, you are a good man!"

"I told you so. I have already begun to improve. But time is flying. If I undertake the Berenice, I must put every moment to use."

“Go back to your work now. I understand wetting the compresses.”

With these words, Selene drew the mantle closer to gain freer play for her hands. As she stood there, with her slender figure and pale face, and the folds of rich stuff falling about her shoulders, opposite Pollux, he cried out, so suddenly as to startle her: “Stand still—exactly as you are. That drapery is wonderful. In the name of all the gods, do not disturb it! Let me copy it, and I shall gain in a few moments a whole day’s time for our Berenice. I can attend to the compresses at the same time.”

Without waiting her answer, he hastened behind the screen, and returned with a lamp in each hand, the tools in his mouth; then back again for the wax model, which was placed on the further corner of the table behind which Keraunus lay. The candles were put out, the lamps lighted and regulated to give the proper light. Pollux threw himself on a bench, put his legs forward, and stretched his neck, and elevated his head, throwing his crooked nose forward like a vulture which seeks its prey far in the distance, dropped his eyes, and then raised them repeatedly, as if seeking inspiration, his nails and fingertips meanwhile playing over the surface of the wax, or buried in the pliant stuff, changing what seemed already finished, and adding new points with amazing rapidity. His hands seemed to act convulsively, but deep, serene eyes, full of intense earnestness, looked out from under his heavy brows.

Selene had not in words given her permission to stand as his model; but, as if fully sharing his zeal, she remained motionless, and, when meeting his gaze, seemed to understand the earnestness of her former gay companion. For a long time neither of them moved their lips. At last, Pollux stepped backward, scanning his work with a sharp scrutiny, and said, while he rubbed the wax from his fingers:

“So it must be. Now I will put on another compress, and we will go on. If you are tired, you may rest.”

She did not accept this permission, and the work was resumed. As he carefully laid again a few folds that had become disarranged, she raised her foot to step back, but he said, earnestly:

“Stay where you are,” and she obeyed.

Pollux worked now less intently, and began to talk.

“You are very pale. Is it the effect of the lamp-light and the night without sleep?”

“I always look pale, but I am not sick.”

“I thought Arsinoe would look more like your mother, but

I find many of your features are like hers. Your faces have the same oval; the connecting lines of forehead and nose are exactly alike; your great eyes and the shape of the brows as if taken from her face. But your mouth is smaller and more finely chiseled, and she could hardly have bound so heavy a knot of hair on the back of her head. I think, too, yours is of a lighter shade."

"When a girl, she probably had fuller hair, and I know it was as light as mine in her childhood."

"They are alike in this, too, that, while not curly, it lies in soft waves over your head."

"That makes it easy to take care of."

"Are you not taller than she was?"

"I think so; but since she was fuller, she seemed shorter. Are you almost through?"

"You are tired of standing?"

"Not very."

"Then have a little more patience. Your face reminds me more and more of past years. It seems to me Time has taken a long step backward. Have you the same sensibilities?"

Selene shook her head.

"You are not happy?"

"No."

"I know well that you have heavy duties for one of your age."

"I let things go as they will."

"No. I know that you do not. You care for the brothers and sisters like a mother."

"Like a mother!" repeated Selene, her lips parting in a bitter smile.

"Of course maternal love is different from all others; but I know the father and the children have every reason to be contented."

"Perhaps the little ones and our blind Helios; but Arsinoe does what she pleases."

"You are certainly not happy, I see, and you were formerly fresh and cheerful, if not merry, like your sister."

"Formerly?"

"How sad that sounds! And yet you are young and fair, and life lies before you!"

"What a life!"

"What do you mean?" asked Pollux; and added, in a hearty tone, as he turned from his work to look on the fair, pale face: "A life that ought to be all full of love and prosperity."

The girl shook her head, and answered, rather sadly:

“ ‘Love is joy,’ says the Christian woman who oversees our work in the papyrus mill. And since my mother died I have never been joyful. I had everything in childhood. Now I come nearest to being happy when we escape dire misfortune. Whatever comes I accept, because I can not help it. My heart is empty, except when occupied by fear. I have long ceased to expect anything good in the future.”

“Girl,” cried Pollux, “what has happened to you? I comprehend only a part of what you say. How do you come in the papyrus mill?”

“Do not betray me,” said Selene. “If my father should hear—”

“He is asleep, and what you have said to me no one shall know.”

“But why should I conceal it? I go every day with Arsinoe to the papyrus mill to earn a little money.”

“Without the knowledge of your father?”

“Yes. He would rather see us starve than allow it. It is hard to practice this pious fraud, but I can not help it. Arsinoe thinks only of herself. She plays at draughts with father, and curls his hair, and dandles the children as if they were dolls, but it comes entirely upon me to provide for the necessities of all.”

“And yet you say you are without love. Fortunately no one will believe it, and I last of all. My mother was telling me of you lately, and I thought then you were just the girl to make an excellent wife.”

“And to-day?”

“To-day I know it.”

“Perhaps you are mistaken.”

“No, no, you are called Selene, and are mild and gentle, like moonlight. Names have their significance.”

“But my little brother, who has never seen the light, is called Helios.”

Pollux had spoken with great warmth, but the last words of Selene had frightened him and repressed his rising sensibility. When he did not answer her bitter outcry she said, at first coolly, but with increasing emotion: “You begin to believe what I said, and are right in doing so; for what I do for the children is not out of love or goodness, or because I prefer their welfare to my own. I inherit pride from my father, and it would be hard for me to see my brothers and sisters in rags, and to have people think us as poor as we really are. That which I most dread is sickness in the house—for then comes anxiety, which never leaves me, and which uses the last ses-

terce—for the children must not starve. I do not want to represent myself worse than I am, for it does pain me to see them suffer. But what I do for them does not bring joy—the highest emotion is fear. Do you ask what I fear? That which is possible to befall us, and I never expect good. If there is a knock at the door I think it may be a creditor. When people stare at Arsinoe on the street, I fancy dishonor is slinking stealthily behind. When my father disregards the order of the physician, I imagine we are already standing on the open street, without protection. How much I might do had I only a joyful heart! Surely I am not indolent, but I envy every woman who sits with her hands folded in her lap and is waited on by slaves; and if a fortune were to fall into my hands I would never lift a finger, but sleep until the sun was high, and let the slaves care for father and the children. My life is simply misery. And if there comes now and then a brighter hour it has passed by before I have recovered from the surprise of it.”

Pollux felt chilled, and the heart which had opened wide to his fair playmate closed again. Before he could think of the right words in which to reply, a trumpet-note rang through the hall adjoining to awaken the slumbering slaves and the workmen. Selene was frightened, and drew her mantle closer. Then begging Pollux to take care of her father and to hide the wine-jar, she hastened toward the door through which she had entered, forgetting her lamp. Pollux hastened after to light her through the passage, and begged her with words whose warmth and earnestness touched her heart, to stand once more as his model. Fifteen minutes later the overseer was lying asleep in his own bed; but Pollux, who was stretched on a cushion within his working space, could not banish from his thoughts the image of the pale girl with her benumbed soul.

Finally, however, sleep overcame him, and a friendly dream brought a vision of the pretty little Arsinoe, who, but for him, would have been trodden under the hoofs of the Numidian horse at the feast of Adonis. She seemed to offer him an almond cake that she had taken from her sister, who let it go quietly with an emotionless smile.

CHAPTER VI.

ALEXANDRIA was greatly excited.

The approaching visit of the emperor turned the thoughts of the busy throngs of citizen from the monotonous paths of daily

toil after the means of support toward hours of freedom and enjoyment.

In many factories, workshops, auditoriums and magazines the busy wheel of industry turned without cessation; for all classes and conditions were animated by the desire to make this visit of Hadrian a time of unexampled brilliancy. Whatever of inventive genius, or wealth, or beauty was to be found among them was claimed to aid in the plays and processions which were to occupy several days. The richest heathen citizens had undertaken the arrangement of the theatrical performances, a mock sea-fight, and the bloody games in the amphitheater; but the number of these was so great it was quite impossible to manage them all. And the sums required for the indispensable parts, such as the performances in the hippodrome, the ornamenting of the streets, and the entertainment of the Roman guests, was so large that even Titianus, who was accustomed to see his Roman associates play with millions, was dismayed. As viceroy, it was his duty to lend eye and ear to all. In general he gave free hand to the citizens; but more than once was forced to remonstrate against extravagance. The greatest trouble, not only to him, but to those chosen by the citizens as leaders in these demonstrations, was in harmonizing discords between heathen and Jewish citizens.

From an assembly, in which all these questions were at last definitely settled through his vigorous exertions, Titianus betook himself to the Cæsareum for the daily visit which the empress expected.

He felt rejoiced to have these preliminaries arranged, for six days had already passed since work had been commenced on the Lochias, and the time of the emperor's arrival was hastening on.

He found Sabina, as usual, on her lounge, but she sat more nearly erect to-day.

She seemed to have recovered from the effects of her sea voyage, for there was more red (paint) on her lips and cheeks, and since she had promised to receive visits from the sculptors Papias and Aristetas, had her hair arranged as in the statue of Verus Victrix made five years before.

As a copy of this statue was set up in Alexandria, some wag had scattered these words among the citizens:

"This Aphrodite is certainly victorious, for whoever sees her gets out of the way. She ought to be called the Flight-inspiring Cypris."

Titianus had scarcely recovered from the excitement of the

recent assembly when he entered the presence of the empress, whom he found in a small apartment with only her chamberlain and a few serving women.

To the respectful inquiry of the prefect as to how she found herself, she replied, with a shrug of the shoulders:

"How shall I answer? If I say *well* I should be telling an untruth; if I say *ill* I shall be surrounded by long faces, which are never agreeable. One must endure life. But just look at the doors in these rooms! It would be the end of me to stay here long." Titianus looked at the doors in surprise, and was about to express regret that she felt annoyance, but Sabina prevented him, saying:

"You men never understand what hurts us women. Our Verus is the only one who ever appreciates and sympathizes; he feels intuitively, I may say. There are thirty-five doors in my apartments; I had them counted! Thirty-five! If they were not old and of costly wood I should think some one meant to play me a trick."

"A few of them might be replaced by curtains."

"Let them alone. It is only a few plagues more or less, all through my life. Are the Alexandrians almost through with their preparations?"

"I hope so," answered Titianus, sighing. "All are trying to do their best; but in the strife to be foremost each jostles the other, and I, who stand between the opposing parties, still feel the effect of the disputes I have been forced to hear and to settle."

"So?" answered Sabina, her lips twitching as if she heard something agreeable. "Tell me about this assembly. I want amusement; for Verus, Albilla, and the others have begged permission to go and see the works on the Lochias. I am accustomed to have people find it pleasanter anywhere else than in my company. My fugitives are gone a long time; there must be much to interest them."

The prefect suppressed the annoyance he felt in thinking of the disturbance their presence would be to the workmen, and began, in a mock-tragic tone: "The first dispute arose over the arrangements for the procession."

"Step a little further back," begged Sabina, pressing a heavily ringed hand over her ear, as if in pain. The cheeks of the prefect reddened slightly, but he lowered his tone, and repeated:

"Harmony was first disturbed over the procession."

"I heard that," answered Sabina, yawning. "I am very fond of processions."

“But,” said the prefect, a man just entering his sixtieth year, with a slight touch of irritation in his tone, “it is here as at Rome and everywhere else; when such arrangements are not under the absolute control of one person, one quarrel begets another, even over the celebration of a peaceful festival.”

“It seems to vex you that they seek in this way to honor Hadrian.”

“You must be jesting. I have sought to make it as successful as possible; I have troubled myself personally, even with the details, and have had the satisfaction of harmonizing the discord. This scarcely belonged to my office.”

“I thought you not only served the state, but were a friend of my husband.”

“That I am proud to call myself.”

“Yes, Hadrian has many, very many friends, since he wore the purple. Have you got over your ill-humor? You must have grown very irritable, Titianus; the poor Julia has an uncomfortable husband.”

“She is less to be pitied than you think,” answered Titianus, with dignity, “for my office occupies me so closely that she seldom has opportunity to see me disturbed. If I have failed to hide my annoyance from you, I beg you to consider that it has risen from zeal to render Hadrian a worthy reception.”

“As if I were angry with you! But to return to your wife. Her destiny, I hear, is like my own. We poor women have nothing to expect from our husbands but the fragments after all others are served. But to your description!”

“The worst difference was over the unfortunate relations of the Jews to their fellow-citizens.”

“I hate these atrocious sects—Jew, Christian, or whatever they may be called. Do they hesitate to take their share in the reception of the emperor?”

“Quite the contrary. Alabarchos, their wealthy chief, ordered them to bear the entire cost of the naumachy, and his fellow in the faith, Artemion—”

“What? Will any one accept their money?”

“The heathen citizens are fully able to bear all the expense, which will amount to many millions of sesterces, and only wish to prevent the Jews from taking part in the processions and games.”

“They are right.”

“Allow me to ask if it be fair to forbid half the Alexandrians to show honor to their emperor?”

“Hadrian will be glad to escape that honor. To be called ‘African,’ ‘German,’ ‘Dacian,’ adds glory to our conquests,

but after the destruction of Jerusalem, Titus forbade any one to call him 'Judean.' ”

“That was because he wished to blot out all memory of the frightful slaughter consequent upon their steady resistance. The conquered people let finger from finger, limb from limb be hacked away before they would yield.”

“You speak again like a romancer. Or have these people made you their advocate?”

“I know them, and seek to do them, as well as all other citizens of this land, justice. They pay their taxes as promptly as the other citizens, and the amount is greater, for there are many rich men among them, and they are distinguished in all the trades and professions, in science, and in the arts. I measure them by the same rule as the others, and their superstition affects me no more than that of the Egyptians.”

“But they have overstepped that rule. They refused to sacrifice to Jupiter and Hera in Ælia Capitolina, the city which Hadrian built. That means they refuse loyalty to me and to my husband.”

“It is forbidden them to worship any other than their own God. Ælia was built on the site of their destroyed Jerusalem, and the statues of which you speak stand in their holiest places.”

“What is that to us?”

“You know even Caius could not force them to set up his statue in their Holy of Holies. The governor, Tetronius, confessed that to constrain was to exterminate them.”

“So let happen to them what they deserve, which is annihilation,” cried Sabina.

“Annihilate?” asked the prefect. “In Alexandria alone, almost half the citizens—that is, several hundred thousand of obedient subjects—annihilate?”

“So many!” exclaimed the empress, frightened. “That is horrible—great gods, if this man should rise against us!”

“No one has told me of this danger.”

“In Cyrenia and Salamis, on the Island of Cyprus, they have murdered ten thousand of their fellow-citizens.”

“They were terribly incensed, and were more powerful than their oppressors.”

“In their own land, there has been sedition after sedition.”

“On account of the sacrifices of which we were speaking.”

“Tinnius Rufus is now legate in Palestine, and he is not a man to be trifled with. He will know how to tame this dangerous brood.”

“Perhaps so,” answered Titianus; “but I fear he will never

reach his end through brutality, and if he should, the province will have been depopulated."

"That only proves there are too many subjects in a province."

"But never enough useful citizens."

"Seditious despisers of the gods, and useful citizens!"

"Here in Alexandria, where many of them have adopted the customs and manner of thought of the Greeks, and use their language, they are among the most loyal subjects of the emperor."

"Do they share in the festivities?"

"So far as the Greek citizens permit."

"And the naumachy?"

"It will not devolve upon them; but Artemion was allowed to provide wild animals for the amphitheater."

"And he is not avaricious?"

"You would be astonished to learn how little. The man must have the art of Midas to change stones into gold."

"Are there many such among your Jews?"

"A goodly number."

"Then I wish they might revolt, and the people themselves be destroyed, while the gold would remain."

"Meanwhile, I seek to preserve their lives, as good taxpayers."

"Does Hadrian share this wish?"

"Without doubt."

"Your successor may perhaps teach him other ideas."

"He acts always according to his own judgment, and I am still in office," said Titianus, proudly.

"May the God of the Jews long preserve you there," retorted Sabina, with scorn.

CHAPTER VII.

BEFORE Titianus could reply the door of the apartment opened, and the Pretor Lucius Aurelius Verus, his wife Domitia Lucilla, the young Balbilla, and Florus the historian entered. The four were much excited, and wished to tell the empress at once what they had seen, but she waved them off with her hand, whispering:

"No, no, not yet; I am exhausted—this long absence, and then—give me the smelling salts, Verus. Leukippe, a goblet of water with fruit syrup, but not so sweet as usual."

The Greek slave hastened to obey her order, and while the empress held the carved onyx vial to her nose, she said:

“Is it not a small eternity, Titianus, that we have been discussing state affairs? You all know that I am outspoken, and can not be silent when I hear preposterous views. While you were absent I have been obliged to speak and to hear very much which has robbed me of strength. I only wonder you do not find me in worse condition. Since what can be more exhausting to a woman than to maintain herself with firmness against a man who advocates opposite opinions. Give me the drink, Leukippe.”

While the empress was sipping the contents of her glass Verus approached the prefect, and asked in a whisper:

“Have you been long alone with Sabina, my cousin?”

“Yes,” answered Titianus, biting his lip and grinding his teeth, and doubling his fist in a manner the pretor could not fail to understand, who said in a low tone:

“It is a great pity; and just now she has hours—”

“What are you saying of hours?” asked Sabina, taking the cup from her lips.

“Those,” answered Verus, “in which I am not troubled by any business of senate or of state. Who but you can I thank for this?”

With these words he came nearer, took the empty cup from her hand and passed it to the Greek, with the manner of an affectionately devoted son toward a suffering mother. The empress nodded to him several times, in token of her gratitude, and asked, with an influx of cheerfulness in her tone:

“Well, what did you find on the Lochias?”

“Wonderful things,” exclaimed Balbilla, clapping her hands. “The old palace is a veritable swarm of bees, or an ant heap. White, brown, and black arms—more than we could count, vied with each other in activity. The hundreds of workmen nowhere seemed to be in each other’s way. And as the stars, guided in their course by the wisdom of the gods, have their paths through the ‘gracious night’ without interference, so all this host was guided by one small man.”

“I must interpose in behalf of the architect, Pontius. He is certainly a man of ordinary stature.”

“Then, we will say, to satisfy your sense of justice,” returned Balbilla, “this host was guided by an ordinary sized man with a papyrus roll in his right hand, and a pencil in the left. Does that description suit you better?”

“You can never fail to please me,” answered the pretor.

“Let Balbilla go on,” commanded the empress.

“We have seen chaos,” said Balbilla; “but there are

glimpses of an orderly creation discernible through the present confusion. It is visible to the eyes."

"And occasionally manifested to the feet," added Verus, laughing. "Had it been dark, and the workmen worms, we might have crushed half of them, they so swarmed over the pavement."

"All sorts of things," said Balbilla, quickly. "Some were polishing spots that had become damaged; others laid new pieces of mosaic in the empty beds, out of which the originals had been stolen; and skillful artists painted bright figures on plaster surfaces. Every statue and column was surrounded by a scaffolding that reached to the roof, and on them all men were climbing, who jostled each other, like the sailors who climb the hostile ship in a sham fight on the water."

The cheeks of the handsome girl were flushed with memory of the lively scene, and while she spoke and gesticulated the lofty structure upon her head trembled.

"Your description begins to be poetic," broke in the empress. "Perhaps the muse will inspire you to put it into rhyme."

"All the nine are on the Lochias," said the pretor. "We saw eight; but the ninth—she who protects star-gazers and the fine arts—the lofty Urania—had in place of a head—permit me to ask you to guess what—godlike Sabina?"

"Well?"

"A wisp of straw."

"Alas," sighed the empress. "Do you think, Florus, any of the learned men, or the versifiers, have ever resembled this Urania?"

"At any rate," answered Florus, "we are more careful than the gods to hide the contents of our heads with a thick skull, and with more or less hair."

"That sounds almost," said Balbilla, pointing to her own thick curls, "as if I had special need to cover what is hidden beneath my hair."

"The Lesbian swan was also called 'she of the beautiful locks,'" answered Florus.

"And you are our Sappho," said the pretor's wife, pressing the arm of the girl to her breast.

"Honestly, will you put into verse what you have seen to-day?" asked the empress.

Balbilla looked at the floor, and then answered brightly:

"It is natural for me to express all the peculiar things I meet in rhyme. It would delight me to do this."

"But follow the counsel of the grammarian Apollonius.

Since you are the Sappho of our time you ought to write, not in the Attic-Greek, but in the old Æolian dialect."

Verus laughed. The empress, whose diaphragm did not act vigorously, tittered, but Balbilla answered in a lively manner:

"Do you believe I should not succeed in such an attempt? To-morrow I will begin to study the Æolian dialect."

"Let that go. Your simpler songs have always been the best," said Domitia Lucilla.

"You shall not laugh at me," said Balbilla, willfully. "In a few weeks I shall know how to use that dialect, for I can do all I attempt—yes, all."

"What a stubborn head is hidden under those curling locks," exclaimed the empress, graciously threatening with uplifted finger.

"And what power of comprehension," added Florus. "Your teacher in grammar and meter told me that his best pupil was a woman of noble descent, and a poetess besides—in fact, Balbilla."

The girl blushed at these words, and asked, in a transport of joy:

"Do you flatter, or has Hephastion really said that?"

"Alas," cried the pretor, "Hephastion was also my tutor, and I must take my place below Balbilla. But it is nothing new to me, for the Alexandrian said the same thing; and I am not vain enough of my verses to dispute his verdict."

"You follow different models," said Florus. "Ovid is your pattern, Sappho hers. Your style is Latin, hers is Greek. Do you always carry the love songs of Ovid."

"Always," answered Verus, "as Alexander his Homer."

"And out of respect to the master your husband tries to adapt himself to those precepts, under the protection of Venus," added the empress, turning toward Domitia Lucilla.

The slender and elegant woman answered only by a light shrug of the shoulders this not very friendly remark, but Verus said, as he stooped to gather up the sliken cover and spread it again over her limbs.

"My best fortune is in the favor of the 'Verus Victrix.' But we are not yet at the end of our story; our Lesbian swan met another bird on the Lochias, in the person of a pastic artist."

"How long since birds have been reckoned among the sculptors?" asked Sabina. "At the highest they might be likened to woodpeckers."

"When they work in wood," laughed Verus; "but our artist is an assistant of Papias, and handles noble stuff in good

style. This time certainly he has gathered remarkable materials for his statue."

"Verus has certainly given a good name to our new acquaintance," broke in Balbilla, "because he was whistling a song so loud and clear as we approached the inclosure behind which he was at work that the sound ran through the wide, empty hall. A nightingale could not have done better. We stood still and listened until the merry fellow, who was utterly unconscious of our presence, had finished; and when he heard the architect's voice he called out, 'Now Urania must have her head; I had an idea of it, and with three dozen strokes could have finished it, but Papias said he had one at the shop. I am curious about the honey-sweet face he may please to set upon my Torso by the day after to-morrow. Send me a good model for the bust of Sappho, which I have undertaken to replace. I am haunted by a thousand goblins of ideas, and am so excited. What will become of my work?'"

Balbilla had attempted to imitate the deep voice of a man in repeating these words, and when she saw that the empress was amused, went on in her lively way:

"All this came so fresh and so merry right out of his heart that it did me good. We all went up to the screen and tried to persuade the sculptor to show us his work."

"And you found—?" asked Sabina.

"He positively refused to break through his hedge," answered the prefect; "but Balbilla coaxed it out of him. And really the tall fellow does know something. The drapery was wonderfully expressive, rich, and of remarkable delicacy. Urania holds the mantle firmly about herself as if really using it for protection against the cool night air, while gazing at the stars. When he has finished this muse he has some other statues to repair. We saw a head he was to place to-day on a Berenice; and for the Sappho I suggested Balbilla as a model."

"A good idea," said Sabina. "If the bust prove to be a success, we will take it to Rome."

"I will gladly sit to him," said Balbilla; "the hearty fellow pleases me."

"And Balbilla pleases him," added the pretor's wife. "He gazed at her in astonishment, and she promised to sit three hours for him to-morrow, if you would allow it."

"He begins with the head," broke in Verus. "What a fortunate fellow is an artist! She let him turn her head, and arrange the folds of her peplum, and scarcely guarded her own garments from the splashes of gypsum and colored paint,

while I, who would so gladly have assisted, was never once allowed to lift her over the very worst places."

Balbilla blushed, and said, a little irritated, "Really, Verus, I can not allow you to speak so with me, and that you must understand once for all, it is not difficult for me to avoid muddy spots without any assistance."

"You are too strict," interrupted the empress, with an unpleasant laugh. "Ought she not, Domitia Lucilla, to give your husband the right to be serviceable?"

"If the empress considers it consistent with propriety," answered the lady addressed, shrugging her shoulders and with a significant motion of the hands. Sabina understood her meaning and said, while suppressing a yawn:

"In our day one must be indulgent toward a husband who has chosen the love songs of Ovid for his intimate companion."

"What has happened, Titianus?"

While Balbilla was relating her interview with the sculptor Pollux, a letter requiring immediate attention had been brought by a chamberlain to the prefect. He retired to another part of the room, broke the seal, and had just finished reading it, when met by the question of the empress. Sabina's small eyes saw everything that happened in her neighborhood, and she had noticed that while reading the prefect moved uneasily. Therefore it contained something important.

"A pressing letter," he answered, "calls me back to the prefecture. I must say farewell, and hope soon to be able to bring you agreeable tidings."

"What is in your letter?"

"Important news from the province."

"May I ask particularly?"

"I am sorry that I can not answer your question. The emperor expressly commands me to keep the matter secret. His dispatch requires immediate attention, and I am forced to take my leave at once."

Sabina returned his parting salutation with icy coldness, and had herself at once conducted to an inner apartment to be dressed for the evening meal. Balbilla accompanied her. Florus betook himself to the "Olympian table," the excellent eating-house of Lykortas, of whom the Roman epicure had related marvels.

When Verus was left alone with his wife he approached her, asking in a friendly manner:

"Shall I escort you to your dwelling?"

Domitia had flung herself upon a cushion, and, with her face covered by both hands, gave no answer.

“Will you go now?” repeated the pretor. As she still maintained silence he stepped nearer, laid his hand upon her shapely fingers, and said:

“I believe you are angry with me.”

She pushed his hand lightly away, saying:

“Let me alone.”

“I am sorry that I must do that,” sighed Verus. “Business calls me into the city, and I shall—”

“And you will go to search for new beauties among the Alexandrians, who so bewitched you last evening. I knew that.”

“There are here women of unusual grace,” answered Verus, composedly: “white, brown, copper-colored, black—all charming in their own way. One is never weary of admiring them.”

“And your wife?” asked Lucilla, taking a position opposite to him.

“My wife? Truly, my fairest, wife is an honorable title, and has nothing to do with the frivolities of life. How could I pronounce your name in the same hour with that of these poor children, who only serve to amuse an idle hour?”

Domitia Lucilla was accustomed to hear such words, but this time they seemed to hurt her. But she concealed the pain, and, crossing her arms, spoke with decision and dignity.

“Go on to the end with Ovid and the love-gods if you choose, but do not attempt to crush another innocent under your wheels.”

“Do you mean Balbilla?” asked Verus, laughing. “She knows very well how to take care of herself, and has quite too much spirit to be caught in the toils of Eros. That little son of Venus does not interfere with such good friendship as ours.”

“Dare I believe you?”

“My word upon it. I want nothing from her but pleasant words,” said he, extending his hand toward his wife. Lucilla only touched it lightly, and then said:

“Send me back to Rome. I long more than I can tell you in words after my children, especially our boy.”

“It can not be,” said Verus, earnestly. “Not now, but, I hope, in a few weeks.”

“Why not earlier?”

“Do not ask me.”

“A mother has the right to know why she is separated from her son in his cradle.”

“That cradle stands in the house of your mother, and she cares for our little one. Have patience then, for that I am

seeking to gain for you and for myself, and no less for our son, is so great that it might silence years of longing."

The last words were spoken lightly, yet with a dignity seen in him only at rare moments. Lucilla seized his right hand, before he was through speaking, in both hers, and asked, anxiously:

"Do you seek the purple?"

He nodded affirmatively.

"Is it for that reason?"

"What?"

"Sabina and you—"

"Not alone for that. She is hard and sharp toward others, but even as a boy she only showed me kindness."

"She hates me."

"Patience, Lucilla; have patience. There will come a day when the daughter of Nigrinus will be wife of the Cæsar, and the former empress— But I will not say that aloud. I am, as you know, under great obligations to Sabina, and honestly wish the emperor a long life."

"And the adoption?"

"Hush! He is thinking of it, and his wife desires it."

"Can it perhaps come soon?"

"Who can tell at this moment what the emperor may do within an hour; but perhaps the decision may be made on the thirtieth of December."

"On your birthday?"

"He asked for that day, and is casting my horoscope."

"Then will the stars decide our fate?"

"Not the stars alone. Hadrian must also be persuaded to interpret it in my favor."

"How can I help you?"

"Show yourself exactly as you are in all intercourse with the emperor."

"Thank you for these words, and I will not ask to leave you. Might it be more than a mere post of honor to be the wife of Verus, I would not wish for the added dignity of wife to a Cæsar."

"I will not go to the city this evening, but stay with you. Are you contented?"

"Yes, yes," she cried, and raised her arms to throw them about the neck of her handsome husband, but he held them back, and said:

"Let that pass. To play lover will help nothing toward gaining the purple."

CHAPTER VIII.

TITIANUS commanded his charioteer to drive to the Lochias. As the road thither passed his own palace he ordered a halt; for the letter hidden in the folds of his toga contained news which would probably prevent his return home before the following morning. Without delaying to listen to the various persons waiting for him with messages or petitions, or to receive orders, he passed quickly through the crowd toward the apartments of his wife. She met him on the way, for she had heard his footstep, and hastened toward him.

“I was not deceived,” she said, with hearty accent. “How delightful that you could get away earlier than usual! I did not expect you before the end of the evening meal.”

“I have come only to go again,” answered Titianus, entering the room. “Please send for a piece of bread and a cup of mixed wine. But there stands already what I need. Yes, you are right; I was not so long as usual with Sabina, but she contrived to put as many disagreeable words into the interview as if we had been half a day together. In five minutes I must leave you to return—only the gods know when. It is hard to say it, but all our trouble, and pains, and haste, and the careful labor of the poor Pontius, are in vain.”

With these words the prefect threw himself upon a cushion, and his wife brought the refreshment for which he had asked, saying, as she passed her hand over his hair:

“Poor man! Has Hadrian concluded, after all, to go to the Cæsareum?”

“No. Leave us, Syra. You shall see. Please let me hear again this letter from the emperor.”

Julia, the wife of Titianus, unrolled the papyrus and read:

“Hadrian, to his friend Titianus, Governor of Egypt. Profound secrecy:—Hadrian greets Titianus, as he for years has so often done, at the beginning of a business dispatch, with only half a heart. But to-morrow he hopes to greet this dear friend of his youth, and his present wise deputy, not only with whole soul, but also with hand and mouth.

“But to speak plainer: I shall be in Alexandria to-morrow, the 15th December, with only Antinous, my slave-master, and Phlegon, the private secretary. We shall land in a little harbor on the Lochias, toward evening, and my vessel will be known by a great silver star on the beak. Should it be dark

before we arrive you will know by the three red lanterns at the top of the mast what friend is approaching.

“The learned men you sent to entertain me, and get more time to put the old nest in order, where I have been longing to roost with the birds of Minerva, and who I hope are not yet all driven away, I have sent home, that Sabina may not fail of entertainment, or these distinguished men be not too long interrupted in their work.

“I do not need them. If, perchance, you are not the person who sent them, I beg pardon. An error in such cases carries something of humiliation; but it is easier to explain what has already happened than to represent adequately what is expected in the future.

“I will gladly compensate these clever men for their useless journey, and dispute this question with them and their associates in the museum. The grammarian, whose learning stands out at the tip of every hair, and who sits still much more than is good for him, will have had his life lengthened by the trip.

“We shall come in plain clothes, and will sleep on the Lochias. You know that I have rested more than once on the bare ground, and when it is necessary can sleep as well on a mat as a bolster. I bring my pillow. This is my great Molossian, whom you already know. There will be some little room, where I can make observations for the coming year without disturbance. I trust you to guard my secret; and beg, as only friend and emperor may, that literally no one shall know my plans. Also, not the slightest preparation shall disclose whom you expect. I can not command my dear Titianus, but appeal to his heart to fulfill my wish. I rejoice in the thought of seeing you again, and amuse myself with the confusion I shall find on the Lochias. You shall introduce me to the artists (of whom there are doubtless a swarm at present) as the architect Claudius Venator, from Rome, come to assist Pontius by his counsel. This Pontius, who planned such fine buildings for Herodes Atticus, I have met at the dwelling of the wealthy sophist, and he will certainly recognize me. Share your knowledge of my plans with him. He is a reliable man, no gossip or any simpleton, who will forget himself. Let him into the secret, but not until my ship is in sight. May all go well with you.”

“Now, what do you say to that?” asked Titianus, as he took the letter from her hand. “Is it not more than vexatious? Our work was progressing so finely.”

“But,” answered Julia, with a shrewd smile, “it might not have been finished. As things now stand, that is no matter, Hadrian will appreciate the good-will. I am rather glad of it, for it lifts a heavy responsibility from already overburdened shoulders.”

“You always see the right,” cried the prefect; “I am glad I came in, for now I shall expect the emperor with much lighter heart. Let me lock up this letter, and then good-bye. This absence may cost you more hours of loneliness, and me many a day’s rest.”

Titianus extended his hand, which his wife held fast in both her own, saying:

“Before you go, I want to say that I feel very proud.”

“That is your right.”

“You have not bound me to silence by a single word.”

“Because you have been tested. Still you are a woman, and a handsome one.”

“An old grandmother, with whitening hair.”

“And yet, statelier and more graceful than many younger who are much admired.”

“You will constrain me in my old age to exchange pride for vanity.”

“Not in the least. I have been looking at you with critical eyes, and thinking of Sabina’s lament over the handsome Julia. But where is there another woman of your age with a prouder bearing or more faultless features. So clear a forehead, such deep, kind eyes, such well-shaped arms—”

“Hush!” cried Julia, “you make me blush.”

“May I not rejoice that this grandmother from Rome, who is my wife, can blush so easily? You are quite different from the other women.”

“Because you are so unlike ordinary men.”

“Flatterer! Since the children are all gone we seem again just married.”

“There is no apple of discord in this house.”

“For the dearest, it is above all things most natural to be zealous. But once more I must say good-bye.”

Titianus kissed the forehead of his wife and hastened to the door; but Julia called him back to say:

“I send daily a meal to Pontius. This evening the supply shall be threefold. I can do so much for the emperor.”

“An excellent idea.”

“Then good-bye.”

“We shall meet again, when the gods and the emperor permit.”

* * * * *

When the prefect arrived at the spot indicated by the letter, there was no vessel in sight with a silver star on the beak-head. The sun went down, and still nothing was to be seen of the three red lanterns. The harbor master in whose house Titianus was waiting for the famous architect from Rome coming to assist Pontius by his counsel, saw nothing uncalled for in this attention. The whole city knew that the old Ptolemaic palace was being put in order for the emperor, with unexampled haste and with large outlay of money.

While waiting, Titianus thought of the young sculptor, Pollux, and of his mother in the little house at the gate.

Considerate as he always was, a messenger was dispatched to ask Doris to wait his coming to the palace, even to a late hour. "Advise her on your own account, and not as coming from me, to have her house lighted and in good order, for perhaps I may go in."

No one on the Lochias had any suspicion of the honor awaiting the old palace. After Verus, his wife, and Balbilla had left, Pollux worked diligently for some time, then coming out of his cage to stretch his limbs, he called to Pontius, who stood near a scaffolding.

"I must either rest or undertake a new job. One is just as good as the other. Do you find it so?"

"Always," answered Pontius, and went on with the directions he was giving to some slaves, who were placing a new capital on a Corinthian pillar.

"Do not disturb yourself," said Pollux. "But I want to ask you to say to my master, Papias, if he come in with Gabinius, the dealer in relics, that he will find me on the round bastion, which we inspected together yesterday. I am going to place a new head on the Berenice. My apprentice must have finished the preliminaries some time ago; but the fellow came into the world with two left hands, and since that throws one eye out of place, all straight things appear crooked, and, according to the laws of optics, all crooked things straight. He has, perhaps, placed the wooden support for the new head obliquely. Since no historian has told us that Berenice carried her head to one side, like the old color-grinder yonder, I must look after its standing straight. In half an hour I think the clever queen can no longer rank among the headless women."

"Where did you get the new head?" asked Pontius.

"Out of the secret archives of memory," answered Pollux; "have you seen it?"

"Yes."

“Does it please you?”

“Very much.”

“Then it is worthy to live,” sung Pollux. As he left the hall he nodded to the architect, and stuck a pink behind his ear, which he had picked that morning from his mother’s garden plot.

He found that the apprentice had done his work on the bastion better than he feared, but Pollux did not feel satisfied with his own arrangement. As the busts now stood, their backs were toward the balcony of the overseer, and the only reason why he had been willing to resign possession of this beloved head was to give pleasure to his old playmate. But he found that it was only their own weight which held the busts on their pedestals, and resolved so to alter the arrangement of all that his favorite might occupy the desired position.

To accomplish this he called a few slaves to assist in the exchange.

The unusual echoes waked in this lonely place excited the curiosity of one pair of inquisitive eyes, that had already peeped out to watch the work of the apprentice, but retreated again upon seeing the bedaubed workman.

This time their owner stood still, observing the movements of the slaves directed by Pollux. He stood, at first, with his back toward her, but in placing the bust upon its pedestal, faced the balcony. Immediately a clear voice cried out: “Surely that is the tall Pollux! Oh, how glad I am!” With these words the girl on the balcony clapped her hands, and as the sculptor nodded in reply, exclaiming: “And you are the little Arsinoë? Everlasting gods! can that be the child?” raised herself on tiptoe to appear as tall as possible, and said, as she returned his nod: “I am not yet fully grown, but you are wonderfully dignified with the beard on your chin, and your eagle nose. Selene told me yesterday you were working here with the others.”

The eye of the artist was struck by the appearance of the girl. There are poetic natures whose imagination incorporates instantly all unusual experiences into a story or a poem. So Pollux connected every beautiful face or figure he chanced to meet with his special art.

“A Galatea, a perfect Galatea!” thought he. “One might fancy her just risen out of the sea, so fresh, so joyous, so full of life. The little curls on her forehead seem still floating on the water. Now she bends over for the greeting. How perfect is every motion! It is as if the very daughter of Nereus rose and sunk with each wave. She is like both Selene and

her mother in the shape of her head and the Grecian cut of her features; but the elder sister is like the statue of Prometheus before it was possessed of a soul. And Arsinoe is the same masterpiece after the heavenly fire was flowing in her veins."

During the few seconds occupied by these thoughts the girl became impatient of his silence, and cried out:

"You scarcely answer my greeting. What are you doing there?"

"Look!" he replied, drawing the cover from the bust.

After a moment of silence she cried loudly, "My mother! my mother!" and hastened back into the chamber.

"Now she will call her father and spoil all Selene's pleasure," thought Pollux, while he moved the heavy marble into exact position. "But let him come. I command here now, and Keraunus will not dare disturb that which belongs to the emperor." He stood with crossed arms before the bust, and said to himself: "Patchwork, pitiable patchwork; we seem to be making a garment for the emperor of rags and shreds; to be upholsterers and not artists. Were it not for Hadrian, and for Domitia, with her children, I would never again lift a finger for this kind of work."

The way from the overseer's dwelling led through passages and over some flights of stairs; but it was scarcely a moment after Arsinoe disappeared from the balcony before she stood beside Pollux. With flushed cheeks, she pressed him away from his position, and placed herself on the same spot, to gaze at the beloved features. Tears ran down over her cheeks. She paid no heed to Pollux, or to the workmen and slaves, who had stared as she hastened past them like a spirit. Pollux did not disturb her. His heart was touched by her emotion; and he thought it was well worth while to have such warm and enduring love as had this poor dead woman on the pedestal. After gazing long on the beloved features, Arsinoe had become quiet, and turning to Pollux, she asked:

"Have you made it?"

"Yes," answered he, casting down his eyes.

"And all from memory?"

"Certainly."

"Do you know what I am thinking?"

"Please tell me."

"The prophetess at the feast of Adonis was right in saying that half the work of a sculptor is from the gods."

"Arsinoe!" exclaimed Pollux, inspired to courage by her words, as if a fresh spring had gushed up in his heart, and

gratefully seized her hand; but she drew it away, for her sister Selene had come out on the balcony, and called her. Pollux had placed the bust here for the sake of his old playfellow, and not for Arsinoe; and now her look seemed to chill the emotions of his soul.

"Here is the bust of your mother," he cried in a tone of explanation, pointing toward it.

"I see it," she answered, with coolness. "By and by I will look at it nearer. Come back, Arsinoe; father wishes to speak with you."

As Selene went into the chamber she shook her head, murmuring:

"Pollux said it was to be mine; for once I was to have something, but even this joy has been spoiled."

CHAPTER IX.

THE overseer of the palace, to whom Selene called her younger sister, had just returned from the assembly of citizens, and the old black who always followed him took the crocus-colored pallium from his shoulders and the golden fillet from his head. Keraunus seemed heated, and his eyes to be starting from their sockets, while beads of perspiration stood on his forehead. He scarcely answered the pleasant greeting of Arsinoe, and walked up and down the room for some time before opening the important matters for which he had summoned his daughters. He puffed out his cheeks and crossed his arms, and Selene had become anxious, and Arsinoe impatient, when at last he began:

"Have you heard of the festival to be celebrated in honor of the emperor?"

Selene nodded affirmatively, and her sister cried out: "Of course we have! Have you engaged places for us upon the benches of the council?"

"Do not interrupt me," said the overseer in a surly tone. "The question is not one of looking on. All citizens have been called on to let their daughters take part in the festivities, and the number of all such has been asked."

"Shall we then have a share in the fun?" asked Arsinoe, clapping her hands with joy.

"I wished to retire before this call came, but the shipwright, Tryphon, who has his workshop near the king's harbor, held me back, and cried out in the assembly that his sons told him I had two handsome daughters. How did they know that?"

With these words Keraunus elevated his gray eyes, and his face flushed to the roots of his hair. Selene shrugged her shoulders, but Arsinoe said:

"We often pass the workshop of Tryphon, but we do not know him or his sons. Have you ever seen them, Selene? It is very polite of him to call us handsome."

"No one has a right to trouble himself about your looks unless he comes to ask you of me in marriage," answered Keraunus, surly as ever.

"What did you answer Tryphon?" asked Selene.

"I did what was incumbent on me. Your father governs a palace, which now belongs to Rome, and its Emperor Hadrian will also be my guest in this dwelling of my fathers; and can I therefore do less than share with other citizens in whatever festivities the council decide to celebrate in his honor?"

"So then we may do it?" asked Arsinoe, going toward her father in a caressing manner.

Keraunus was in no humor for caresses, and pushed her back with a cross "let me alone," and went on to say:

"If Hadrian should ask: 'Keraunus, where were your daughters during my days of honor?' and I should be forced to answer: 'They were not among the daughters of the noble citizens,' it would be an insult to the Cæsar, toward whom I am, in the main, well disposed. I thought over all these things before giving your names, with the promise that you would be at the assembly of women in the little theater. You will meet there the noblest women of the city, and the first artists will decide in what part of the celebration you had best take part."

"But, father," cried Selene, "how can we show ourselves there in our simple garments, and whence will come money to buy others?"

"We can dress in clean white woolen robes, and make them pretty enough with fresh ribbons to compare with any of the other girls," asserted Arsinoe, pressing in between her father and sister.

"It is not that which troubles me," answered the overseer, "but the costumes, the costumes. Only the expense of dressing the poorer class will be borne by the council, and we do not want to be counted among them. You understand me, my children."

"I shall take no share in the procession," said Selene, decidedly, but Arsinoe fell in with the word:

"To be poor is certainly inconvenient and disagreeable, but not disgraceful. The noblest Romans of the ancient time counted it an honor to die poor. We can always boast of our

Macedonian origin, even though the city pay for our costumes."

"Hush!" cried the overseer. "This is not the first time I have heard you express such low sentiments. The disadvantage of poverty can be endured by the noble, but the only real profit it brings is after he himself has ceased to be conscious of it." It cost the overseer much effort to bring out ideas so foreign to his own sentiments; and which he did not remember to have heard expressed by another person, and at the close he let himself sink, with every sign of exhaustion, upon the cushion of a divan which occupied a corner recess of the spacious apartment.

Cleopatra had probably reclined upon this at her feasts with Antony, for this very spot had been the dining-room of the distinguished lovers. The floor of the whole room had an elaborate pattern wrought into the paving; but in this recess stones of various colors were so arranged to make a painting of such exceeding beauty and fineness of execution that Keraunus had forbidden his children to walk over it.

This was less from any appreciation of the artistic work than because his father, and his grandfather before him, had each made the same prohibition.

The scene represented in this mosaic was the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, and the divan covered only a row of lovely cupids, which made an outside border to this noble picture.

Keraunus ordered his daughter to bring him a glass of wine, but she diluted it with fruit syrup. After drinking half of it with many expressions of disgust at the mixture, he asked:

"Would you like to know the cost of a single costume if we do not fall far below the others?"

"Please tell us," answered Arsinoe, anxiously.

"Philius, the tailor, who works for the theater, says it is impossible to furnish one under seven hundred drachmas."*

"You can not think seriously of such an outlay!" cried Selene. "We have nothing, and I am sure no one will lend to us."

The younger daughter stared blankly at her finger-tips, and said nothing; but the tears swimming in her eyes betrayed her feelings. Keraunus was pleased with this dumb evidence of her sympathy with his own desire to have a share in the festivities at any price. He forgot his late criticism upon her low sentiments, and said:

"The little one has always a sense of what is suitable. As

* One drachma is worth about fifteen cents.

to you, Selene, I wish to remind you that I am your father, and that I can not endure your admonitory tone. You have acquired it through intercourse with the children, and toward them it is quite proper. Fourteen hundred drachmas seem at first thought a large sum, but if one purchases the stuff and the ornaments wisely, it can be returned to the merchant, after the festival, perhaps with a profit."

"With a profit!" cried Selene, bitterly. "Not the half, or even a quarter will be paid for the old things! And if you should turn me out of the house for it I will not help plunge the family into deeper misery. I will have nothing to do with the sport."

This time the face of Keraunus did not flush; he was not violent. But he looked up composedly, and not without an expression of contentment, comparing one daughter with the other. He was accustomed to regard Selene as the practical, Arsinoe as the pretty one; but since only through the satisfaction of her vanity could he reach his own end, he said:

"Then you can stay with the children. We will excuse you on the ground of poor health; and really, girl, you do look pale enough to frighten one. I shall only provide the means for Arsinoe."

The dimples became visible once more in her cheeks, while the lips of Selene were colorless, as she exclaimed:

"But, father, neither the baker nor the butcher have received one sesterce for two months, and yet you will throw away seven hundred drachmas!"

"Throw away!" repeated Keraunus, disturbed, but not in a passion. "I have already forbidden you to speak in that manner to me. The wealthiest young men of the city will take part in these festivities. Arsinoe is handsome, and perhaps some one of them may choose her as a wife. Do you call it throwing away when a father is seeking a worthy husband for his child? Besides, what do you really know of my means?"

"We have nothing, therefore I can know nothing of them," cried the girl, quite beside herself.

"No!" exclaimed Keraunus, stretching himself, and with a supercilious smile, "is that nothing which lies in the cupboard yonder, and also on the window-sill? Out of love to you I am willing to relinquish all. The onyx clasp, the ring, the golden fillet, and the girdle, certainly—"

"They are only plated silver," broke in Selene, without mercy. "You sold the genuine after mother's death."

"It was necessary that she should be cremated according to

our rank," answered Keraunus. "I do not like to recall those sorrowful days."

"Do think of them, father!"

"Hush! That which belongs to my personal adornment I ought not to relinquish; for I must meet the emperor as he whom I am. But the value of that bronze Cupid, the carved ivory cup of Plutarch, and especially the painting yonder, which the former owner assured me was done by Apelles here in Alexandria, can be used for this purpose. We shall soon learn what they are worth, for, as if the gods ordered it, I met on way home Gabinius, the dealer in relics, from Nicaa. He promised, after finishing his business with the architect, to come in here and look at my treasures; and he will pay ready money for anything he takes. My Apelles is well worth ten talents; but if he gives me only a half, or a quarter of that sum, I shall be satisfied. Then, for once, Selene, I shall insist on your enjoying a pleasure."

"We will see," answered the pale girl, shrugging her shoulders; and Arsinoe cried:

"Show him also the sword, which you always say once belonged to Antony, and if he gives much for it, you can buy me a bracelet."

"Selene shall have one, too. But I expect little from the sword; it will hardly be considered genuine. Yet there are many other things. Hark! that must be his knock. Quick, Selene, help me on with the chiton! My band, Arsinoe. They always give a higher price to one who appears in good circumstances than to a poor man. I ordered the slave to detain him in the front apartment. That is done in all the best houses."

The dealer in relics was a small and meager man, who had gained distinction and wealth through his own shrewdness and diligence. He was regarded as the highest authority in discriminating between false and genuine articles. No man had better eyes than he, but he was rough in intercourse with those from whom he had nothing to expect, though polite, even to fawning, where he had the prospect of gain, and he possessed an immense fund of patience. He constrained himself to an air of conviction as the overseer assured him he was rather tired of guarding these small treasures; he did not propose to part with them for the sake of the money; still, he would like to show them to an expert, and was willing to let them go should a sufficient sum be offered. One piece after another passed through the fine fingers of Gabinius, and were laid aside. The man was very silent, and shook his head each time he put

down an article. As Keraunus related when this or that had originated, he replied only by a faint "So?" or "Do you think so?" or "Indeed!"

After the last article had been scrutinized Keraunus asked:
"Well, what do you think?"

The beginning of the sentence rang confidently, but the end expressed anxiety; for the dealer smiled and shook his head once more before he said:

"All very pretty, but nothing of any special value. I advise you to keep them, since they are precious in your eyes, while I have little occasion for such."

Keraunus avoided meeting the eye of Selene, who had anxiously watched the dealer; but Arsinoe, who had also been attentive to his every movement, pointing to her father's Apelles, cried out:

"And is this painting of no value?"

"I am sorry that I can not assure such a beautiful young lady that it is a treasure of inestimable worth," answered the dealer, stroking his whiskers. "But, unfortunately, it is only a weak imitation. The original is in the Cothurnus, a villa of Pliny, on the Lake of Como. I have no call for such articles."

"And this carved goblet," asked Keraunus. "It belonged to Plutarch, as I can prove, and was probably a gift from the Emperor Trajan."

"Certainly it is the prettiest thing in your collection," answered Gabinius; "but four hundred drachmas is really more than it is worth."

"And this Cyprian cylinder with the fine engraving?"

The overseer put out his hand, trembling with excitement, to take up the polished crystal, but pushed it to the floor. It rolled noisily over the stone floor and the smooth mosaic to the divan. Keraunus was stooping to pick it up, but both daughters held him back, while Selene cried:

"Father, you must not; the physician has strictly forbidden it."

While the grumbling overseer tried to push aside the girls the relic dealer had already dropped upon one knee to reach it. But the man was much longer in rising than he had been in stooping down, for it was some moments before he stood on his feet. Meanwhile his features had taken on a strained expression. Once more he seized the tablet describing the Apelles, and seated himself on the divan, apparently absorbed in the painting, which he held so as to hide his face from the three persons who were watching him. But he was not studying the picture. His thoughts were occupied with

the marriage scene on the mosaic at his feet, in which he had discovered a rare treasure.

Meanwhile the features of Keraunus grew more cheerful in their expression. Selene no longer held her breath, and Arsinoe tripped to the side of her father, and pulling his arm, whispered: "Don't give him the Apelles cheap, and remember my bracelet."

Now Gabinius rose, glanced again at the articles on the table, and said:

"For all these together, I can offer—let me see—twenty, fifty, four hundred, four hundred and fifty. I can offer six hundred and fifty drachmas—not one sesterce more."

"You are joking," exclaimed Keraunus.

"Not a sesterce more," repeated the dealer, coolly. "I shall make no profit, but, as a sensible man, you understand that I can not purchase at a positive loss. As to the Apelles—well—under certain conditions, it might have a value for me. The case is a little peculiar. You young ladies know that my trade has taught me to estimate things according to their real worth; yet I must ask you to leave me for a little while alone with your father. I want to talk with him about this rare picture."

Keraunus nodded to his daughters, who left the room at once. Before the door was closed, Gabinius called after them:

"May I ask you to send your slave with a bright light? It is already twilight."

"What is the matter with the painting?" asked Keraunus.

"Let us speak of other things until the lamp comes," answered Gabinius.

"Then take a seat on this divan. You will thus be giving me, as well as yourself, a pleasure."

When they were seated, Gabinius began:

"One gives up these things, with their pleasant associations, unwillingly. I know this from experience. Many people, after selling such, have offered ten times the amount I paid to get them back again—very often in vain—they are gone beyond recall. What is true of others is doubtless true of you. If you were not needing money, you would not offer these things to me."

"I must assure you—" broke in Keraunus, but the dealer did not allow him to go on.

"Ready money fails sometimes with the richest, even when they have abundance in large possessions. It is in just such cases of embarrassment that my help is wanted."

“There is my Apelles,” broke in Keraunus, once more.
 “It will belong to you, if your offer pleases me.”

“Here comes the light,” cried Gabinius, taking the three-armed lamp (into which Selene had quickly put a new wick and fresh oil) from the hand of the slave, and setting it in the very middle of the mosaic painting, turning to Keraunus as he did so with a faint, “By your permission.”

The overseer looked inquisitively at this singular proceeding, but Gabinius scarcely noticed him, and dropping again on his knees, passed his fingers over the lines of the painting.

“Have you lost something?” asked Keraunus.

“No, nothing at all. There—in the corner. Now I know enough. May I place the lamp on the table? There—and now to return to our business. I will say beforehand, that my offer will no longer be in drachmas, but in genuine Attic talents.* You know the difference. I shall offer you five; which is enough to buy a good house in some parts of the city.”

Again the blood rushed to the head of the overseer, and his heart beat so violently that for a few moments he could not speak; but at length, so far recovering that he determined this time to seize fortune by the hair and not to be overreached in the bargain, answered:

“Five talents are not enough; offer me more.”

“Then we will say six.”

“If you double that sum I will agree to it.”

“I can not offer above ten. For that sum one could build a small palace.”

“I stand by twelve.”

“Then let it be so, but not a sesterce more.”

“I shall part unwillingly from the noble work; but as a favor to you, I will give up my Apelles.”

“I am not talking about that, which is of so little value that you can continue to enjoy it. There is another thing in this room which I want, which perhaps you scarcely consider worth noticing. A wealthy lover of art has asked me to procure for him just such an article.”

“I know not what you mean.”

“Does all the furniture of this room belong to you?”

“To whom else should it belong?”

“Then you are at liberty to dispose of anything here?”

“Certainly.”

* One Attic talent is about \$1,180.

“Well, then, the twelve talents I offered are for the picture under our feet.”

“The mosaic? Why, that belongs to the palace.”

“It belongs to the dwelling, where, as I heard from your own mouth, your ancestors have dwelt more than a hundred years. I know the law, and that declares whatever has been in undisputed possession of a family for a hundred years to be inalienable.”

“The mosaic belongs to the palace.”

“No, certainly not. It is yours. To-morrow I will send you twelve talents, in gold, and a little later this evening I will take up the painting, with my son’s help, pack it, and carry it away after dark. You must look out for a carpet to cover the empty place. And it is even more important for me to keep the transaction a secret than for you.”

“The mosaic belongs to the palace,” repeated the overseer, this time in a louder voice. “Do you hear? It belongs to the palace, and I will break the bones of any one who touches it.”

With these words Keraunus rose, bending his gigantic body, while the blood rushed to his face as he threatened the dealer with his doubled fist. Gabinius stepped backward frightened, asking:

“Do you not then want my twelve talents?”

“I want—I want”—stammered Keraunus, “I want to show you how I treat those who take me for a thief. Get out, rascal, and don’t let me hear another word of the mosaic, and the theft under cover of the darkness, or I will have the lictors of the prefect at your throat, and see you put into irons, you detestable robber.”

Gabinius hurried to the door, but turned again toward the snorting and panting Colossus, crying out, as he crossed the threshold:

“Keep your wares; we will talk it over another time!”

When Selene and Arsinoe came back to the room they found their father sitting on the divan, his head hanging over his breast, and breathing with great difficulty. Terrified, they came toward him, but he cried out, brokenly:

“Water, a swallow of water—the thief—the scoundrel!”

Without the slightest hesitation he had thrust back the proposition which would have brought a competence for himself and his family; yet he would have as unhesitatingly borrowed the same, or double the amount, from either a rich or a poor man, well knowing he could never restore it. He was not at all proud of his deed; he thought it only natural for a

Macedonian nobleman. To accept the offer of the relic dealer would have been to him among the impossible things.

But where now was he to find money to procure the costume for Arsinoe?—how could he keep the promise given in the assembly? He lay for an hour on the divan thinking it over. Then he took a wax tablet from the chest, and began a letter to the prefect, offering to sell him the mosaic for the emperor's use in the palace, but he soon became entangled in high-sounding phrases.

At last, despairing of success, he threw the unfinished letter into the chest, and laid himself down to sleep.

CHAPTER X.

WHILE heavy clouds of care, anxiety and disappointment darkened the souls of those in the dwelling of the palace overseer, feasting and jollity reigned in the Hall of the Muses. Julia, wife of the prefect, had sent to the Lochias a richly prepared meal sufficient for six hungry men; and the slave of Pontius, who had received, unpacked, and arranged it on the rudest of tables, hastened to show his master these wonders in the art of cooking. The architect shook his head at the sight, and said to himself:

“Titianus must take me for a crocodile; or rather, for two crocodiles.”

Then he went to the inclosure behind which Pollux was at work, and finding Papias with him, invited both men to share his meal. To these guests he added two painters, and the most famous worker in mosaics of the city, who had all the day been busy in repairing pavements or frescoed ceilings. With the help of the good wine and the merry talk, the dishes were soon emptied.

Whoever works steadily with either hands or brains will become hungry; and for several days all these artisans called together by Pontius had labored to the extent of their powers. Each did his best, not alone to satisfy Pontius, whom they all respected, but also to give the emperor a proof of what the Alexandrians were capable.

After the dishes had been removed, and the satisfied guests had washed and dried their hands, the goblets were filled from a tankard of a size corresponding to the abundant provision of food. One of the painters suggested speeches, and the sculptor, Papias, who was as famous for happy expression of thought as for sculpture, was unanimously chosen toast-master. But he declined the honor in favor of one more worthy—the man who

had, only a few days before, come into this empty palace and, as a second Deucalion, called out of nothing, instead of out of stone, this busy host of workmen and artists. While assuring them that he understood using hammer and nails much better than the tongue, and had never learned to make a speech, he begged them to choose Pontius for the place. But he had not finished his suggestions, when the gate-keeper, Euphorion, came with great haste into the hall, bringing a letter for the architect.

“To be read instantly,” he declared, bowing in a theatrical manner before Pontius. “A lictor of the prefect brought this, which I trust contains good tidings. Hush your barking, you wretched beggars, or I shall strike you down.”

The last remark, whose tone was scarcely meant for the ears of the artistic company, was addressed to the three four-footed Graces of his wife, who, against his will, had followed him into the hall, and sprung barking upon the tables where stood the remnants of the feast. Pontius, who loved animals, and was a special friend of these little dogs at the gate-keeper’s, said, while opening the letter of the prefect: “I invite the three little ones to finish our feast. Give them what you think best, Euphorion, and if there be anything suitable for your own stomach, take it, and welcome.”

While Pontius glanced hastily at the letter, and then read it through more attentively, the musician had gathered many nice bits together for the pets of his wife, and finally raised the last pasty, on the plate to which it belonged, to his own nose. “For dogs, or men?” he asked of his son, touching it with his outstretched finger.

“For gods,” answered Pollux. “Take it to mother; she will like for once to eat ambrosia.”

“A joyful evening to you all,” cried Euphorion, bowing to the men busy with their cups, and left the hall with the pasty and the three dogs. While he was retreating slowly, Papias, whose speech had been interrupted by his entrance, rose, and lifting his cup, began once more:

“Deucalion, our more than Deucalion—”

“Excuse me,” broke in Pontius, “if I interrupt a speech so felicitously begun. This letter contains important tidings. The banquet is over for to-day. We must postpone our symposium and your toast.”

“It was no toast, for when a modest man—” began Papias.

Pontius prevented his progress, saying: “Titianus is coming to the Lochias this evening. He may be here any moment, and he will not be alone. He brings one of my fellow-archi-

fects, Claudius Venator, from Rome. The man comes to assist me with his counsel."

"I have never heard that name," said Papias, who was as familiar with the persons as the works of fellow-artists.

"That surprises me," answered Pontius, folding up the letter which had brought him word of the emperor's arrival.

"Does he know anything?" asked Pollux.

"More than all of us together," answered Pontius. "He is a great man."

"That is good," cried Pollux. "I love to meet great men. When they look one in the eye it is as if something of their greatness passes into us. Involuntarily one stretches himself upward and thinks how fine it would be to some day reach his chin—"

"Do not follow a sickly ambition," said Papias, interrupting his pupil in admonitory tone. "Not he who stands on tiptoe, but the man who is faithful in performance of duty may look to attain greatness."

"This man does honest work," said Pontius, rising and placing his hand on the shoulder of Pollux. "And that is true of us all. Let each one be at his post by sunrise to-morrow. For the sake of my colleague it will be well to have all here promptly."

The artists rose, expressing their thanks and regrets.

"You can not continue your speech this evening," cried one of the painters to Papias, who, in taking leave of Pontius, remarked:

"When we come together again, I shall explain what I understand by a toast. It may perhaps interest your Roman guest. I am curious to know what he will say to the Urania. Pollux has done his share of the work well—I must devote a few hours more to its completion. The poorer our material, the more shall I rejoice if it please the emperor; he is himself something of a sculptor."

"If Hadrian were to hear that!" broke in one of the painters. "He wishes to be considered a great sculptor, the first of our time. They say he was to blame for the death of the great architect Apollodorus, who did such noble work in the time of Trajan. And why? Because the worthy man regarded the emperor as a bungler, and did not approve his design for the Temple of Venus at Rome."

"That was only a rumor," said Pontius, in reply to this charge. "Apollodorus died in prison, but his confinement there had little to do with his criticism of the emperor's work."

But I must beg you to excuse me, gentlemen. I must look over the draughts and plans."

The architect walked out, but Pollux sought to continue the conversation, saying:

"I can not comprehend how Hadrian, with the cares of government and state affairs, at the same time a devoted hunter—interested also in all sorts of learned tittle-tattle—can call back his fine senses from their flight in these directions to the practice of any artistic work. The inside of his head must look like the salad-dish we just emptied, in which Papias had discovered three sorts of fish, black meat, white meat, oysters, and at least five other ingredients."

"And who," added Papias, "will deny that if talent be the mother, and diligence the father, of all artistic skill, steady practice must be called the tutor? Since Hadrian paints and works in stone, it has become the fashion, here as everywhere, to dabble in it. Among the wealthy young men who frequent my workshop, there are many well endowed by nature, but none of them bring much to pass, because the gymnasium, the baths, the combats, the banquets, and I know not what else, take so much time from their practice."

"Yes," added one of the painters, "without the constraint and the annoyance of the apprenticeship, one can not attain to a free and happy power of creation. In the schools of rhetoric, upon a hunting expedition, and in war, one can have no regular lessons. It is only when a pupil devotes six hours a day to his practice that I begin to think he will accomplish something. Have any of you seen a specimen of the emperor's work?"

"I have," answered the worker in mosaic. "A few years ago Hadrian sent me one of his pictures as the pattern for a mosaic I was to make. It was a fruit piece, containing melons, gourds, apples, and green leaves. The drawing was so-so, the coloring vivid, and the composition pleased me for its roundness and fullness. It is more agreeable to see a painting too rich than too poor. The large fruit, under the almost too exuberant foliage, looked as if it might have grown in the garden of luxury; but the whole expression was pleasing. In my mosaic, I softened the coloring a little. A copy of this picture I have yet. It hangs in the hall of my designers. The rich Nealkes used it as a pattern for a piece of tapestry, which Pontius has purchased for the wall of the emperor's private room, and I added a handsome border for him."

"Say rather for the original designer."

“Or better still, against his possible visit to your workshop,” broke in the most loquacious of the painters.

“Do you suppose the emperor will visit us? I should like to sell him my ‘Salutation of Alexander in the Temple of Jupiter Ammon.’”

“I hope, when it comes to fixing the price, you will not forget your colleagues,” added another, with a smirk.

“I will be guided by your example,” answered the first speaker.

“Then you will scarcely come too short,” cried Papias, “for Eustorgius knows how to put a high value on his own work. If Hadrian should leave an order with all the masters in whose work he dabbles, he will need a special fleet to carry all his purchases to Rome.”

“They say,” said the painter Eustorgius, “he is a painter among poets, a sculptor among painters, an astronomer with the musicians, a sophist with the sculptors; *i. e.*, he pursues each of the arts or sciences as a secondary occupation, with happy success.”

Just here Pontius returned to the table, and hearing the last words, he interrupted the speaker to say:

“You forget, my friend, that he stands among the Regents, in the full significance of that word. Each of you can execute in his own department certainly more carefully and minutely, but how great is the man, who, with no lazy interest, but with earnestness and skill, attempts what only a fine spirit and a cultivated thought could accomplish. I know him, and am sure that he loves capable workers, and seeks to encourage them with princely generosity. But he has his ears everywhere, and will prove an implacable enemy to all who irritate his sensibilities. Guard your Alexandrian tongues; and let me tell you that the colleague I am expecting from Rome stands very near to Hadrian. He is an old associate, he looks like him, and never keeps back from him anything he hears. Do not criticise the emperor, or be more severe toward the amateur in purple than you are with your wealthy pupils for whom ‘charming,’ or ‘wonderfully pretty,’ or ‘extraordinarily nice,’ slips so easily over the lips. Do not take my warning amiss. You know how I mean it.”

These words were spoken with that manly heartiness which always won the confidence and obedience even of those who held opposite views.

Adieus and hand-shakings were exchanged; the company left the hall; a slave carried out the wine-tankard, and cleared

the table upon which Pontius spread out his plans and diagrams.

But he was not long alone, for Pollux came to his side, and said, with comical pathos, placing one finger against his nose:

“I have sprung from my cage to say something to you.”

“Well?”

“The hour approaches in which I can seek to requite the benefits you have at various times bestowed upon my stomach. My mother will to-morrow set before you the dish of cabbage. She could not do it sooner, as the only sausage-maker, who is king of his art, prepares the little moist cylinders only once in a week. A few hours ago the sausages were ready, and to-morrow, for breakfast, my mother will heat over the noble dish; for, as I have told you before, only as warmed over does it reach our ideal. The sweet dishes that will come with it will also bear evidence of my mother’s skill; but for the refreshing drink—the dull-care-dispersing wine, we shall be indebted to my sister.”

“I will come,” answered Pontius, “if our guest gives me a free hour; and shall heartily relish your good cheer. But what does such a merry bird as you know of ‘dull care?’”

“That word suits the meter,” answered Pollux, “and I have inherited from my father, who sings and poetizes when he is not busy at the gate, the troublesome necessity of expressing in rhyme whatever moves my soul.”

“You have been more silent than usual to-day, and yet you look very happy. Not alone your face, but your whole long body from crown to foot, seems a vessel filled to the brim with joy.”

“It is good to be in the world,” cried Pollux, stretching himself upward, and lifting his arms toward the heavens.

“Has anything especially agreeable happened to you?”

“That is not at all necessary! I live here in noble company—the work progresses—and why should I conceal it? There was something special to-day. I met an old acquaintance.”

“A very old one?”

“It is sixteen years since I have known her; but I saw her first in baby-clothes.”

“More than sixteen! Then this venerable friend must be at least seventeen! Was it Eros, or did the happiness follow in his train?”

The architect spoke meditatively, and Pollux listened with attention. Then he said:

“What is going on outside at this hour? Did you not hear

the deep baying of a dog between the shrill yelping of the three Graces?"

"Titianus brings the Roman architect," said Pontius, excited. "I will go to meet them. But one word more, my friend. You, too, have an Alexandrian tongue. Be careful, in the presence of this Roman, not to ridicule the emperor. I repeat what I said before. The man who comes is superior to us all; and nothing can be more repugnant than for one to put on airs because some weakness has been discovered in a great man of which the complainer happens to be free. The artist I expect is a great man, but Hadrian is far greater. Now retreat behind your frame-work, and to-morrow I will be your guest."

CHAPTER XI.

PONTIUS threw his pallium over the chiton he was accustomed to wear while at work, and went to meet the monarch of the world, whose coming the letter of the prefect had announced. He was outwardly calm, and if his heart beat faster than usual, it was with joy in the expectation of meeting again the wonderful man whose personality had so deeply impressed him on a former occasion. In the consciousness of having done all he could to prepare the palace for its master, he stepped into the court, where many slaves were busied in laying down new flag-stones by torch-light. Neither they nor their overseer had heard the deep baying of the dog and the loud voices which rang through the court, so absorbed were all in their work. Pontius had offered a reward if a certain amount of this flagging were laid within a specified time.

The emperor had been delayed by adverse winds, and it was almost midnight when the ship reached the haven.

He greeted Titianus with the hearty warmth of an old friend, and entered, with him and Antinous, the chariot of the former; while Phlegon, the private secretary, and Hermogenes, the physician, and the slave, Mastor, followed upon another vehicle with the luggage, which included camp-beds. The harbor guards at first opposed the progress of these chariots, driving noisily through the streets, disturbing the quiet of the night; but seeing Titianus they stepped respectfully aside. The gate-keeper and his wife had remained awake, in accordance with the suggestion of the prefect; and so soon as Euphoriion heard the approaching chariot-wheels, the gates flew open for the emperor's admission.

The state of the pavements and the crowd of laborers made

it necessary to descend from the chariot at the gate-keeper's house. Hadrian, whom nothing escaped which was worth seeing, stepped before the open door and looked into the pleasant room, with its birds and flowers and statue of Apollo, and Doris, in her newest gown, awaiting Titianus on the threshold.

The prefect saluted her heartily, for he was accustomed, whenever he came to the Lochias, to exchange a few words with the cheerful and sensible woman.

The little dogs had long ago crept into their basket for the night, but as soon as they scented a stranger, plunged with loud yelping past their mistress into the court, so that while Doris was answering the friendly greeting of the prefect, she was obliged to call more than once the names Euphrosyne, Aglaia, and Thalia.

"That is charming," cried Hadrian, looking into the little house. "A perfect idyl. Who would have expected to find such a ludicrous corner of peace in this most unquiet and busiest of cities?"

"Pontius and I were surprised in the same way by this little nest, and resolved to leave it untouched," said the prefect.

"Sensible people understand one another, and I owe you gratitude for sparing this house," answered the emperor. "What a good omen it is for me! The Graces receive me on entering these old walls."

"Joy be with you," cried Doris, in greeting.

"We come late," said Hadrian.

"That is no matter," answered the old woman, laughing. "For the last week we have learned to make no difference between day and night on the Lochias; and blessings are never too late."

"I bring an excellent guest," said Titianus—"the great Roman architect, Claudius Venator. He has just left the ship."

"Then a swallow of wine will do him good. We have Mareotish wine in the house, from the garden of my daughter directly on the sea. If your friend will so honor humble people, I beg you to enter. It is neat here, sir, and the cup I can offer you would not disgrace the emperor. Who knows what you may find in the frightful whirl yonder?"

"I will gladly accept your invitation, little mother," replied Hadrian. "It is easy to see that you will entertain us gladly, and one might envy your little home."

"It will be prettier when the climbing roses and the honey-

suckles are in bloom," answered Doris, as she filled the cup. "And here is water to mix with it."

The emperor took the cup and admired it, saying, before he touched it to his lips: "This is a masterpiece, mother, what may the emperor expect, if the gate-keeper be so served? Who has done this work?"

"My son cut it in his idle hours."

"He is an excellent sculptor," remarked Titianus. After the emperor had partly emptied the cup with great satisfaction, he placed it on the table, saying: "A most refreshing drink. I thank you, mother."

"And I thank you for calling me mother. There is no fairer title for a woman who has brought up good children, and I have three of whom I need not be ashamed."

"I wish you joy of them all, little mother," answered the emperor. "We shall meet again, for I may stay some time on the Lochias."

"Now, in this confusion?" asked Doris.

"This famous architect," said Titianus, "will assist our excellent Pontius."

"He needs no help," exclaimed the woman. "He is a man of the very best sort. My son tells me that his thoughtfulness and activity are unparalleled. I have seen him myself when giving his orders; and I know my people."

"What specially pleases you in Pontius?" asked Hadrian, who enjoyed the unrestrained manner of this woman.

"He never loses his self-possession in all this whirl, speaks neither a word too much or too little, can be severe when it is necessary, and is kind toward the lowest. What he does in his profession, I am unable to judge, but I know him to be honest and reliable."

"You describe him correctly," replied the emperor, "only I had thought him more severe."

"Every man must be harsh sometimes, but he is so only where it is needful; and every day he shows us how kind he can be. I have always noticed that a man who holds himself apart from and is rude toward his inferiors is not great in himself, and seems afraid of being classed with them. But he who is truly great, does not hesitate to treat us as equals. It is so with Pontius, and the noble Governor Titianus, and with you also, I dare say, since you are his friend. You are heartily welcome, but, as I said before, Pontius needs no help."

"You do not comprehend me very highly, and for that I am sorry, because you seem to have lived with open eyes, and to understand human nature."

Doris looked at the emperor with searching yet friendly eyes, and answered in a cautious tone:

“ You—you are certainly great, and it may be will perceive something that has escaped the notice of Pontius. There are a few whom the muses have especially endowed, and you may be one of them.”

“ Why do you think that?”

“ I know from the glance of your eye, and from your forehead.”

“ Perhaps you have the gift of divination?”

“ No, nothing of that sort; but I have two sons to whom the heavenly powers have given something which I am not able to describe, and those in whom I recognize the same are always first among their own circle. And I am willing to swear that you outrank all with whom you associate.”

“ Don’t handle the oaths so lightly,” replied the emperor, laughing. “ We shall speak together again; and when I leave the Lochias I should like to ask if you have not been disappointed in me. Come now, Telemachus, you seem greatly charmed with the birds of this good woman.”

Antinous, to whom these last words were addressed, had been contemplating the feathered pets of Doris, going from one cage to another, with great satisfaction.

“ Is that your son?” asked Doris.

“ No, he is only my pupil, but I love him as if he were my own child.”

“ A handsome fellow.”

“ Look to it; our old friend has her eye on the young men still.”

“ We shall not give that up before the end of a century, or until the Parcœ cuts the thread of our life.”

“ What a confession!”

“ Let me say one thing more. We women never cease to rejoice in a handsome youth, but only while we are young do we ask what they think of us; in our old age we are quite satisfied with showing them kindness. Listen, young man: you will always find me here, and ready to do anything in my power for your comfort. I am like a snail, and seldom leave my house.”

“ Hoping to meet again,” cried Hadrian, as he crossed the court with his companions. Titianus walked in advance of Hadrian and Antinous, and but a few words were exchanged between them. The emperor was smiling to himself. The opinion of this clever woman, out of the common people, had given him far greater pleasure than the bombastic compli-

ments of Mesomedes and the other lyric poets, and the flattering words he was accustomed to hear from sophists and rhetoricians. Doris took him for a simple architect. She could not know who he was, or—had Titianus been careless of his secret? Did the woman know, or even guess, with whom she was talking? The suspicions of Hadrian were easily roused, and he began to think the words of the woman were prepared beforehand, and her welcome only a recitation.

He stopped suddenly, bidding Titianus and Antinous await his return with the dog, and went back to the little house, creeping along in a manner quite unusual for princely feet. He stopped before the still open door, and listened to the conversation within between Doris and her husband.

“A stately man,” said Euphorion. “He looks a little like the emperor.”

“Not much,” answered Doris. “Think of that statue in the Paneum Garden. That has an expression of discontent, and of sarcasm. This architect has a thoughtful brow, but real kind-heartedness shines through his features. It is only about the beard that they resemble each other. Hadrian might be glad to look as well as this guest of the prefect.”

“Yes, he is much handsomer—has—has—shall I express it?—much more that is godlike than that cold marble statue,” declaimed Euphorion. “A great gentleman, certainly, but still a sculptor. I wonder if he might not be persuaded through Pontius, Papias, Aristetas, or some one of the great painters to take the part of Calchas in our festival. He would represent the character much better than that withered ivory-cutter, Philemon. Reach me my lute. I have forgotten again the beginning of that last verse. Oh, my memory! Thank you.”

Euphorion touched the strings vigorously, and sung with still good and well-trained voice:

“Sabina! hail to thee, Sabina! Hail to the victorious and mighty goddess, Sabina! If Pollux were only here he would help me to remember the right words. ‘Hail to the hundred-times victorious Sabina!’ That is not right. ‘Hail to the godlike and far-famed victorious Sabina!’ It is not that, either. If a crocodile would only swallow this Sabina I would gladly give him that plate of fresh cakes yonder for a dessert. Now I believe I have it. ‘Hail, a hundred times hail, to the mighty goddess, Sabina!’”

Hadrian had heard enough. While Euphorion was trying to fix the right words in his rebellious memory, he turned his back on the gate-keeper’s house, and, with his companions,

made a way—not without some difficulty—through the crowd of laborers on the pavement. More than once he tapped Titianus on the shoulder, and, as they received the greeting of Pontius, cried out:

“I am more glad than ever that I determined to come now. It has been a good evening; a most excellent evening.”

For years the emperor had not seemed so cheerful and free from care; and as, in spite of the late hour, he found everywhere the workmen still busy, and saw what they were planning to do in the old palace, the restless man gave expression to his satisfaction, saying to Antinous:

“Here is a good lesson as to what wonders can be accomplished through good-will, industry and skill. Explain to me, Pontius, how you constructed this giant scaffolding.”

CHAPTER XII.

ONLY a part of the night hours remained after this cheerful entrance of the emperor into the half-finished dwelling.

Pontius directed a suite of rooms to be put in order, which he had designed for the use of the nobles in Hadrian's suite, from one window of which was a fine view of the harbor and the island of Antirrhodus.

The good bed which the prefect had sent to Lochias for his own use was carried into the sleeping-room of the emperor; while in others the field-beds were spread for the use of Antinous and the rest of the party. Tables, cushions, and other furniture which had been already delivered from the Alexandrian factories for the furnishing of the palace, and which stood unopened in boxes and bales within the great middle court, were quickly unpacked, and such as were appropriate placed in the emperor's apartments. Before Hadrian, conducted by the prefect, had been through the rooms where repairs were going on, Pontius had completed his arrangements, and informed his guests that he had done the best possible for this night, but promised on the next day a more properly furnished apartment.

“Excellent, excellent!” exclaimed the monarch, as he entered the one appropriated to himself; “one would believe you had the demons of industry under call. Pour water over my hands, master, and then to supper! I am hungry as the dog of a beggar.”

“I think we shall find something to satisfy you,” answered Titianus. “Have you eaten all sent you to-day, Pontius?”

“Unfortunately, I have;” answered Pontius, sighing.

“But I ordered a meal for five.”

“It has filled six hungry artisans,” returned Pontius. “Had I only surmised for whom so much food was provided! But what shall we do now? There is bread and wine in the Hall of the Muses—meanwhile—”

“That must answer,” said the emperor, as he wiped his face. “In the Dacian war, in Numidia, and often while hunting, I have been glad to find either one of these provisions.”

Antinous, who was very tired and hungry, looked troubled. When Hadrian saw this, he said, laughingly:

“The youth needs something more than bread and wine. You showed me while we were looking about, an entrance to the dwelling of the palace overseer. Would it be possible to find there a bit of meat, or cheese, or something of the sort?”

“Scarcely,” answered Pontius; “for the man fills his own immense stomach and the mouths of eight children with bread and porridge. However, we can but try.”

“Then send, but lead us directly to the hall where the muses are guarding our bread and wine. This they do not always furnish their disciples.”

On their way to the hall, Hadrian asked of Pontius:

“Is the overseer of this palace so poorly paid that he is forced to such a meager diet?”

“He has a dwelling without rent, and two hundred drachmas a month.”

“That is not so small. Who is the man, and what sort of person is he?”

“His name is Keraunus, and he comes of old Macedonian stock. His ancestors have held the same office—no one knows how long—and he boasts of relationship to the Lagides, through a mistress of some one of the dead kings. Keraunus has a seat in the council, and never goes out without his slaves, who come from that class the dealers throw in to their customers when making a bargain. He is fat as a marmot; dresses like a senator—is very fond of relics and varieties—for which he would spend his last penny. He bears poverty with more haughtiness than dignity; but is, after all, an honest man, who can be made useful, if managed rightly.”

“So he is another odd fellow! You say he is fat. Is he jolly?”

“Nothing less than that.”

“Fat and surly people are my abhorrence. But what sort of structure have you here?”

“Behind this frame-work is one of the best pupils of

Papias. His name is Pollux, and he is a son of the gate-keeper. You will like him."

"Call him," said the emperor.

But before Pontius could do this, the head of Pollux appeared above the frame-work. His attention had been attracted by the voices and footsteps, and after having saluted the prefect, and satisfied his curiosity, he was about to spring back from the high stool upon which he had mounted, when Pontius called, saying that the Roman architect wished to make his acquaintance.

"That is kind of him," answered Pollux, "and more especially kind of you, for only through you could he learn that such a being walks under the moon, and has learned to use hammer and chisel. Let me descend from my four-legged cothurn, for now you are obliged to look up at me, but after that the order will be inverted."

"Stay where you are," answered Hadrian. "There is no formality among fellow-artists. What are you doing in there?"

"I will push back my covering to show you our Urania. It will be good to hear an opinion from one who understands such work."

"Afterward, my friend, afterward; first let me have a bit of bread, lest the fierceness of my hunger should influence my criticism."

During these words Pontius had brought to the emperor a salver containing bread, salt, and a cup of wine. As Pollux noticed the meager meal, he cried out:

"That is prison fare, Pontius; have we nothing better in the house?"

"I suspect that you had a share in annihilating the excellent dishes I sent to Pontius," said the prefect, threatening Pollux with his finger.

"You spoil a delightful memory," sighed the sculptor, with comical woe.

"By Hercules, I did have a share in that work of annihilation. Had we only— But stop! An idea comes to me which would be worthy of Aristotle. The breakfast, Pontius, to which I have invited you stands all ready in my mother's cupboard, and can be warmed over in a very few moments. Do not be frightened, sir. I refer to a dish of cabbage and sausages, which, like the soul of an Egyptian, possesses in its resurrection nobler qualities than when it first saw the light."

"Excellent!" cried Hadrian, with a smile; but he laughed aloud as he heard an exclamation of joy from the lips of Antinous, who now approached.

“Another palate revels in happy anticipation,” said the emperor to the prefect, pointing to his favorite.

But he had misunderstood the sense of that exclamation; for the name of this homely dish, which Antinous had often seen upon the table of his mother’s poor house in Bithynia, carried him back to the home of his childhood, and into the midst of his kindred.

A quick movement of the heart, more than delight of the palate, had pressed the “Ah!” from his lips. Yet he rejoiced in the prospect of sharing this provision, and would not have exchanged it for the costliest banquet.

Pollux had come out of his inclosure, and said: “In a quarter of an hour I shall be here with my breakfast turned into a supper. Do but stay your hunger with the bread and salt, for this food my mother has prepared will not only satisfy hunger but furnish enjoyment.”

“Salute Mother Doris,” cried Hadrian, as he left the hall, and then turning to Titianus and Pontius said:

“A fine fellow. I am curious to see what he can do as a sculptor.”

“Then follow me,” said Pontius, leading Hadrian behind the screen.

“What do you say to this Urania? The head is the work of Papias, but the body of the figure and the drapery Pollux has done independently within a very few days.” The imperial critic stood looking at the statue for some time silently, with folded arms. Then he nodded approvingly, and said, in an earnest tone:

“A deeply thoughtful and wonderfully free work. This drapery over the bust would not disgrace Phidias. All is great, original, and true! Had the young master a model here, on the Lochias?”

“I have seen no one, and think he modeled the figure entirely out of his own head,” answered Pontius.

“That is impossible,” cried the emperor, in the tone of a connoisseur. “Even Praxiteles could not have invented such lines—such folds. It must have been formed after a living model. We will ask him. What is to be made out of this newly prepared mass of clay?”

“Perhaps the bust of a princess from the Lagides. Tomorrow you shall see a head of Berenice made by our young friend, which seems to me among the best ever done in Alexandria.”

“Does the fellow practice magic?” asked Hadrian. “It is simply impossible that he can have made this Urania, and a

complete female head, within these few days." Pontius explained to the emperor that he had only placed the head upon a bust, already in position, and went on to make known to him, while answering without hesitation all his questions, the varied devices by which alone they could give this dilapidated building an appearance of respectability within so short a time. And he spoke as freely with Hadrian of all these matters as he would have done with any intelligent fellow-workman.

The prefect, meanwhile, was listening to the details of their traveling experience from Phlegon, the private secretary of the emperor.

Both these conversations were interrupted by the appearance of Pollux in the hall, accompanied by his father.

The musician bore a streaming dish, fresh cakes, and the pasty which he had carried home to his wife a few hours before. Pollux brought a large two-handled tankard, filled with Mareotish wine, around which he had twined hastily branches of green ivy.

A few minutes later the emperor was reclining upon a cushion that had been placed for him, and busily at work upon the savory dish. He was in his happiest mood; called Antinous, the physician, and Phlegon to his side, and laid portions of food upon the plates, which he insisted they should pass to him, lest, as he said, they should fish out the best sausages. He also made a valiant attack upon the contents of the tankard.

When it came time to open the pasty his face took on a different expression.

His brow contracted, and turning to the prefect he asked, in a severe tone:

"How come these people by such food?"

"Where did you get this pasty, Euphorion?" asked Titianus.

"It came from the banquet Pontius gave this evening to the artisans. The three Graces disposed of the bones, and this pasty, which had been left untouched, was given to me for my wife. She gladly devotes it to the guest of Pontius."

Titianus laughed.

"This explains the disappearance of the rich meal we sent to the architect. This pasty—allow me to look at it—was prepared after a recipe of Verus. He invited himself yesterday to breakfast with us, and instructed my cook how to prepare it."

"No disciple of Plato proclaims more diligently the doctrines of his master than Verus the excellence of this dish," ex-

claimed the emperor, who had recovered his cheerfulness so soon as he saw there was no contrivance to deceive him. "What follies occupy this spoiled child of fortune! Does he cook now entirely with his own hands?"

"Not at all," answered the prefect. "A couch was carried into the kitchen, upon which he reclined while directing my cook how to prepare this, which is reported to be your—I mean is reported to be a favorite dish of the emperor. It is composed of pheasant, ham, udder, and flaky pie-crust."

"I agree with Hadrian's taste," said the emperor, laughing, and proceeding to do honor to it. "You entertain me bountifully, my friend, and make me your debtor. What is your name, young man?"

"I am called Pollux."

"Your Urania, Pollux, is a good work. Pontius says you have arranged the drapery without any model; but I say again, as I did to him, that is impossible."

"You said right. A young maiden stood for it."

Hadrian looked at the architect, as much as to say, "I told you so."

Pontius asked in surprise: "But when? I have never seen a female here."

"Quite lately."

"But I have not left the Lochias even for a moment, and have not been to rest before midnight, and am always on my legs again long before sunrise."

"Still there lie a few hours between your sleeping and your waking," answered Pollux.

"Ah, these young people!" cried the emperor, while a satirical smile played about his lips.

"Separate Damon and Pythias by iron gates, and they would contrive to meet through the key-hole!"

Euphorion looked questioningly at his son, and the architect made some further inquiries; but Hadrian rose from his couch, giving Antinous and Phlegon permission to retire, begged Titianus with friendly tone to return to his home, and asked Pollux to take him into his working inclosure, since he did not feel weary, and was accustomed to only a few hours of sleep.

Pollux was greatly attracted to this man. He had not failed to notice how much the gray-haired stranger resembled the emperor; but Pontius had prepared him for this, and there was in the eyes and about the mouth of the Roman architect something he had not seen in any portrait of the emperor. His respect increased as they stood together beside

the scarcely finished statue; for he pointed out to him a few faults, while praising its general correctness; and he gave in a few terse sentences his own conception of Urania. Then he developed concisely his own theories of the relation between the artist and his work.

The heart of the young man beat faster, and the blood leaped through his veins, as he heard from those bearded lips thoughts and feelings of which he had often been dumbly conscious, but had never sought to express.

And how kindly the great man received his timid suggestions, and how striking were his answers! He had never before met such a man—never before so recognized the superiority of another spirit.

Two hours after midnight had already struck, when Hadrian stopped before the roughly outlined bust of fresh clay, and asked of Pollux:

“What are you going to do with this?”

“Make the image of a woman.”

“Probably your courageous model, who ventures upon the Lochias in the night-time?”

“No, a lady of rank will sit to me.”

“From Alexandria?”

“Oh, no. A beauty from the retinue of the empress.”

“What is her name? I know all the Roman women.”

“Balbilla.”

“Balbilla? There are several of that name. Can you tell me how she looks?” asked Hadrian, with a mischievous smile.

“That is more easily asked than answered,” replied Pollux, who had recovered his liveliness with the emperor’s smile.

“But wait! Have you seen peacocks spread their tails like a wheel? Think, then, if each eye in the tail of that bird of Hera were a little round curl, and under the wheel was a charming and clever girl’s face, with a jolly little nose, and rather too high a forehead, then you will have a picture of the noble lady who has persuaded me to make a bust of herself.”

Hadrian laughed aloud, threw off his pallium, and cried:

“Stand back. I think I know the girl. If I am mistaken, you shall tell me.”

While speaking, he had seized the pliant clay with his nervous hands, and kneading it like a well-trained sculptor, cutting off here and adding there, he shaped a woman’s face with a mighty structure of curls above, that looked like Balbilla, but with every peculiarity of feature so ridiculously distorted that Pollux could not restrain his amusement.

As Hadrian stepped back from his completed caricature, and asked if that were the Roman lady, Pollux cried:

“So surely as you are a great architect and a master of sculpture.”

The emperor seemed greatly to relish his own joke, for he looked at the image, and laughed over and over.

It affected Pontius quite differently. He had followed with appreciative interest the conversation of Hadrian with the sculptor, and had watched the commencement of the image. Afterward, he had turned away, for he hated that distortion of beautiful forms so common in Egypt. It was to him literally painful to see the image of a richly gifted and defenseless creature, to whom also he was bound by ties of gratitude, put to shame by such a man as the emperor. He had met Balbilla for the first time that day, but through Titianus had learned of her residence at the Caesareum, among the followers of the empress, and also that she was the granddaughter of the governor, Claudius Balbillus, who had given freedom to his grandfather, a learned Greek slave.

He had met her with feelings of gratitude and of devotion; her cheerful nature had greatly pleased him; and with every word from her lips he felt himself drawn toward her, as if through ties of blood or long-established friendship. The familiar manner of the wanton Verus toward her had annoyed him, and after the royal party left the Lochias his thoughts had often recurred to it, and he resolved to have an eye on this grandchild of his benefactor whenever it was possible. It seemed a sacred duty to defend her, as he would have defended a beautiful and unprotected singing bird. The emperor's caricature seemed to him like the desecration of something holy; and as he stood amused with his own hateful performance, Pontius felt hurt, as do all noble natures in discovering that which is petty and mean in a being they have honored. As a sculptor, if not as a man, the emperor had dared to insult the undefended beauty.

A shade of aversion rose in the soul of Pontius toward one for whom he had before felt only warmest admiration, and he was glad when Hadrian at last proposed retiring to rest.

The emperor found all the provision for comfort in his sleeping-room to which he was accustomed; and as his slave Mastor removed his garments, lighted his night-lamp, and shook up the pillows, he said:

“This is the best evening I have spent in years. Is Antinous well provided?”

“As in Rome.”

“And the Molossian?”

“I will place his mat in the passage before your door.”

“Has he been fed?”

“Yes, with bones, bread and water.”

“I trust you have had supper?”

“I was not hungry; the bread and wine were enough.”

“To-morrow all will be better arranged. Be careful of your words not to betray me. A few days here, without interruption, would be worth very much to me. Now, good-night.”

With these words the emperor laid himself upon his bed, and was soon asleep.

The slave also laid himself down for the night, after spreading a mat for the dog just outside the emperor's door.

His pillow was a tough leathern shield supported by a sword. This was a poor bed, but for years Mastor had known nothing better, and he usually enjoyed there the dreamless sleep of a child; but to-night his eyes could not close, and with his hand he wiped away the salt tears that repeatedly gathered in them. He had bravely held them back until now; for the emperor wanted only cheerful faces among his attendants. He had once said to Mastor that he had chosen him for the sake of his mirthful eyes.

The poor, light-hearted Mastor! He was only a slave, but he had also a heart which stood open to sorrow and joy, mirth and woe, to hatred and to love. While a child his native village fell into the hands of enemies to his race; he and his brother were taken as slaves, first to Asia Minor, and then, because they were pretty, fair-haired boys, to Rome. There they were bought for the emperor. Mastor became his body-servant; his brother worked in the gardens. Nothing was wanting to their comfort except freedom—their only unsatisfied want, the longing for home.

Even this disappeared after Mastor had married the pretty daughter of the head-gardener, with bright eyes that peered everywhere. His service as a slave allowed little time for the company of his wife and the two children she had borne him; but the consciousness of possessing them made him happy when absent with the emperor upon hunting expeditions, or traveling through the empire. For seven months he had heard nothing of his family, but at Pelusium a letter reached him that had come with the emperor's dispatches from Ostia.

He could not read, and owing to the hasty departure of Hadrian, it was only after reaching the Lochias that the opportunity came to learn its contents. Antinous had read it

aloud, after returning from his supper in the Hall of the Muses. It was from his brother, and had been written by a public scribe. But the letter was enough to break his heart. His pretty little wife was wandering about the world with a Greek ship-captain, with whom she had left his house and the service of the emperor. His oldest—his boy, the darling of his heart—was dead, and the fair-haired, delicate little Tullia, with the white teeth and plump arms, and the dainty little fingers, which so often had pretended to pull his shorn locks, or stroked them gently, had been carried to the miserable house for the orphans of deceased slaves. Two hours ago he had been picturing to himself his home, and the dear circle there. Now all that was gone, and though the deepest grief beat on his soul with merciless fist, he dared not sob or groan, or even toss from side to side, driven by the tempest within, for his master was a light sleeper, and was roused by the slightest sound. And at sunrise he must wear a cheerful face again; yet it seemed to him now that he too would be crushed in the wreck of his home and of all his heart held dear. The pain tore his heart, but he did not groan or make any outward sign.

CHAPTER XIII.

THIS night had been as sleepless for Selene, the palace overseer's daughter, as for the poor slave. Her father's idle wish to have Arsinoe take part in the approaching festival with the daughters of the wealthy citizens filled her heart with a new anxiety. This was the final blow which must plunge the already weakened structure of their domestic life into disgrace and poverty. If the last piece of value were to be sold, and the creditors should have no more patience, but seize upon her father and send him to the debtors' prison, during the presence of the emperor, was it not certain that another overseer would be put into his place, and she, with her brothers and sisters, plunged into hopeless misery?

There lay Arsinoe at her side, sleeping as sweetly and quietly as the blind Helios and the other little ones. Before going to bed she had spoken earnestly to the thoughtless girl and tried to persuade her, yea, had urged and pleaded with her to refuse, as she herself had done, to take any share in this festivity; but Arsinoe had at first refused to listen, and then had wept, but at last comforted herself with the hope that some way might be found—at any rate, what her father allowed, Selene had no right to forbid or trouble herself about. Selene might have gained more influence over her sister had she not

repelled her by an air of superiority and a sobriety that had come from riper age and a life of care. Scarcely a day passed without unpleasant words and tears between these two. Arsinoe was always the first to offer the hand of reconciliation, but Selene seldom uttered, as her kindest word, more than: "Let it pass now," or, "I know that already." Their intercourse bore the stamp of unkindness, which might easily grow into hostility. Many times they went to bed without a "Good-night," and still oftener omitted the morning salutation. Arsinoe, who loved to talk, was usually silent in the presence of Selene, who had little pleasure in those things which generally interest the young; while Arsinoe found joy in all.

In the care of the younger children, the same difference was apparent. The elder looked after the clothing, the food, and the absolute necessities of life. She watched over their conduct with strictness, seeking to eradicate the germs of future evil. Arsinoe dressed their dolls and shared their play. Her invariable good-humor, her kisses and pleasant words gained what Selene often failed to secure by severity and fault-finding. Arsinoe won their hearts, and they would run to meet her whenever she appeared, while Selene must call every time she desired their presence. To her, it seemed bitter and unjust that Arsinoe should secure, through merely idle play, a sweeter reward than she could attain by all her hours of care, and anxiety, and labor, which often lasted far into the night.

But in this children are not far from right. They are guided more by the heart than the head, and whoever gives them sincere love is sure to receive the same in return.

Certainly to-night Selene looked on her slumbering companion with little sisterly feeling, for the words which had passed between them sounded very unkind. Still they did love each other; and whoever should have thought to speak harshly of one in the presence of the other would have quickly learned that a strong inward bond held their hearts together.

No nineteen-year-old girl spends a whole night without sleep, however restless and troubled.

In her short snatches Selene dreamed of her sister. Once she saw her dressed as a queen, and followed by a crowd of beggar-children with insulting words; then she saw her on the bastion, beating the bust of their mother to pieces, while she jested with Pollux. Again she herself seemed to be playing in the garden of the gate-keeper, as she had often done in her childhood. She was making cakes of sand with Pollux, and as soon as they were finished, Arsinoe sprang upon them and trampled them to pieces.

Selene always dreamed now. It was long since she had known truly refreshing sleep. And the dreams were generally of a sorrowful sort, and often so terrifying that she was wakened by her own groans, or by the frightened cry of Arsinoe. The sounds never disturbed the father; for he began to snore as soon as he fell asleep, and did not leave off until he woke in the morning.

Selene was the first one up in the house. To-day the dawn was hailed as a deliverance. It was still dark when she rose, but the December day was short; and without disturbing the other sleepers, she lighted her lamp, washed her face, and arranged her hair; then knocked on the door to waken the old slaves. After they had sleepily answered her call, she took a pitcher and went out to bring fresh water for her father.

The best supply of water for the palace was to be found on a little terrace upon the western side. It was from the works of the city, and was brought by pipes emptying their contents through figures of curious composite design, which carried a mussel shell at the end of their long twisted fishy tails: in each shell lay a bearded river god. The heads of the figures resembled horses, and they spirted water into a basin, which in the course of a century had become filled with a green, slimy vegetation. To reach this, it was necessary to pass through the corridor on which opened the apartments of the emperor and his companions. Selene only knew that an architect from Rome had come late to the Lochias, for she had been solicited after midnight to supply him with meat, but in what part of the palace the strangers were lodged no one told her.

But as she to-day went along her accustomed route, a feeling of anxiety took possession of her. There was a sense of something unusual, and when she set her foot on the steps leading up to the passage a rustling sound caused her to raise the lamp above her head, in order to ascertain its source, when suddenly there came plunging toward her something huge, frightful: in the dim light it seemed much larger than a dog.

Her blood was congealed by terror. She stood riveted to the spot, but conscious that the growling and gnashing threatened her with evil. At last she found strength to turn for flight, but in the same instant a frightful roar sounded behind, and she heard the quick leap of the monster on the stone pavement. Then she was violently thrown down. The pitcher flew from her hand, and was broken into a thousand pieces.

Her scream of terror was echoed from the hard, naked walls of the passageway, and awoke the sleepers on each side.

“See what it is!” cried Hadrian to his slave, who had already sprung up, seizing shield and sword.

“The Molossian has attacked a woman who wished to pass,” answered Mastor.

“Call him back, but do not strike him,” cried the emperor as he went out. “Argus has only done his duty.”

The slave hastened as fast as possible along the passage, calling the dog by name. But Antinous had already interfered to rescue his victim. He had rushed out of his room on hearing Selene’s cry of distress, to find the savage creature snarling and gnashing his teeth over the prostrate form of a swooning maiden, on whom the dawning light of day fell faintly through a broad window opening.

As Antinous knelt down beside her, the dog, reduced to silence by the sound of his familiar voice, stood with sunken head not far off. The youth gazed anxiously into the pale face of the swooning girl, raised her lifeless arms, and searched her garments for marks of blood, but in vain. After he was convinced that she still breathed, he called to Mastor:

“Argus seems to have only thrown her down. I discover no mark of a wound. But she is unconscious. Go quickly into my room and bring the blue vial from my case of salves, with a cup of water.”

Meanwhile Antinous ventured to raise her head, with its full rich hair, and contemplate the nobly cut features, now white as marble. He was touched by the painful twitching about her mouth, and was most glad to render these unsought offices of kindness—he, the favorite of the emperor, to whom Love itself pressed forward whenever he showed himself.

“Wake up, oh, wake up!” he cried to Selene, and as she did not move, he cried the more earnestly: “Oh, wake up!” But she heard nothing, and still lay motionless, while he, blushing, spread the peplum over her bare shoulders, which the dog had torn off. Now Mastor came with the water and the vial, placing both in the hand of the Bithynian. While Antinous laid the head of the unconscious girl upon his knees, the slave left, saying:

“The emperor calls,” and Antinous bathed her forehead with the reviving fluid, and held the vial to her nostrils, still begging her to wake.

At last she opened her colorless lips, revealing her white teeth, and slowly lifted her eyelids. Antinous placed the cup and vial upon the ground that his hands might be free to assist her in rising; but scarcely had he turned his face aside to

do this, when she flung her arms passionately about his neck, screaming:

“ Help, Pollux, help! The monster will devour me!”

Frightened, Antinous seized her arm to loosen the grasp on his throat, but already she had sunk back. A violent shiver ran through her frame in the next moment.

Then she raised her hands, pressed them upon her eyebrows, and looked in perplexity upon his face.

“ What is this? Who are you?” she asked.

He rose quickly, and while assisting her attempt to rise, exclaimed:

“ The gods be praised that you are alive! Our great Molossian threw you to the ground, and he has such frightful teeth.”

Selene now stood erect, but the last words of the youth made her shiver once more.

“ Are you in pain?” he asked, anxiously.

“ Yes,” she answered, stolidly.

“ Has he bitten you?”

“ I think not. Pick up the clasp yonder, it fell from my peplum.”

The Bithynian obeyed; and while the girl fastened the garment upon her shoulders, she asked again:

“ Who are you? How comes this Molossian in our palace?”

“ He belongs—he belongs—to us— We arrived last evening quite late, and Pontius—”

“ Then you came with the Roman architect?”

“ Yes; but who are you?”

“ I am Selene, daughter of the palace overseer, Keraunus.”

“ And who is Pollux, on whom you called for help as you woke to consciousness?”

“ What is that to you?”

Antinous blushed and replied, in an embarrassed manner:

“ I was frightened to hear you call his name so passionately after I had restored you with water and this essence.”

“ Since I am restored I can go. Whichever brings savage dogs into a strange house ought to guard them better. Bind the creature fast, for the children—my little brothers and sisters—come this way whenever they go out. I thank you for your help. And now, my pitcher.”

With these words she looked around for the pretty vessel which had been a special favorite of her mother.

When she saw it lying in fragments, she cried out with indignant sobs:

“ It is good for nothing.”

With these words she turned her back upon Antinous and went homeward, stepping very carefully upon the left foot.

The youth longed to follow her and say how deeply he regretted the accident, and that the dog did not belong to him; but he dared not venture.

He stood on the same spot until long after she had vanished from sight.

Then he returned to his room, but sat down on the bed, staring dreamily at the floor until the voice of the emperor startled him.

Selene had scarcely bestowed a glance upon Antinous. She was in pain, not alone in the ankle, but from a wound in the back of her head, where the thick hair had absorbed the blood. She felt exhausted, and the loss of her pitcher, which must now be replaced, caused her more vexation than the beauty of Antinous could have furnished pleasure.

Slowly and wearily she entered the common room where her father was waiting for the water. He was accustomed to have it at a certain time. As Selene was gone so much longer than usual this morning, he found nothing better to do than to occupy the time with grumbling and fault finding.

As she at last stepped over the threshold he saw that she had no pitcher, and asked, peevishly:

“Am I to have no water to-day?”

Selene shook her head, dropped into a chair, and began to weep.

“What is the matter?” asked Keraunus.

“The pitcher is broken,” she answered, sadly.

“You should be more careful of those costly things,” said Keraunus, crossly. “You are always complaining when the money fails, and yet you destroy half the household goods.”

“I was thrown to the ground,” said Selene, wiping her eyes.

“Thrown? By whom?” asked the overseer, slowly rising.

“By the savage dog of the Roman architect who came last evening, for whom we furnished bread and salt after midnight. He slept on the Lochias.”

“And he sets his dog on my child!” cried Keraunus with rolling eyes.

“The Molossian was alone in the passage as I went out.”

“Has he bitten you?”

“No; but he threw me down, and stood over me, gnashing his teeth. Oh, it was horrible!”

“Cursed vagabond!” exclaimed the overseer, angrily, “I will teach him how to conduct himself in a strange house.”

“Let it pass,” begged Selene, as she saw her father seize his

crocus-colored pallium. "One can not help what is past; and if you should have an angry quarrel, it would hurt you."

"Vagrants, impudent folk that spread themselves, with their dangerous beasts, through my palace," grumbled Keraunus to himself, without noticing his daughter; and as he arranged the folds of his pallium growled out rather than called: "Arsinoe! will the girl never come?"

As she approached, he ordered her to heat the iron and curl his hair.

"It is already in the fire," answered she. "Come with me to the kitchen."

Keraunus followed. The younger children were standing about, waiting for the porridge Selene was in the habit of giving them at this time. Keraunus answered their morning salute with only such a nod as Arsinoe's curling-iron permitted.

The blind Helios alone received a kiss on the cheek. He loved this always cheerful though so sorely afflicted child with peculiar tenderness; and really laughed aloud when the boy, pressing against his sister while she handled the hot iron, asked:

"Do you know, father, why I am most sorry that I can not see?"

"Why?" returned the overseer.

"Because I should so much like to see you with the pretty curls Arsinoe makes."

But the cheerfulness of the overseer disappeared, when Arsinoe interrupted her work to ask half earnestly and half playfully:

"Have you thought any more about the emperor's reception, father? I make you look so nicely every day, that for this-
once you ought to do it for me."

"We shall see," answered Keraunus, mildly.

"Do you know," Arsinoe went on after a little pause, while she held the last curl in the heated tongs: "I thought it all over last night. If we can not afford to use the money for my costume, we can very well—"

"What do you mean?"

"Even Selene can have no objection."

"Against what?"

"You will be angry again."

"Go on."

"You pay taxes with the other citizens."

"What of that?"

"That it would be quite right for us to receive something from the city."

“For what purpose?”

“To buy my costume for the festival, which is not private, but given by all the citizens to the emperor. We would not accept alms, but it would be foolish to refuse what the rich city offers—as a gift.”

“Be silent,” cried Keraunus, excited, and vainly endeavoring to recall the sentiments with which he had rebuked her the day before. “Be silent, and say nothing more about the matter until I give you permission.”

Arsinoe threw down her curling-tongs so hastily that they rang upon the stone hearth; but her father returned to the common room, where he found Selene stretched upon a couch, and the old slave woman binding one wet cloth on her head and another on the left foot.

“Were you hurt?” cried Keraunus, his eyes rolling slowly from right to left, and from left to right.

“Look at that swelling!” screeched the slave in broken Greek, while she raised the fair foot of Selene upon her black hand. “Thousands of rich ladies have not a hand so small as this foot. Poor, poor little foot!” And she pressed it to her lips. Selene pushed her away, and turning to her father, said:

“The wound on my head is slight, but the flesh over the ankle is a good deal swollen. It hurts me to step. When the dog threw me down I must have struck against the stone step.”

“It is monstrous!” exclaimed Keraunus, the blood rising to his face. “But wait; I will show him what I think of such conduct.”

“No, no,” begged Selene. “Only ask him politely to shut up or chain the dog, that he may not hurt the children.” Her tone was anxious, for the fear that her father would lose his place was more vivid than usual; she could not tell why.

“Would you have me say only pleasant words about this affair?” asked Keraunus, turning away, as if something very unreasonable were asked of him.

“No, no, only tell him what you think,” screeched the slave.

“Had this happened to your father, the strange stone-cutter would have received a blow across the back.”

“His son Keraunus will bestow nothing less,” asserted the overseer, leaving the room without any further notice of Selene.

In the vestibule he found the old slave, and commanded him to take a stick, and go on to announce his coming to the guest of Pontius.

This would be more imposing, and would also bring the slave first into contact with the dog, whom he regarded as an

abominable beast. As he approached his destination, he found himself in proper mood to speak the truth to the stranger who had allowed one of his family to be thrown down by a fierce dog.

CHAPTER XIV.

HADRIAN had slept well; only a few hours certainly, but enough to refresh his spirit. He stood at the window of his sitting-room, which occupied more than half the western wall, and opened toward the sea.

Two high pillars, with shafts of reddish-brown porphyry, sprinkled with white, and gilded Corinthian capitals, stood on either side of the recess. The emperor leaned against one of these porphyry shafts, stroking the Molossian, whose ready vigilance had pleased him. What cared he for the poor girl's fright? Beside the opposite pillar stood Antinous, with one foot on the bow-window sill, his chin resting on his hand and one elbow supported by his knee.

"This Pontius is really an accomplished man," said Hadrian, touching with one hand a tapestry on the wall; "the pattern of this fabric was from a fruit picture I painted and sent here to be copied in mosaic. Yesterday this room was not destined for my use, so that the tapestry must have been hung after our arrival. And how many other good things he managed to collect! It is very comfortable, and besides, there are many articles to admire."

"Have you tried the luxurious couch yonder?" asked Antinous. "And the bronze figures in the corners are not at all bad."

"It is excellent work," replied the emperor, "but I would rather have the windows free. Which is bluer here, the sea or the sky? What a real spring-breath is wafted across, even in December! One hardly knows which to admire most, the countless vessels in the harbor, the rich and charming country seats, or the fine buildings everywhere visible in their stately grandeur, and the harmonious beauty of their forms."

"What is that long embankment, connecting the island with the mainland? Only look, there comes a great trireme under an immense arch which seems to rest upon it. And there is another!"

"That is the dike, which the Alexandrians call with pride their Heptastadion, because it is seven stadia in length. Along the upper part is a stone channel—concealed as an elder-tree

does its pith—through which the Island of Pharos is supplied with water.”

“It is a pity we can not see from here the buildings, and the people, and the carriages, which swarm like busy ants, behind our backs,” said Antinous. “The little island yonder, and the narrow point of land with its high buildings, hide it all.”

“But these serve to give life to the picture,” answered the emperor. “That little castle on the island was often occupied by Cleopatra, and the high tower on the northern point, where now the blue waves sparkle, and the gulls and pigeons are describing their merry circles, held Antony after the battle of Actium.”

“In order to forget his disgrace,” cried Antinous.

“He called it his Timonium, because he wished, like the wise man-hater of Athens, to live undisturbed by his fellow-men. What if I should call the Lochias my Timonium?”

“One needs not to hide greatness and distinction.”

“Who told you that Antony came here to hide his disgrace? He had often enough proved himself a brave soldier at the head of his troops, and when he turned his ship before Actium, it was not through fear of swords and lances, but because fate compelled him to submit to the wishes of his wife, on whose destiny his own hung.”

“Then do you excuse his conduct?”

“I only seek to understand it, and am unwilling to believe that shame prompted any of Antony’s movements. Do you think I could blush? One is not subject to shame after he has learned to despise the world.”

“But why did Marc Antony shut himself into this sea-girt prison?”

“Because, for any man, who has been surrounded by women, and jesters, and flatterers, there comes a moment when he is overtaken by disgust. At such times, there is only one among all the crowd whose company he can endure. It was so with Antony after the battle of Actium, and he left men to enjoy good society.”

“Is that what sometimes drives you into solitude?”

“Perhaps so; but you can always go with me.”

“Then you hold me far better than the others,” cried Antinous, delighted.

“In any case, far handsomer,” returned the emperor, in a friendly tone.

“Go on with your questions.”

[Antinous needed a few moments before accepting this invita-

tion. At last, recovering himself, he asked Hadrian to explain why most of the ships lying at anchor on the other side of the Heptastadion came in through the Eunostus. This entrance was less dangerous than that which led to the eastern landing, between the Isle of Pharos and the Lochias.

Hadrian answered all the questions of Antinous respecting the different buildings of the city. After pointing out the Soma, where rested the body of Alexander the Great, he grew thoughtful, and said to himself:

“The Great! One might envy the Macedonian youth, not on account of this honorable title, which many of less worth have borne, but because he really deserved it.”

Antinous was astonished that Hadrian could tell him so much about all these points, and exclaimed:

“You know everything about this city, and yet you have never before seen it.”

“That is one of the greatest pleasures of travel,” answered Hadrian, “that we can identify so many places and objects with which we have become familiar through books and descriptions. We compare the reality with an idea previously formed. To be surprised with new and unexpected objects is, to me, far less satisfactory than to learn more about those whose existence has been long familiar. Do you understand what I mean?”

“I think so. One hears about a thing, and when he comes to look at it, inquires if it be what he had imagined. I always think people and places I have heard praised will be better than I find them.”

“That experience, which now contributes to the prejudice of existing things, will diminish with the cultivation of your imaginative powers,” replied Hadrian. “I—I”—looking far into the distance, while he stroked his beard, “find, the older I grow, that it becomes possible so to represent to myself men and things that, when I see them for the first time, they seem familiar objects. Here I look on nothing new. I recognize old acquaintances. But in this case it is natural; for I knew my Strabo, and have heard, or read a hundred descriptions of this city. Still many things which I never heard do not seem strange.”

“I have experienced something of the same sort,” said Antinous. “Have our souls really lived in other bodies, and do they retain some memory of a former life? Favorinus once told me that a great philosopher—I think it was Plato—has asserted that our souls float about in the sky before we are

born, looking at the earth on which they are appointed to live. Besides that he said—”

“Favorinus!” cried Hadrian, turning away, “this fine talker possesses the skill to give a great thought an attractive form, but he does not understand the secrets of his own soul. He talks too much, and never withdraws from the confusion of life.”

“You recognize the fact, but disapprove of his explanation.”

“Yes; for I meet men and things as old acquaintances, which had their origin, or first saw this world, long after my birth. Perhaps my experience is not like others, but I am sure that there lives and works within me a secret something that is independent of me, and which goes and comes according to its own choice. Call this my familiar spirit, or my genius; the name is of no consequence. This something does not always come at my call, and it frequently works within me when I least expect it. But whenever it is present, I am conscious of an experience and a power that are not my own. What that knows I know also. Alexandria is not strange to me, because the wings of my genius have visited it. Much has it taught me, and worked through me. Many times I have asked before the work of my own hands: ‘Is it possible that you, Hadrian, the son of your mother, can have accomplished this?’ What shall I call the foreign vigor which assisted me in the task? I recognize the same inspiration in other people, and notice that such always outrank their fellows. This is especially true of artists. Or do common people become artists where genius chooses them for its own habitation? Do you understand me?”

“Only in part,” answered Antinous, whose great eyes, that were so full of life and sparkle while looking out on the landscape, were now turned—heavy and weary—to the ground.

“Do not be angry, sire. Such things I can never understand fully, for no one living has less of what you call genius than I. I have no thoughts of my own, and it is hard to follow those of others. What have I ever done that has been worthy of notice? If I make an attempt, no genius comes to the assistance of my soul. She is helpless, and falls into dreaming. And if I do finish anything, I must acknowledge that it might have been done very much better.”

“Self-knowledge,” said Hadrian, “is the highest attainment of wisdom. Each one thinks he has gained it, after embellishing the representation of some friend. What others

attain through their works, you accomplish by your simple existence. Be quiet, Argus!"

During these last words, the Molossian had gone growling toward the door, and, in spite of his master's command, barked loudly, as a vigorous knock was heard upon the outside. Hadrian asked in surprise: "Where is Mastor?"

Antinous opened a door into the next room, calling his name, but received no answer.

"What has become of the fellow?" asked the emperor. "He is usually close at hand, and fresh as a lark, but to-day he seems to be dreaming; and while assisting at my toilet let first a shoe, and then a shoulder-clasp fall out of his hand."

"Yesterday I read him a letter that had just come from Rome. His young wife has run away with a ship-captain."

"We will congratulate him on his freedom."

"He seemed very fond of her."

"A nice fellow like him, and my body-slave, will easily find a compensation."

"But not just yet. At first he must mourn his loss."

"So it seems. But there is the knocking again. We must see, who dares— But of course any one has the right to knock here, since I am on the Loehias, not the emperor, but an architect from Rome. Lie down, Argus; are you possessed, old fellow? The dog seems more careful of my dignity than I am myself—and the play of being architect does not seem to please him."

Antinous had already his hand on the door, when it opened from the outside, and the slave of Keraunus stepped over the threshold. The old negro presented a pitiable aspect.

The imposing figure of the emperor, and the handsome attire of his favorite, threw him into embarrassment; but the threatening growl of the Molossian caused him such anxiety that his meager legs knocked together under his threadbare coat.

Hadrian looked at this picture of woe in surprise, and asked: "What do you want, fellow?"

The slave attempted to take another step forward, but on Hadrian's authoritative command to remain where he was, stopped, casting his eyes down upon his flat feet, and scratched his shorn head.

"Well?" asked Hadrian again, in a tone not less encouraging, and loosened his own grip of the dog's collar in a suspicious manner.

The bowing knees of the slave began to tremble again, and stretching out his broad palms toward the gray-bearded man,

who appeared to him no less terrible than the dog, began, in cruelly mutilated Greek, the address his master had repeated to him over and over, which was to the effect that he appeared before the architect Claudius Venator, of Rome, to announce his master, Keraunus, a member of the city council, a Macedonian and Roman citizen, son of Ptolemæus, overseer of the former kingly, now imperial, palace on the Lochias.

Hadrian pitilessly suffered the poor fellow, from whose forehead the hot perspiration started, to go on to the end, while he only rubbed his hands together in delighted amusement, and, to prolong the sport, carefully refrained from giving the slightest assistance when his stammering tongue met an apparently insurmountable hinderance.

When the negro at last brought his bombastic sentence to an end, Hadrian said, kindly:

“Say to your master he can come in. ‘This is capital sport,’” added Hadrian to Antinous, as the slave went out. “If this is the Eagle, what must be the Jupiter?”

Keraunus did not keep him long waiting. While walking up and down the passage before the door, his evil temper had risen steadily, for he was determined to regard as an insult the fact that he, whose dignity and birth the slave must have already made known to the architect, should be allowed to remain so long alone. He had expected the Roman would come out himself to conduct him in, and could scarcely believe the short message of the slave.

“Did he simply say ‘I could enter;’ not ‘at his pleasure;’ or ‘if he will have the kindness to do so?’” asked the overseer.

“He said: ‘He can come in,’” answered the slave.

Keraunus uttered a curt “So!” straightened the golden fillet over his locks, threw back his head, crossed his arms above his broad breast, and ordered the negro to,

“Open the door.”

With immense pomposity he crossed the threshold, and not to be deficient in politeness, bowed, looking toward the sky, and would at once have opened upon his complaint in sharp language had not a glance at the emperor and an effect from the sudden adornment of the room, as well as from the unfriendly growl of the dog, persuaded him to strike a milder key. The slave, who followed him, took a secure position between the wall and a couch, but Keraunus advanced further. The emperor had seated himself on the window-sill, with one foot laid lightly upon the neck of the Molossian, and examined Keraunus as he would a notable rarity. When the overseer

met his glance he perceived that he had to do with a greater man than he had expected. There was something very impressive in the appearance of the emperor; but it only served to prick on his pride, and though not in so sharp a way as he had intended, he asked, with great show of dignity:

“Do I stand before the new guest of the Lochias, the architect Claudius Venator, from Rome?”

“You stand,” answered Hadrian, with a mischievous glance toward Antinous.

“You have met a friendly reception in this palace. As did my ancestors, who have ruled here for a century, so do I understand the exercise of hospitality.”

“I am overwhelmed by the venerable dignity of your race, and bow myself before your filial piety,” answered Hadrian, using the very tone of the overseer.

“I did not come here to tell stories,” said Keraunus, whose gall was excited by a fancied sarcastic smile about the mouth of the stranger—“not to tell stories, but to complain that you, in return for my hospitality, have taken so little pains to guard your host from injury.”

“What does this mean?” asked Hadrian, rising from his seat, and beckoning Antinous to hold the dog—for Argus manifested a special hostility toward the overseer. He had an instinctive perception that the man had come with no friendly intentions toward his master.

“Does this dangerous beast, with the gnashing teeth, belong to you?”

“Yes.”

“He threw my daughter to the ground this morning, and a costly pitcher in her hand was broken to pieces.”

“I heard of this accident, and would have given much to prevent it. You shall be fully compensated for the pitcher.”

“I beg you not to add insult to the injury we have already suffered. A father whose daughter has been thrown down and wounded—”

“Then did Argus bite her?” broke in Antinous, frightened.

“No,” answered Keraunus, “but both head and foot were injured by the fall, and she suffers much pain.”

“That is sad; and since I have had some experience in the art of healing, will gladly help her,” replied Hadrian.

“I pay the salary of a professional practitioner for services rendered to my family,” answered Keraunus, in a bluff tone, “and I came here to request, or more frankly, to demand—”

“What?” asked Hadrian.

“First, that I receive an apology.”

“The architect, Claudius Venator, is always ready to do that, if any person has suffered through him or through his fault. I repeat that I sincerely regret what has happened, and beg you to say to the young woman who has met with the accident, that her pain is also mine. What more do you wish?”

The features of Keraunus had become quite softened during these words, and he replied, less excited than before:

“I must beg you to chain your dog, or lock him up, or in some other way insure our safety.”

“That is too much,” cried the emperor.

“It is only a reasonable demand, upon which I shall insist,” answered Keraunus, with decision. “Neither I nor my children can be sure of our lives so long as this savage beast wanders about.”

Hadrian had erected monuments to favorite deceased dogs and horses, and the faithful Argus was dear to him, as only four-footed companions can be to childless men; therefore the demand seemed bold and unreasonable, and he answered, involuntarily:

“Foolishness! The dog shall be watched; and now let me hear nothing more.”

“You will either put him in chains,” returned Keraunus, with rolling eyes, “or some way will be found to make him forever harmless.”

“The cowardly murderer would find himself in trouble,” cried Hadrian. “What do you think, Argus?”

The dog raised himself with these words, and would have sprung at the throat of Keraunus, had not both his master and Antinous held him back.

Keraunus knew he was threatened, but at that moment he would have allowed himself to be torn in pieces without flinching, so completely was he mastered by rage and wounded pride.

“Will he also set his dog upon me in this house?” he cried, assuming a challenging attitude, with the left fist against his side. “Everything has its limits, and so has my patience with the guest, who in spite of his ripe years, forgets every consideration of propriety. I shall report to the Prefect Titianus how you conduct yourself; and when the emperor arrives, he shall learn—”

“What?” asked Hadrian, laughing.

“What liberties you take with me.”

“Till then the dog stays where he is, and, I assure you, under good control. But man, let me tell you that Hadrian is as fond of dogs as I am, and he is still more fond of me.”

"We shall see," grumbled Keraunus. "I or the dog."

"I think we shall say the dog."

"And with that Rome would undertake a new stretch of power," cried Keraunus, his eyes rolling in their sockets.

"You have taken Egypt from the Ptolemies."

"With good reason; but that is an old story."

"Right does not die out like a bad debt."

"But it loses its power with the death of the claimant. How long since the Lagides became extinct?"

"You assert that only because it is for your interest to believe it. In the man now standing before you flows the blood of the Macedonian princes of this land. My oldest son bears the name of Helios Ptolemæus, with whom, as you suppose, the Lagides became extinct."

"The dear, little, blind Helios," broke in here the old slave, who was accustomed to use the name of this child as a shield against the bad humor of Keraunus.

"Then the latest scion of the Lagieds is blind?" exclaimed the emperor, laughing. "Rome can bide his claim. But I must inform the emperor what a dangerous pretender this house contains."

"Denounce me, report, calumniate me," cried the overseer, scornfully; "but I will not be trampled on. Patience! Patience! You will come to know me!"

"And you, the Molossian," answered Hadrian, "if you do not instantly take yourself out of this place with your pilfering crow yonder."

Keraunus nodded to the slave, and turned his back to the enemy without a word of leave-taking. He lingered for an instant on the threshold, and cried to Hadrian:

"You may depend on this: I shall make known in the council, and to the emperor, how you have dared to treat a Macedonian citizen in this place."

Hadrian released the dog, who plunged fiercely against the door, now closed between him and the object of his rage. Hadrian commanded him to be quiet, and said to Antinous:

"A monster of a man! Not only ridiculous, but repugnant to the last degree. How the wrath worked within, yet without coming to any genuine outburst. I am always on my guard against such fellows. Look out for Argus, and do not forget that we are in a land, which, as Homer once said, is full of poison. Mastor must keep his eyes open; there he comes at last."

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN the body-slave of Hadrian sprung to the rescue of the threatened Selene, he had already passed through a scene that would never leave his memory. He had received an ineffaceable impression, his ear had caught words destined to echo forever in his soul, and which so mightily moved his whole being, that he had rendered the ordinary services at his master's morning toilet in a dreamy and absent-minded manner. It was his custom to leave the sleeping-room of his master at a very early hour, to make all ready which he would require on rising. There was the polishing of the gold-work on the closely fitting greaves, and the straps of the military boots, the clothes to be aired and sprinkled with the delicate perfumery of Hadrian's choice. But time was especially needed to prepare the bath. On the Lochias there was as yet nothing corresponding to the complete arrangements for bathing in the imperial palace at Rome, but the slave knew he would require an abundant supply of water.

He had been instructed to apply to Pontius whenever anything was needed. And he found him without much search, busied in preparing a comfortable sitting-room for the emperor, on his waking.

Pontius authorized Mastor to call on any of the slaves busied in laying the pavement for carrying the water. It was not the business of the emperor's body-slave to perform especially menial service; but upon a journey, or a hunting expedition, he took pleasure in looking after all matters connected with his master's personal comfort. The sun had not risen when he stepped into the court, and some of the slaves were still sleeping on their mats; others were gathered in groups about a fire waiting for the soup, which an old man and a boy were stirring with wooden sticks. Mastor did not like to disturb either of these, and so went on toward another group, who seemed to be talking together. As he came nearer, he perceived that only one was speaking, and the others were listeners.

The heart of the poor Mastor was very heavy, and he had no disposition to hear stories or jests. Life was wholly imbittered for him, and the duties to the emperor, which usually occupied all his energies, had to-day lost their interest. It seemed to him that grief had loosened the bands of service, and that he stood a lonely and irresponsible man.

He was thinking of gathering together all the gold pieces

which had been given him, either by Hadrian, or by rich people who had solicited his help in securing an early audience with his master, and going away to the city, where, with wine-drinking and sensual indulgence, he might forget himself and his troubles. What should follow, he did not care. If found, he might be scourged to death; he had known kicks and blows before he became a slave of the emperor—once, even, while being dragged to Rome, had been set upon by dogs. And if they should kill him, what matter would it be? All would then be over at a blow, and life seemed to offer nothing beyond weariness in the service of a restless master, heartache, and scorn. He was at heart a good fellow, who harmed no one, and never interfered with the pleasure of others. Least of all would he do that to-day, for he whose own heart is heavy with sorrow is especially careful not to disturb others. So, as he came nearer to the group, he determined to delay the proffer of his request until the speaker had finished. This was an old workman—but from his long hair one could tell that he was a freedman—and since he wore also a long white beard, Mastor supposed him either a Jew or a Phœnician. The flame from under the soup-kettle lighted his face, revealing nothing unusual, except the steady elevation of his eyes toward heaven, while his head rested upon his raised hands.

“And now, brethren,” he said, letting his hands fall to his side, “we will return to our work. ‘In the sweat of thy face, shalt thou eat bread’—so it is written. We, who are old, find it pretty hard to carry the stones, and to bend the stiff back so long; but then we are nearer the beautiful time than the rest of you. Life is not easy to any of us, but the Lord has invited, first of all, as His guests, those who carry trouble and burdens; and the slaves among us are certainly not the least of such.”

“‘Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest;’” broke in a younger man, repeating these words of Christ.

“Yes, those are the words of our Saviour,” said the old man in a tone of hearty assent, “and I think He had us in mind. As I said before, life is not so easy for any of us; but how much heavier was the burden He took upon Himself to deliver us from suffering. All must work, even the emperor. But He, who might have lived in the glory of His Father, let Himself be scorned and derided and spit upon—let thorns be thrust into His forehead, and before the heavy cross, whose weight crushed Him, and suffered the most painful death without a murmur, for our sakes. But He did not suffer in vain,

for the Father accepted the offering of His son, and said: 'Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' Let then another hard day begin, and a hundred more follow; let death cut us off from life: we believe in our Redeemer, we have the promise of God to receive us out of all pain and sorrow into His heaven, there to exchange the short period of misery for unending centuries of joy. Go now to the work. My Knakias, the stout Krates will gladly take your work until your finger is healed. And when the bread is distributed let us all remember the children of our dear departed Philammon. The work will be hard for you to-day, my poor Gibbius. My dear brethren, the master of this man sold yesterday his daughters to the trader from Smyrna. But comfort yourself, brother, with the thought that though you do not find them again in Egypt, or any other land, you will certainly see them in the house of your Heavenly Father. Our path lies through this world, but heaven is its goal, and the Leader who will never fail us is our Redeemer. And we shall all bear the labor, and sorrow, and anxiety easier for remembering that when the festal evening comes the King of Kings will open His doors, and bid us each enter as His guests, with all that we have loved here."

"Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest," repeated another voice out of the group.

The old man rose and nodded to a boy, who passed the bread, cut into pieces of equal size, while he poured wine into a wooden cup from a large pitcher.

Mastor had not lost a word of this speech, and the words, twice repeated: "Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest," sounded in his ears like a kindly invitation to beautiful days of joy and freedom. In this night-time of his sorrows it seemed a distant gleam which promised a new morning.

He approached the old man to ask if he were the overseer of this band of workmen.

"I am so," answered the old man; and on learning that Mastor had come in the name of Pontius, pointed out a few of the younger slaves, who quickly carried the needful water to the palace.

Pontius met them on the way, and remarked to Pollux, who accompanied him:

"The slave of the Roman architect has called on the Christians to serve his master. They are an orderly and temperate set, and always faithful to their duties."

While Mastor assisted at the toilet of the emperor, his service was unusually remiss, for the words he had so lately heard occupied his thoughts. He had not understood all, but he did comprehend that there was a friendly God, who had suffered torment in His own person, and who was specially kind to the poor and miserable, and who had promised to gather together again those who had loved each other here.

The "Come unto Me" rang so comfortingly in his heart, as to remind him of the mother who had often called him to her side, and opened both arms to receive and press him to her heart, and as he had loved to clasp his own dear son. The thought that some Being loved him in this way—he, the poor, lonely, forsaken man—who could release him from his burdens, and would at last restore to him father, mother, and the dear ones of his own broken home, took away half the bitterness of his sorrow. He always heard conversation that was carried on in the emperor's presence, and as the years went on, had learned to understand it more and more. There he had heard of the Christians, but they were always spoken of as erratic and dangerous, though there were, at that time, a few thoughtful men who sometimes—and so had Hadrian himself—taken their part. He had also heard some of his fellow-slaves spoken of as Christian fools. But now, for the first time, Mastor knew from their own mouths what they believed and hoped, and he could scarcely wait to finish his duties before seeking the old man again, among the workers on the pavement, to hear once more those words of hope and comfort.

So soon as Hadrian and Antinous had entered their sitting-room, Mastor hastened to the Christian in the court and sought to engage him in conversation. But the old man answered that all things must have their time. At present the work could not be interrupted, but after sunset released them from toil, he would speak again of Him who had invited the heavy laden.

Mastor thought no more of running away, and when he returned to the emperor, such a sunny glance was in his blue eyes, that the words of rebuke Hadrian had intended for his ear were unspoken; and turning to Antinous, said:

"I think the fellow has already comforted himself with a new love. Let us, as far as we may, follow the advice of Horace, and enjoy the present. Though the poet may let the future go as it will, I can not quite do that, for unfortunately I am emperor.

"Rome knows how to thank the gods that you are so," answered Antinous.

“What happy expressions this fellow does sometimes find,” said Hadrian, smiling, and stroking the brown locks of his favorite. “Now I must work until noon, with Phlegon and Titianus, whom I expect immediately; and after that we may find some amusement together. Ask the tall sculptor behind the screen at what hour he expects Balbilla for her sitting. We must examine the work of the architect and the Alexandrian artists by daylight; their zeal deserves this attention.”

Hadrian went to the apartment where his private secretary had the letters and dispatches from Rome and the provinces ready for his perusal.

Antinous stood for some time where he left him, watching the ships as they cast their anchors, or left the roadstead, and the little boats that swarmed about the large vessels, as wasps around ripe fruit. He heard, too, the song of the sailors, and the flute players, with which the oar-strokes of the great triremes were keeping time. He rejoiced in the clear blue sky, and the fresh, sweet air of morning, and speculated a little as to whether the odor of tan, wafted across the harbor, was agreeable or not. But as the sun rose higher the brilliance dazzled him. Yawning, he retired from the window, and threw himself upon a couch and stared with very little interest at the faded ceiling.

Idleness had become the occupation of his life, but he found its gray shadow, ennui, detracting from every pleasure. These lonely hours were usually spent in lazy dreaming of his kindred in Bithynia, of whom he dared not speak to the emperor, or of the hunting matches he had undertaken with Hadrian, of the wild game, or the fish which, as a skillful angler, he had caught, or of kindred topics. But he had no concern for the future—no love of work, no ambition, no passionate eagerness in any direction. He cared nothing for the admiration his beauty excited, and often had scarcely interest enough in life to move a limb or draw a breath.

He was indifferent to almost everything, except the words of the emperor, who seemed to him greater than all other beings together. Him he feared as fate, and to him he felt himself united as in the flower to its stem—that would die if the stem, on which it hung as a graceful ornament, were to be destroyed.

But to-day, as he lay stretched on the divan, his thoughts took a new direction. He could not forget the pale maiden he had rescued from the teeth of the Molossian—he felt again the cold white hand upon his neck, and heard the cool words with which she had left him. Antinous began to long for Selene, the same Antinous who, in every city he visited with the em-

peror, especially in Rome—received letters and bunches of flowers from the most celebrated beauties—and since he had left his mother's home had cared for no woman as he did for the horse Hadrian had given him, or for the great Molossian dog.

This girl seemed to him like breathing marble. Perhaps whoever she should clasp to her breast must lose his life; but that slow congealing of the blood seemed to him a more attractive death than one caused by a too rapid beating of the heart.

“Selene,” he murmured, with a slight tremor of the lips. That strange, silent presence had taken possession of his whole being, and he who formerly would lie stretched dreamily on his couch, without counting the hours, now sprung from the reclining posture, and walked the apartment with long strides. A passionate longing drove him up and down, and the wish to see her led him to devise some means by which he might accomplish the purpose. It seemed impossible to press himself into the dwelling of her enraged father without some excuse, and yet he knew she must be there, for the injury to her foot would prevent her leaving the house. Could he go again to ask the overseer for bread and salt?

After the scene so lately enacted he dared ask nothing of Keraunus in the name of Hadrian. What if he were to take a pitcher, to replace the one broken? That might only irritate still more the haughty man.

After dismissing various projects, he remembered that he possessed a few rare essences, which had been given him by the emperor. From these he would select something that might be useful for her injured foot. This act of compassion would certainly not displease his master, who had offered assistance of that sort in his conversation with Keraunus. He called Mastor to watch the dog, who had closely followed his promenading of the apartment; then going to his bedroom he took a costly flask, which had been a gift of Hadrian on his last birthday, and which had once belonged to Plotina, the wife of Trajan. Then he went out to seek the overseer's dwelling. On the steps where he had found Selene sat the old negro, who, in fear of the dog, dared venture no further. Antinous requested the slave to lead him to his master's dwelling. The negro went forward, and throwing open the door of the outer room, pointed toward the common room, saying: “Yonder; but Keraunus is not at home.” Without troubling himself further the negro returned to the children, while the Bithynian stood in doubt as to what he ought to do, with the vial in his hand. He could hear voices in conversation with Selene, and

one of them was that of a man; and still hesitating, the voice of Arsinoe crying out: "Who is there?" made further progress necessary.

Selene stood in the room, dressed in a white garment, and with a veil about her head, as if prepared to go out, while Arsinoe was perched upon the edge of a table covered with an array of old-fashioned articles. A Phœnician, who stood beside the table with a handsomely carved cup in his hand, seemed to be bargaining with her.

Keraunus had gone that morning to a relic dealer, but not finding him at home, had left an order for him to call and examine various articles.

The Phœnician had arrived before the return of Keraunus from the council, and Arsinoe was exhibiting the articles, expatiating upon their value in the meantime with much enthusiasm.

Unfortunately, Hiram did not count them of any higher worth than had Gabinius. Selene, expecting only failure, wished to bring the affair to an end, for the time was near at hand when the sisters must be in the papyrus mill. The refusal of Arsinoe to accompany her, and the prayer of the old slave that she would at least to-day spare her foot, only elicited the firm reply:

"I shall go."

The appearance of Antinous disturbed her.

Arsinoe thought him handsome but awkward; the relic dealer looked at him in admiration, and was the first to offer a greeting. Antinous returned it, bowed to the sisters, and said, addressing Selene:

"We have heard that you received an injury to both head and foot; and since we were the cause of your suffering, permit me to offer this vial, which contains an excellent remedy."

"I thank you," answered the young woman; "but I feel so much better that I shall try to go out."

"You ought not to do that," replied Antinous, very earnestly.

"I must go," said Selene.

"At least, keep the vial, that you may make an application after your return. Ten drops in a vessel of water, like that one yonder."

"I can do it, then."

"You will soon learn how healing it is. I hope you are no longer angry with us?"

"No."

“That makes me glad,” cried he, looking upon her with his great dreamy eyes full of silent passion.

Selene misunderstood their expression, and asked, in a cooler tone than before:

“To whom shall I return the vial after using its contents?”

“Please keep it,” begged Antinous. “It is handsome, and would have double worth for me if I knew it to be in your possession.”

“It is very pretty; but I never accept gifts.”

“Then break it after you have used it. You have not yet forgiven the savage trick of our dog, and we are heartily sorry.”

“I am not angry. Arsinoe, pour the medicine into a vase.”

Arsinoe did as she was requested; but in doing so, she noticed the beautiful play of colors in the glass, and said, frankly:

“If my sister will not have it, please give it to me. How can you make such an ado about nothing, Selene?”

“Then take it,” said Antinous, looking down at the floor, with a sudden memory of the high value Hadrian placed on the little vessel, and a fear that it might be called for.

Selene shrugged her shoulders as she wound the veil about her head, and said, with a reproachful look at her sister:

“It is high time.”

“I do not want to go to-day,” said Arsinoe, stubbornly; “and it is madness for you to walk a quarter of an hour with that swollen foot.”

“It were much better to spare yourself,” said the trader, respectfully; and Antinous added:

“If you make yourself worse, it will be sharpening our self-reproach.”

“I must go,” answered Selene, decidedly; “and you ought to go with me, sister.”

This was certainly not a decision of obstinacy, but one forced upon her by harsh necessity. If she failed to be at the papyrus mill on that day she would lose the wages of not only the week past, but also of that to come—both her own and Arsinoe’s. The emperor had promised the rich owner of the mill to pay him a visit, and since some repairs were to be made in the old structure, and it was to be adorned in honor of that event, leave of absence had been given to all the work-people, without deduction of wages—which were to be paid to-day, in advance. And Selene needed this money for the support of the family, and she summoned her will for the effort. Seeing that Arsinoe gave no sign of following, she asked again, with severe earnestness:

“Will you come? Yes or no?”

“No,” cried Arsinoe, sitting more firmly on the table.

“Then must I go alone?”

“You ought to stay at home.”

Selene stepped nearer and looked her sister reproachfully in the face. But Arsinoe insisted on having her own way. She pouted and pounded three times on the table, crying out:

“No—no—no!”

Selene beckoned to the old slave woman and commanded her to stay in the room until her father should return; then saluted the trader politely, and with only an indifferent nod to Antinous, left the room. The youth followed and overtook her when she stopped to speak with the children. She straightened their garments and charged them to keep away from the passage, where they might meet the dog.

Antinous stroked the curling locks of the blind boy and asked Selene, when she turned to climb the steps:

“Will you permit me to help you?”

“Yes,” she answered, for her first effort to walk had caused sharp pain. She extended her elbow that he might support her by placing his hand beneath.

Even then she would certainly have declined his offer of assistance had she cared at all for this favorite of Hadrian, but she carried the image of another man in her heart, and did not even perceive the beauty of Antinous.

Never before had his heart beat so violently as during the few moments in which he was permitted to touch the arm of Selene. He was intoxicated with emotion, yet he did not fail to perceive her pain while climbing.

“Oh, stay at home to-day and spare yourself,” he begged, more than once, with trembling voice.

“You weary me,” she replied in displeasure; “I must go, and it is not very far.”

“Will you allow me to accompany you?”

She laughed aloud, and answered, with a little scorn:

“Certainly not. Lead me through the passage, that the dog may not again attack me. Then you can go where you please, except with me.”

He obeyed, and, at the point where the passage entered a wider hall, she said: “Good-bye,” and expressed her thanks in a few friendly words.

There were two ways leading out. One passed over the bastion and the terrace, having many ascents and descents; the other was through the palace. She was forced to choose the latter, for it was quite impossible to go up and down the

stairs without help; but she shrunk from meeting so many men as were now gathered in the building.

She thought of asking her old playmate, Pollux, to lead her through the crowd as far as to the house of his father.

But this did not seem easy, for since the hour when he had first shown the bust of her mother to Arsinoe, instead of herself, she had felt piqued and angry. To him she had opened wide her weary and desolate heart during the frequent conversations they had held within a few days past. Twice she had served him as a model, and she had promised to go again for that purpose on the coming evening. They had talked together on many things, and even of love. He had waxed eloquent in assuring her that a good husband was all she wanted to make her sad heart happy and light. She had blushed, and he had looked down on his own great hands; but she had thought she could enjoy life at his side. It seemed to her that they had been created for each other. Then why had he first shown the bust to Arsinoe? She would ask him, and let him know that it had troubled her. At any rate, she must go and tell him that, on account of her injured foot, she could not stand as a model this evening.

With steadily increasing pain she entered the Hall of the Muses, and approached the screen which hid her old playfellow. But he was not alone; for she heard voices, and the merry laugh of a woman. Just as she was about to call the name of Pollux, the voice exclaimed, louder and merrier:

“Ah, that is too bold! Are you my dressing-maid? What liberties an artist presumes to take!”

“Say yes,” he begged in the same voice which more than once had persuaded her own action. “You are very beautiful, Balbilla; but if you allow me this, it would make you still more so.”

Again the merry laugh echoed behind the screen. The tone must have hurt the poor Selene, for she shrugged her shoulders, and her features worked as though suffering pain.

She pressed both hands to her side as she turned from the place and limped into the court.

What tortured the poor girl so keenly? Was it the need of the family? Was it the bodily pain, which grew at every step, or was it the chilled, wounded heart, deceived in its last opened and fairest hope.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHEN Selene went out, she usually met admiration from the passers-by—but to-day, a couple of street urchins followed, crying as they kept pace with her halting step: “Click—clack—”

The mirth of the thoughtless creatures was excited by the steady fall of her unbuckled shoe on the pavement.

But while she, under an accumulation of miseries, approached the papyrus mill, joy and delight visited Arsinoë—for scarcely had her sister and Antinous left the dwelling when Hiram, the relic dealer, begged permission to look at the glass vessel which the handsome youth had given her. He examined it carefully, turning it on all sides in the sunlight; testing its quality through contact with the stone in his finger-ring, and murmured lightly to himself: “*Vasa murrhina.*”

The sharp ears of Arsinoë caught these words, for she had learned from her father that the most costly vases with which the wealthy Romans adorned their apartments were of “*vasa murrhina.*” So she told him she knew what great sums were paid for that ware, and she must have a very good price if she were to sell her late gift. He made an offer, but she laughingly increased it tenfold; and after a half-playful and half-earnest bargaining, the Phœnician said, decidedly:

“Two thousand drachmas; not a sesterce more.”

“That is certainly not enough; but you can have it.”

“I should not give half that sum to a less pretty customer.”

“And I only let you have it because you are such a nice man.”

“I will send you the money before sunset.”

These words made the girl thoughtful—who had been at first so overcome by delight and surprise, that she would instinctively have thrown her arms around the neck of either the trader or the slave woman; or, better still, have taken the whole world into her embrace—for her father would soon come, and she was afraid he might disapprove her bargain, and return the vase to the young man and the money to the merchant. She would never have asked for it, had she had any conception of its value. But now it certainly belonged to her, and if it were to be restored, no one would be satisfied; for the stranger would feel insulted, and she would lose the greatest pleasure of all her life. What was to be done? She still sat on the table’s edge, holding one foot in her hand, and in this

saucy attitude studied the floor as earnestly as though provision for the future were to be read among the figures described there. The trader amused himself with the embarrassment which made her charming, and wished, in that moment, that his son, a young painter, were standing in his place. But at length he broke his silence, saying:

“You fear that your father will not like our bargaining in his absence; and yet it is for him that you wish to make the money.”

“Who said that?”

“Would he have offered me his treasures if he had not needed the money?”

“It is only—I can but—” stammered Arsinoe, who was little practiced in deception. “If I do not confess to him—”

“I have seen how innocently you came by this vase,” answered the dealer, “and Keraunus need know nothing of the matter. You can suppose it to be broken, and its fragments lying in the sea yonder. Which of these things does your father consider of the least value?”

“This old sword of Marc Antony,” said the girl, her face growing brighter. “He says it is too long and narrow for that which it pretends to be. For my part, I think it was never meant for a sword, but for a roasting-spit.”

“I will send it to my kitchen for that purpose,” replied the dealer; “but I offer two thousand drachmas for it; I will take it with me, and send you the amount in a few hours. Will that be agreeable?”

Arsinoe dropped her foot, slid down from her seat, and clapped her hands joyfully for an answer.

“Tell him,” went on the dealer, “I can afford to pay more for such things now, because the emperor will certainly be looking after what Julius Cæsar, Marc Antony, Octavius Augustus, and other great Romans have used while in Egypt. I would like to have the old woman carry out the roasting-spit. My slave is waiting outside, and will take it under his chiton to my kitchen door. Otherwise, he might meet those who would envy him the costly treasure. It is always well to be protected from envious glances.”

The dealer laughed, hid the vial of Antinous in his robe, gave the sword to the old woman, and took leave of Arsinoe.

So soon as left alone, she put on her shoes and veil to run to the papyrus mill. Selene must hear of this unexpected good fortune, and then she would bring the poor girl home in a sedan chair, which one could always find near the harbor.

Though there was more of apparent discord than harmony

in the intercourse of these sisters, yet whatever Arsinoe met, of either good or bad, she wished at once to share with Selene.

“Everlasting gods, what luck!” Now she would be able to go among the daughters of the rich citizens as well dressed as any of them, and take her full share in the festivity; and besides, a nice sum would be left for the family, and the work in the mill, which disgusted her, she hoped would now be forever unnecessary.

The old slave still sat with the children near the steps. Arsinoe lifted each one to bestow a kiss, and whispered:

“You shall have cakes this evening!”

She pressed her lips on both eyes of the blind boy, and said:

“You may go with me, dear little fellow. I shall have a litter for Selene, and you can be put in with her, and be brought home like a rich gentleman.”

The little fellow threw up his hands, exclaiming joyfully:

“Through the air, through the air, and not a fall!”

While still holding him in her arms, Keraunus, excited, and with dripping forehead and panting for breath, came up the steps from the bastion, and exclaimed as soon as he sufficiently recovered breath:

“I have just met Hiram, with the sword of Marc Antony. You were a fool to sell it for two thousand drachmas!”

“But, father,” said Arsinoe, laughing, “you would have given it for a pasty and a swallow of wine.”

“I,” exclaimed Keraunus, “should probably have got three times as much in exchange for this venerable relic, which the emperor might have paid talents to possess—but sold is sold. I did not expose your ignorance to the dealer, and can not blame you. Still, the thought of no longer owning the sword of Marc Antony will give me sleepless nights.”

“If we set a nice piece of meat before you this evening, I think the slumber will follow,” answered Arsinoe, taking the handkerchief from his hand, and wiping his face in a caressing manner. “We are rich people now, father, and will show the daughters of the other citizens what we are able to do.”

“You must both take part in the festivity,” said the overseer, with decision. “The emperor shall see that I do not shrink from a sacrifice in his honor, and when he sees my daughters, and I bring my charges against the architect—”

“You can let that drop, father, if Selene’s foot is well again.”

“Where is she?”

“Gone out.”

“Then her foot is not so very bad. I hope she will soon come home.”

“Perhaps so. I was going just now to fetch her in a litter.”

“A litter?” asked Keraunus, astonished. “The two thousand drachmas have turned the girl’s head.”

“On account of her foot. It was very painful when she went out.”

“Why, then, did she not stay at home? As usual, there will be a whole hour of haggling over one sesterce, and neither of you have any time to lose.”

“I will seek her at once.”

“No, no, you at least must stay here, for in two hours the women and girls will assemble in the theater.”

“In two hours! But, Great Serapis, what shall we wear?”

“It is your business to arrange that,” answered Keraunus. “I will order for myself the litter of which you spoke, and be carried to Tryphon’s house and back again. Is there any money in Selene’s box?”

Arsinoe went to her sleeping-room, and returned, saying:

“Six double drachmas, that is all.”

“Four will be enough,” answered Keraunus; but after thinking a moment, took it all.

“What do you want of the shipwright?” asked Arsinoe.

“I was plagued again on your account in the council. I said one of my daughters was sick, and the other was needed to nurse her. But that did not satisfy them—they still wanted the one who was not sick. Then I said you had no mother—that we lived by ourselves, and I did not feel willing to have my child go alone into the assembly. And Tryphon replied that it would be a pleasure for his wife to take you into the theater with her own daughter. That I answered, half in play, half in earnest, saying I did not suppose you would be willing to go without your sister. I did not positively refuse, and you know the reason.”

“Oh, the brave Antony and his royal roasting-spit!” cried Arsinoe. “Now all is possible, and you can announce us to the ship-master. Our white dresses are still quite good; but, on the way, you must buy of Abibaal the Phœnician a few yards of blue ribbon for me, and of red for Selene.”

“Very well—”

“I will get both dresses in order, but, seriously, when must we be ready?”

“In two hours.”

“Do you know how it is, little father?”

“ Well then?”

“ Our old slave is half blind, and does everything wrong. Will you allow me to ask Mother Doris from the gate-keeper’s house to help me? She is so kind and so skillful, and she irons so nicely.”

“ Hush,” interrupted Keraunus; “ those people shall never cross my threshold.”

“ But my hair; just look at it!” cried Arsinoe, running her fingers through the rich, full tresses. “ To put that up, to weave in the ribbons, to iron the two dresses, and sew on the ornaments—even the dressing-maid of the empress could not do all that.”

“ Doris shall never cross my threshold,” replied Keraunus, again and again.

“ Then I must ask Hippias the tailor to send some one; but that would cost something.”

“ We have enough, and can do it,” answered Keraunus with pride, repeating over his commissions, not to forget any: “ Hippias the tailor—blue ribbon—red ribbon—shipwright Tryphon—”

The woman sent by the tailor assisted Arsinoe to put the dresses in order, and was unceasing in outspoken admiration of the soft and shining hair, which she built up very high, weaving ribbons through and through; then twisting it above the comb, again to fall in long ringlets over her neck.

Keraunus looked with pride upon his lovely daughter. He was also delighted with the money just brought by the servant of the relie dealer, and fairly chuckled as he counted and piled up the gold pieces.

Arsinoe whispered while he was thus occupied:

“ Did Hiram take any advantage of me?” but Keraunus begged her not to disturb him, and answered:

“ Think of the great Antony’s weapon, perhaps the very one he plunged into his own breast. Why does Selene stay out so long?”

An hour and a half had passed, and as she still delayed, the overseer declared they must go; for it would not do to keep Tryphon’s wife waiting.

Arsinoe was really sorry to go without her sister. She had taken much pains to put her dress in order, and laid it across the divan near the mosaic painting. Never had Arsinoe been alone upon the street, and it seemed to her she should enjoy nothing without the company and protection of Selene.

But the confident assurance of Keraunus that they would be glad to assign her a place somewhat later reassured her

spirits. As a final preparation, she had sprinkled upon her garments a few drops of the perfumery her father used before going into the council; and charged him with ordering the servant to buy the promised cakes for the children. The little ones had gathered about, and admired her with an "Ah!" and an "Oh!" as an awe-inspiring presence which they dared not approach or touch. On account of the arrangement of her hair, she could not bend down to them as usual; but she stroked the curls of the little Helios, and said:

"To-morrow we will ride through the air; and perhaps afterward Selene will tell you a pretty story."

Her heart beat faster than usual when she stepped into the sedan which waited for her before the dwelling of the gate-keeper. Mother Doris admired her without showing herself; but as Keraunus stepped into the street to order another sedan for himself, she cut quickly her two handsomest roses, and running out, with a finger on her laughing lips, put them into the hand of the girl.

As in a dream, Arsinoe reached the house of Tryphon and the theater; and for the first time in her life learned that joy and anxiety can reign in the same heart, and that one will not exclude the other. These two emotions prevented her from seeing and hearing what passed about her. Only once she became conscious, as she met two young men walking arm in arm, and crowned with wreaths, that they cried after her:

"Long live beauty!"

After this she looked down into her lap, and upon the roses Doris had given her. The flowers reminded her of the son of this friendly old lady, and she wondered if he had seen her in her fine array. That thought was pleasant, and not at all impossible, for Pollux would naturally be there often while at work on the Lochias. Perhaps he had even plucked the roses for her, and dared not venture to bring them himself, seeing her father so near.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE young sculptor was not in the gate-keeper's house when Arsinoe passed by. He had thought of her often enough since their meeting before the bust of her mother; but on this particular afternoon his time and attention were occupied by another young woman.

Balbilla had gone to the Lochias about noon, accompanied by the worthy Claudia, the widow of a poor senator, who for

many years had lived as lady of honor and companion with the rich but fatherless and motherless orphan.

In Rome she presided over the house of Balbilla with as much efficiency as pleasure. There was only one element of discontent in her lot, and this came from Balbilla's love of travel—which forced her too often to leave the chief city—and outside of Rome no place seemed a desirable residence. Going to the baths at Baiae, or to the Ligurian coast during the cold months of January and February, was not unpleasant, because, though not in Rome, she was sure of Roman society. But the mad desire of Balbilla to visit Africa, the country she imagined to be a glowing furnace, and to go in a reeling vessel, had been a sore trial to the worthy woman. But she was constrained to make the best of the necessity, for the empress had expressed so strong a wish for the company of Balbilla on her trip up the Nile, that the refusal of Claudia would have been an act of disobedience. Moreover, she was forced to acknowledge to herself that her self-willed foster-child—as she was in the habit of calling Balbilla—would have insisted on making the journey without the urgency of Sabina.

Balbilla had gone to the palace on the Lochias to sit for her bust. When Selene passed by the screen which hid her old playfellow and his work from her sight, the worthy matron Claudia had fallen asleep upon her couch, and the sculptor was trying to prove to Balbilla that the height and elaboration of her hair-dressing injured the expression of her features.

He begged her to remember how simply the great Athenian masters of sculpture in the most flourishing days of the plastic art had represented the hair in their statues, and proposed to arrange hers in the same manner, if she would come to him the next day, before the maid should have used the hot iron upon it, for to-day the curls would act like the spring of a clasp which one bends out of its place. Balbilla retorted in a lively manner, protesting against his ideas, and maintaining her preference for the prevailing mode.

“But this fashion is not beautiful; it is monstrous, and offends the eye. The idle Roman women invented it, not as any addition to beauty, but simply to attract attention,” asserted Pollux.

“To attract attention by any outward effect is unpleasant to me,” answered Balbilla. “But one is less conspicuous who follows the prevailing fashion in dress—providing that it does not change too often—even though he adopt something in itself more graceful and modest. Which do you consider the more idle, the stylish young man on the Canopic way, or

the cynical philosophers with their tousled hair, the torn felt blanket over their shoulder, and the rough stick in their dirty hands?"

"The latter," answered Pollux; "but they sin against the laws of taste, toward which I wish to win you, and which will as surely survive every changing shade of conventionalism as Homer's *Iliad* is destined to outlive the drawling rhymes of the street singers, who yesterday filled our streets with descriptions of a murder. Am I the first to attempt a bust of yourself?"

"No," laughed Balbilla; "five Roman artists have already done the same thing."

"Has any one of them succeeded to your satisfaction?"

"Every one proved a failure."

"Then will your handsome face go down to future generations in fivefold distortion?"

"Oh, no; I had them all broken to pieces."

"That was good for them," cried Pollux, and turning naturally toward his prospective work, apostrophized it thus:

"Poor clay, if the fair lady to whom you may bear a certain resemblance does not dispense with the chaos of her curls, you are sure to share the fate of your five predecessors."

The matron, awakened by these words, asked:

"Were you speaking of Balbilla's broken busts?"

"Yes," answered the poetess.

"Perhaps this may follow the others," sighed Claudia.

"Do you know what impends over you in this attempt?"

"What is it?"

"This young woman has some knowledge of your art."

"I have learned to bungle a little from Aristeas," broke in Balbilla.

"Aha! Since the emperor introduced it, one would be quite out of fashion in Rome who did not busy himself with sculpture."

"Perhaps so."

"Finding something to displease her in each bust, she has tried to improve it."

"I only prepare the work for the slaves," again broke in Balbilla. "My people have gradually attained to skill in the work of destruction."

"My work has at least the prospect of a speedy end," sighed Pollux. "Verily, all things come into this world under sentence of death."

"Would such a destruction of your labor displease you?" asked Balbilla.

"Yes, if it should be successful; no, in case of failure."

"Whoever preserves a poor bust," said Balbilla, "brings upon himself a more unfavorable verdict from posterity than he deserves."

"Certainly; but how can you have courage to risk for the sixth time such an act of destruction?"

"Because I can destroy whatever I please," said the spoiled girl, laughing. "Sitting still is not my vocation."

"Certainly it is not," sighed Claudia. "But from you we expect something good."

"I thank you," returned Pollux, "and will spare no pains to answer your expectations and make something worthy of preservation in marble."

"What do you mean by our expectations?"

Pollux meditated for a moment before replying:

"It is not easy for me to express that which I feel as an artist. A plastic image that can satisfy its creator must fulfill two conditions: it should carry to future generations a likeness of the person represented, and also give some evidence of the state of the art in the time of its construction."

"That sounds well; but you are forgetting yourself."

"Do you mean my own fame?"

"Certainly."

"I work for Papias, and serve art in general; that is enough. Meanwhile, Fame neither asks for me nor I for Fame."

"Yet you will not omit to place your name on my bust?"

"Why should I not?"

"Wise Cicero!"

"Cicero?"

"You do not seem familiar with the clever remark of the old Tullius about the philosophers who write on the worthlessness of fame, yet always put their own names on the books?"

"I do not despise the laurel, but will not run after that whose only worth is that it comes unsought and because I deserve it."

"Good. But in order to fulfill your first-named condition you need to be acquainted with my thoughts and feelings—my entire inner life."

"I look at you, and speak with you," answered Pollux.

Claudia laughed aloud, and said:

"If instead of two interviews of two hours each, you had known her as many years, there would still be more to discover. Not a week passes in which she does not exhibit something to puzzle Rome. This restless head is never still, though the golden heart be always and everywhere the same."

"And do you suppose that is new to me?" asked Pollux.

"I read the restless spirit of my model upon her forehead and her mouth, and the eyes betray her disposition."

"And my pug-nose?" asked Balbilla.

"That bears witness to the wonderfully odd and merry ideas which astonish Rome."

"Perhaps you are not yet working for the hammer of the slaves," returned Balbilla, laughing.

"And if I were, the memory of this pleasant hour could not be destroyed," returned Pollux.

Pontius now appeared, begging Balbilla to forgive his interruption of the sitting. The opinion of Pollux was needed in an important matter, which would call for his absence only about ten minutes.

So soon as the two women were left alone, Balbilla rose and looked curiously around the narrow workshop, while her companion remarked:

"A fine young man, this Pollux; but rather too free and lively."

"He is an artist," answered Balbilla, turning over every picture and tablet and study of the sculptor, lifted the cover from the Urania, touched the lute which hung on the wall, ran from one thing to another, and at last stopped before a great mass of clay covered with a cloth which occupied one corner.

"What can that be?" asked Claudia.

"A partly finished model, without doubt."

Balbilla touched it with the tips of her fingers, and said:

"It seems to be a head. Perhaps something unusual. The choicest food comes often under the covered dishes. Let us unveil this statue."

"Who knows what it may be?" said Claudia, loosening a cord at one end of the covering. "One often finds choice things in these workshops."

"It is only a human head," cried Balbilla. "I can feel it."

"But one can not be sure," said the matron, loosening a knot. "These artists are such lawless, unaccountable people."

"Take that end, I will lift from here," proposed Balbilla; and a moment later the poetess stood before the distorted caricature of a Roman woman which Hadrian had made.

She recognized it instantly, and at first laughed aloud, but the longer she looked the more vexed and angry did she become. Knowing her own features, she saw that this made prominent whatever was least agreeable in bold exaggeration.

The result was a head ugly enough to frighten one, and yet bearing a resemblance to herself. While looking at it, she remembered what Pollux had lately said about reading her character in her face, and a deep indignation rose within her soul. The great wealth which made her able to gratify every whim, and turned even her follies into subject for admiration, had not protected her from a disillusion which girls in a more modest sphere of life were spared. Her kindness and generosity were often made occasion of trespass, even by artists; but it was certain that whoever had made this caricature had acted from a different motive than the gaining of a high price for a flattering likeness.

She had found pleasure in the fresh and healthy nature of this young sculptor and his respectful address. Still, no one here was so likely to have perceived the peculiarities of her not strictly handsome face, which, though really lending it a charm, still were to be recognized in this caricature. She was indignant, and felt herself insulted. Always accustomed to express her displeasure, she cried in a vehement manner and with moist eyes:

“That is disgraceful, that is mean. Give me the mantle, Claudia. I will not remain another moment as a target for his coarse and malicious jesting.”

“It is most unworthy of him to insult a woman in your position. I hope the sedan waits outside the gate.”

Pontius, coming in, heard the last words. Pollux was still detained by the prefect. As the architect came nearer, he said to Balbilla:

“You have reason to be indignant. The thing is an insult in clay, ugly in every feature, but Pollux did not make it.”

“You apologize for your friend.”

“I would not utter an untruth, even for my brother.”

“As the other in jest, so do you in earnest seek to give it an appearance of honorable intention.”

“You are irritated, and not accustomed to bridle your tongue,” answered the architect. “Pollux, I repeat it, has not made this caricature, but a sculptor from Rome.”

“Who is it? We know them all.”

“I am not at liberty to mention his name.”

“There it is again. We will go, Claudia.”

“Stay where you are,” said Pontius, firmly. “Were you not she whom you are, I should let you go wherever you wish with the wrath and the double guilt upon your soul of injustice toward two upright men. But as the granddaughter of Claudius Balbillus I consider it my duty to say this to you—

had Pollux made this caricature he would no longer be in this palace, for I should have thrust him out, and thrown his wretched performance after him. You look surprised, for you know not who I am to speak thus to you."

"That is not true," answered Balbilla, quietly; for she was convinced that the man who stood before her like a bronze statue, and with eyebrows drawn together, told the truth, and for some reason had the right to speak so decidedly to her. "I know you to be the head architect of this city, of whom Titianus has related great things to us; but how can I explain your special interest in me?"

"It is my duty to serve you, even with my life, should that be necessary."

"You?" asked Balbilla, bewildered. "I saw you for the first time yesterday."

"Nevertheless, you have a right to dispose of all I am or have, for my grandfather was the slave of yours."

"I do not understand," answered Balbilla, with increasing embarrassment.

"Can it be that the tutor of your noble grandfather, and your own father, the old Sophinus, to whom Claudius Balbillus gave his freedom, is entirely forgotten among you?"

"Certainly, most certainly not," cried Balbilla. "He must have been a noble man and a fine scholar."

"He was my father's father," said Pontius.

"Then you belong to our family," exclaimed Balbilla, extending her hand joyfully.

"Thank you for this word," returned Pontius; "and now let me say once more, Pollux had nothing to do with this caricature."

"Take away my mantle, Claudia; I shall continue the sitting."

"Not to-day; it would only injure the work. I pray you, let the indignation, to which you gave such vehement expression, wear off in some other direction. The sculptor ought not to know that you have seen the caricature; it would destroy his freedom. When you come to-morrow, with a refreshed soul and a more cheerful humor, Pollux will be able to make an image of you that should satisfy the granddaughter of Claudius Balbillus."

"And I hope also the grandson of his wise tutor," said the girl, kindly saluting Pontius as she went with her companion toward the door of the hall, where some slaves awaited them.

Pontius accompanied them in silence to their escort, and then, returning to the workshop, carefully covered again the

caricature. As he returned to the hall, Pollux hastened toward him, saying:

“The architect from Rome wishes to speak with you—a grand man he is.”

“Balbilla was called away, and left her greeting for you. Take that thing yonder out of the way, that she may not see it. It is rough and detestable.”

In a few moments he stood before the emperor, who made known his wish to watch the sitting of Balbilla.

As Pontius related to him what had occurred behind the screen, begging him not to mention the matter to Pollux, and told him of her indignation at sight of the insulting caricature, Hadrian rubbed his hands together, laughing aloud in delight. Pontius ground his teeth and said:

“Balbilla seemed to me a mirth-loving but noble-hearted woman. I can see no reason for laughing at her.”

Hadrian looked sharply into the serious eyes of the bold architect, let his hand rest upon his shoulder, and said, with a shade of threatening in his voice:

“To do that in my presence would certainly bring you or any other persons into trouble. The old sometimes venture to amuse themselves with things which the children are not permitted to touch.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

SELENE reached the entrance-gate through the immense wall of sunburned bricks which inclosed the buildings, reservoirs, and courts belonging to the papyrus mill of Plutarch, in which she and her sister worked daily. Usually she reached this point in a quarter of an hour; but to-day it had taken four times as long, and she had scarcely been able, on account of the excruciating pain, to keep herself upright and to move onward, limping and staggering.

She longed to cling to every person going in the same direction, or attach herself to some vehicle; but pitiless and unheeding, men and animals alike had passed on. Some, who were in haste, knocked against her and scarcely turned as she shrunk more closely into herself with a groan, or sunk down upon the nearest curbstone to wipe her eyes or press the swollen foot, by a new pain to divert for a moment the steady, unendurable agony. The street boys who had cried after her gave up their sport when they saw she was determined not to notice their persecution.

Once as she was sitting upon a doorstep, a woman with a

child in her arms asked what was the matter, but went on when Selene only shook her head in reply. And she was very near to giving up, when the street became suddenly filled with a curious throng to watch the passage of Verus in his chariot—and what a chariot!

The Alexandrians were accustomed to see much that was striking and peculiar in their populous city, but this vehicle never failed to attract all eyes, whether in surprise, admiration, or bitter sarcasm.

In the midst of a gilded chariot stood the handsome Roman, guiding the four white horses harnessed abreast with his own hand. On his head was a wreath, and across his breast a garland of roses. On the foot-board sat two charming children dressed as cupids. Their limbs were swinging freely, and white doves, fastened to their hands by long golden wires, fluttered before Verus. The hurrying crowd pressed Selene against the wall, who, instead of looking after this striking equipage, only covered her face in agony. Still, the shining chariot, the golden harness, and the figure of Verus had passed before her as a dream picture. And the dim glance had wakened in her soul—half paralyzed by pain and anxiety—only the thought that the mere bridle of this spendthrift had cost enough to keep their family from want a whole year. As the chariot turned into the next street, and the crowd rushed after it, she was almost thrown to the ground. She could not go any further, and only looked about for a litter—but not one was in sight. It was but a few hundred steps further to reach the mill, but it seemed to her a distance of many stadia.

Then a few workmen came out, laughing and showing their money to each other. So she knew the distribution of wages had already commenced. And a glance at the position of the sun reminded her how long she had been on the way, and of her object in coming. With a mighty effort of will she limped a few steps further, and, as her courage began again to yield, there came along a little maiden who had some petty service at the table where she and Arsinoe worked, but who now carried a pitcher. She called to the little brown Egyptian:

“Please, Hathor, go back with me to the mill, for I have such pain in my foot. Perhaps, leaning on your shoulder, I may walk.”

“I can not,” cried the child. “If I hurry back, I am to get some dates!” and off she ran.

Selene looked after her with the question, not for the first time rising in her heart, why she, who took so much trouble

for others, found so little help in return; and sighing, tried again to go on.

After a few steps, and the pain obscuring the senses of sight and hearing, a voice asked timidly but kindly what was the matter. It was the voice of a leaf-paster, whose place in the mill was near her own—a poor, deformed creature, who still was cheerful and quiet and industrious, and had often rendered little acts of kindness to Arsinoe and herself. Now she offered her crooked shoulder for the support of Selene, and regulated every step with a wonderful appreciation of her suffering. They entered the mill without exchanging a word. In the outer court the girl made Selene rest on a bundle of papyrus stalks, which were in great piles near a water-tank, where they were freshened for arrangement according to the location in which they had grown. Beyond this court, the halls where these three-sided stalks were examined and stripped of their green coverings, and the pith cut into finger-lengths of varied thickness, seemed to grow longer as they proceeded, and, indeed, to stretch on without end.

The pith-cleavers usually sat on both sides of a broad passage used by the slaves when they carried the prepared sheets to the drying-house—each at his own small table; but to-day the greater part of these people had left their places, and stood chatting, or packing the wooden screws, knives, and whetstones together. In the midst of this hall the hand of Selene slipped from the shoulder of her companion, and, overtaken by dizziness, she whispered:

“I can do no more.”

The hunchback held her up as well as she could, and although not strong, succeeded in guiding her to an empty bench.

A few work-people gathered around and brought water, but when she opened her eyes and was recognized by some who worked in the same room with herself, they proposed to take her thither. Without asking her consent, they lifted the bench upon which she was lying. The injured foot, hanging downward, caused such exquisite pain that she screamed and tried to draw it back, extending her hand to grasp her ankle. But her companion again lent her help, taking the suffering foot into her own hand, and supporting it with tender carefulness.

In the large room where both men and women were fastening the dried strips of papyrus together into sheets, she was able to draw the veil closer about her head. Arsinoe and she, in order to remain unknown, had always drawn their veils closely in passing here, and only laid them aside in the small room where some twenty other women were at work. Now

all eyes rested inquisitively upon her, carried as if in triumph, but she seemed to herself like a criminal borne through the streets in disgrace before the eyes of the citizens. Certainly the foot gave her much pain, and she was indeed wretched; yet the beggarly pride inherited from her father, and the humiliating consciousness of being classed with common people, was one large element of her misery. In their own work-room were only free women, but more than a thousand slaves were occupied in this establishment, and she would as soon have eaten from the same dish with animals as to be classed with these people.

At one time, when almost everything was needed in their house, her father had directed her attention to this factory, by relating indignantly how the daughter of a citizen had humiliated herself and her whole class by working there to earn money. It was true she had been well paid, and in answer to Selene's question, he had mentioned the amount she received and the name of the manufacturer who had so bought her honor with his gold.

Soon after this she went to the factory and made all the necessary arrangements for herself and Arsinoe to go for a few hours each day, and take their places among those who gummed the finished strips of papyrus together. This was two years ago, but how often had Arsinoe, at the beginning of a new week or when special repugnance to the work gained power over her soul, refused to go any more to the factory. And how much persuasion she had been forced to use—how many new ribbons she had bought, how often consented to take share in some amusement which cost the half of a week's wages to prevail on Arsinoe to remain, and to prevent her making known to her father the occasion of their so-called walk for pleasure.

As Salene once more sat on her stool before the long table on which lay hundreds of the prepared leaves of papyrus waiting to be fastened together, she felt scarcely able to lift the veil from her face. She drew the upper sheets toward herself, dipped her brush in the vessel of gum, and began to spread it on the edge of the leaves, but in the midst of the task her strength failed and the light implement fell from her fingers. She laid her hands on the table, and burying her face within them, began to weep.

While the tears ran down through her fingers, and shiver after shiver shook her frame, a woman who sat opposite had called the hunchback to herself, and after whispering a few

words, had pressed her hand warmly, and looked with confidence into her lusterless but clear, friendly eyes.

Thereupon the girl seated herself silently beside Selene, in the empty place of Arsinoe, and pushed the smaller part of the papyrus toward the woman opposite, and both began to work diligently at the gumming.

For some time they had continued, when Selene raised her head and tried again to use the brush. Seeing the girl beside her, for whose former assistance she had scarcely shown any gratitude, diligently at work in Arsinoe's place, she said, in a tone that expressed rather surprise than friendliness:

"That is my sister's place. You can keep it to-day, but when the factory opens again she must sit by me."

"I know, I know," answered the girl, timidly; "I am only finishing your portion, for I have nothing more to do, and you are suffering."

Kindness was so strange a thing in Selene's experience that she misunderstood her neighbor, and said, shrugging her shoulders:

"Serve yourself on our account all you please to-day. I can not do anything."

The deformed girl blushed, and looked at the woman opposite hesitatingly, who laid down her own brush, and said, turning to Selene:

"Maria does not mean it so, dear child. She has undertaken one half of your day's work, and I the other, that you may not fail of the wages through your suffering."

"Do I look so very poor?" asked the daughter of Keraunus, a flush coming into her pale face.

"Certainly not, child," answered the woman. "Undoubtedly you and your sister come from a good house, but please allow us the pleasure of helping you."

"I do not understand," stammered Selene.

"If you were to notice that it hurt me to bend over, and the wind had blown these leaves from the table, would you not gladly have gathered them up for me?" asked the woman. "What we are doing for you is nothing more or less than that. We shall be through in a few moments, and then can follow the others who have already gone. As your overseer, you know I must remain any way till you all leave the work-room."

Selene felt that she ought to be grateful to both these women for their kindness, and yet it would seem to her like accepting a charity. Therefore she answered, her cheeks again flushing:

“I am very grateful for your kindness—very grateful—but here every one works for himself, and it would not be proper for me to accept from you what you have earned.”

She had spoken these words with haughtiness and not frank decision; but they did not disturb the quiet composure of the woman, who was known among the work-people as “Widow Hannah,” and now, resting her large, friendly eyes on Selene, answered:

“We have gladly done the work for you, dear daughter, and a Divine Teacher has taught us it is more blessed to give than to receive. Do you understand the meaning of these words? It certainly makes kind-hearted people much happier to show themselves useful to others than to receive good gifts. You have just said you are grateful to us. Will you then destroy our pleasure?”

“I do not quite comprehend,” answered Selene.

“Is that so?” interrupted Widow Hannah. “Then try for once to show yourself willing to accept hearty good-will, and you will learn how good it is, how it expands the breast, and changes trouble into delight. Is it not true, Maria, that we shall thank Selene for the opportunity of using our hands for her?”

“I have been glad to do it,” answered the hunchback; “and now all is finished.”

“And mine also,” added the widow, pressing the last strip with a cloth, and placing her own share beside that Maria had prepared.

“I thank you much,” murmured Selene, with downcast eyes, and rose from her seat. But trying to step with the injured foot caused such pain that with a cry she sunk back again. The widow hastened to her side, and taking the swollen foot with her small and handsome hands, looked attentively at it, and exclaimed:

“Oh, my Saviour! Is it possible that she has come through the streets with such a foot!” and turning to her face, said: “Poor child! you are indeed suffering. How the rim of the sandal presses into the swollen flesh! It is dreadful. Do you live far from here?”

“I can repair ~~them~~ in half an hour.”

“Impossible! Let me first learn from my tablets what is due to you, and I will fetch it from the pay-master. Then we will see what can be done for you. Meanwhile, dear daughter, stay where you are; and, Maria, place a stool under her feet, and carefully loosen the straps from her ankle. Do not

fear, dear child, she has soft hands that are accustomed to nursing.”

With these words she rose and kissed the forehead and eyes of the sufferer; but Selene held her fast, and said, with moist eyes and a pathetic tremor in her voice, “Hannah, dear Hannah!”

As the traveler, on a warm October day, is reminded of the departed summer, so did the presence and the kindness of this widow call up in the heart of Selene memories of her dear lost mother. Something sweet pervaded all the bitterness of her pain. So she nodded thankfully and kept her seat, for it was good to obey once more, and, like a child, feel herself the object of kindness and care.

As the widow went away, Maria knelt down to loosen the thongs of her sandals, which had become almost buried in the swollen muscles. She did it with great care, but the mere touch of her fingers caused Selene to groan and sink again into a swoon. Maria brought water and bathed her forehead, and cooled the wound, and when she again opened her eyes and saw the widow standing at her side, she asked, with a smile:

“Have I been asleep?”

“Your eyes were closed, dear child,” was the answer. “Here, I have the wages of twelve days, for yourself and your sister. Do not move; I will put it in your pocket. The physician belonging to the factory will come directly, and he will arrange for the comfort of your feet, and the chief overseer will order a litter to take you home. Where do you live?”

“We?” asked Selene, frightened. “No, no, I will walk home.”

“But, dear child, you could not even reach the court unless we should both help you.”

“Then let me call a sedan upon the street. My father—no one must know—I am not able to tell you.”

The widow motioned to Maria to go out; and after the door was closed, took a seat beside Selene, saying:

“Now, my dear girl, we are alone. I am not a babbler, and certainly could not betray your confidence. Tell me without agitating yourself where you belong. Do you not believe that I mean well by you?”

“Yes,” answered Selene, looking up into a face that, in its setting of soft brown hair, bore the stamp of hearty kindness upon every feature. “Yes. You remind me very much of my mother.”

“I might also be your mother,” answered Hannah.

“I am already nineteen years old.”

“So old?” answered Hannah, smiling. “My life has been twice as long as yours. I had one child, a son, who was taken from me while he was very young. He would have been one year older than you are. Have you a mother?”

“No,” answered Selene, with the old bitterness in her tone. “The gods have torn her from us. She would have been like you, not yet forty; and she was beautiful and kind, as you are. She left seven other children besides myself, and one of them is blind. I am the eldest, and do what I can that they may not come to want.”

“God will help you in this good work.”

“The gods!” cried Selene, bitterly. “They let them grow up. I look out for all the rest. Oh, my foot! my foot!”

“We must think of that now first of all. Have you still a father?”

“Yes.”

“And you are not willing he should know that you work here?”

Selene shook her head for answer.

“Is he poor, but of noble origin?”

“Yes.”

“I think the physician is coming. Now, then, will you not let me know the name of your father? It will be quite necessary in sending you home.”

“I am the daughter of the palace overseer, Keraunus, and our dwelling is on the Lochias,” answered Selene, with sudden decision, but in a whisper that the old man coming in at the door might not hear. “No one, and least of all my father, must know what we do here.”

The widow nodded quietly, and turned to greet the physician, who now entered with an assistant. Hannah led him to the sick girl, whose forehead she cooled with a wet cloth, and whom she supported on her own arm, kissing her cheek when the pain threatened to overcome her strength again during the examination of the foot and the cutting away of the leather thong, which Maria had attempted in vain to loosen. Groans and sharp cries proved the severity of her pain.

As at last the foot was free from the bands, and the physician had learned the extent of the injury, he exclaimed to his assistant, “Look here, Hippolytes, the girl has come over the streets on this thing! If any one else had told me so, I should have told him to keep the lies to himself. The fibula is broken at the joint, and with this broken limb the child has walked further than I would ever trust myself without a litter.

Zounds! girl, if you are not lamed for life it will be a wonder!"

Selene listened with closed eyes and in great weariness. With the last words she writhed a little and drew up her lip scornfully.

"Do you care nothing for the limping?" asked the physician, whose sharp eyes saw everything. "That is your affair, but it is mine to see that you do not go out of my hands a cripple. Such an opportunity is not offered me every day; and, happily, you have one excellent helper on your side; I mean your fresh, youthful vigor. That hole in the head is hotter than is desirable. Cool it faithfully with fresh water. Where do you live, girl?"

"Almost half an hour's distance," said Hannah, in her name.

"She must not go so far, even in a litter," answered the physician.

"I must go home," cried Selene, decidedly, trying to rise.

"Nonsense!" ejaculated the physician. "I forbid it. Lie still, be patient and obedient, and this bad affair may end happily. The fever has already set in, and it will increase with the evening. That is not caused by the leg, but by the wound in the head. Do you think we could arrange a bed here," he continued, turning to Hannah, "where she might lie still until work begins again in the factory?"

"I would rather perish!" cried Selene, trying to draw her foot away from the doctor.

"Only be quiet, dear child," begged the widow, soothingly. "I know what we can do. My house stands in the garden of Paulina, the widow of Pudens, very near here, on the sea-shore—scarcely a thousand steps away—and she can have a soft bed and good nursing there. A comfortable litter stands ready, and I ought—"

"That is quite a distance," answered the doctor. "But really nowhere could one be better nursed. So we will try it, and I will go with her to beat the cursed legs of the bearers if they do not keep step."

Selene did not oppose this arrangement, and took the soothing drink the doctor had prepared, but she shed some tears when placed in the litter, with her foot supported on pillows. She was only half conscious of being borne through the streets, for the voice of the physician exhorting her bearers to be careful, and the passing by of people, horses, and vehicles, seemed like the incidents of a dream. She also noticed that they carried her through a garden, and was at last dimly conscious of

being laid on a bed. Beyond that all was a dream-like vagueness, but a twitching of the features and quick movement of the hand toward the wound upon her head testified that consciousness was not wholly obscured.

Hannah sat beside her bed, and followed strictly the orders of the physician, who did not leave until fully satisfied with all arrangements for Selene's comfort. Maria was near, assisting the widow to moisten the compresses and prepare the bandages of old linen.

When Selene breathed more quietly, Hannah beckoned to Maria, and asked, in a whisper:

"Can you stay here until morning? We must assist each other, for there will be many nights of watching. How hot the wound is!"

"Yes, if I go first to my mother, for she would else be anxious."

"Good; and you will perhaps undertake another errand, for I can not leave this poor child at present."

"Her family will be anxious."

"I want to have you go to them; but no one besides ourselves must know who she is. Ask for Selene's sister, and tell her what has happened. If you should see the father tell him I will nurse his daughter, for the physician strictly forbade her to go or to be carried home. He must not know that Selene belongs to our work-people, and do not allude to the factory in his presence. If you find neither Arsinoe nor her father at home, simply say to whoever opens the door that the sick girl is with me, and that I will gladly nurse her. Of our workshop, remember, nothing must be said. One thing more: the poor girl certainly would not have gone there to-day unless the family had been in need of the wages. Give them these drachmas, and say, which is true, that we found them on her person."

CHAPTER XIX.

PLUTARCH, one of the richest citizens of Alexandria, and who owned the papyrus mill in which Selene and Arsinoe were employed, had offered to provide a "suitable" reception for the wives and daughters of his fellow-citizens in one of the smallest theaters of the city. Whoever knew him, understood that "suitable," according to his ideas, meant something magnificent.

The daughter of the ship-builder had prepared Arsinoe to see great things, but even at the entrance her expectations

were more than realized; for, as her father mentioned his name and her own, one boy handed her a beautiful bunch of flowers out of a great basket of such; and another, seated on a dolphin, put into her hand, as a card of admission, a tiny plate of carved ivory, set in gold, arranged to be worn as a clasp for the peplum. At each door, all who entered received similar gifts. The passages leading to the auditorium were filled with fragrant perfume, and Arsinoe, who had been here before, scarcely recognized the place, so richly was it ornamented with flowers and drapery.

And who had ever seen women and girls seated in the best places, as was the case to-day? Indeed, it was only on very rare occasions that the daughters of citizens were permitted to witness a spectacle.

Smiling, as to an old acquaintance one has outgrown, she looked up to the highest and cheapest tier of benches in this half-circular space, where alone she had been able to afford a place, and had known the emotions of mirth, fear, sympathy, in spite of the wind that was never at rest up there under the free, overarching sky. In the summer-time it was worse, for then a sail was spread upon the side where the sun shone. This was made of strong cloth, and when it was moved by means of rings by which it hung the creaking was painful to the ears, and sometimes one had to turn the head to avoid being struck by the heavy cords, or by the sail itself.

But Arsinoe recalled it all to-day, only as a butterfly remembers the chrysalis case it has broken through and left behind. Glowing with happy excitement, she and her companion were led to their seats. She knew that many eyes followed her, but that only increased her delight, for she was conscious of looking well, and enjoyed attention. To-day at least! For those who noticed her were the first people of the city. There they stood upon the stage, and among them was her good friend Pollux, who waved his hand toward her. She could not keep her feet still, but crossed her arms, not to show her excitement.

The distribution of parts had already begun, since, in waiting for Selene, they were half an hour late.

As soon as she perceived that the eyes drawn upon her as she entered were turned in other directions, she looked about. She was surrounded by women and girls who were to have a share in the representation, and their place in the building was separated from the stage only by the orchestra, which they reached by the help of a few steps, usually devoted to the choir.

Behind Arsinoe, in wide-reaching circles, sat the fathers, mothers and husbands of those who were to take part in the proceedings; and among these was Keraunus, in his crocus-colored pallium, and a goodly array of mirth-loving matrons and elderly citizens, whom Plutarch had specially invited. Among the girls, Arsinoe saw many whose beauty gave her pleasure, but she had no feeling of envy, and did not think of comparing herself with them. She knew very well that she was pretty, and had no need to hide herself; and that was enough. There was something intoxicating in the continuous murmur of voices and the fine fragrance rising from the altar in the orchestra. There was nothing to disturb her observations, for her companion had found friends with whom she was chatting and laughing.

Arsinoe fixed her attention upon the stage, partly perhaps for the sake of Pollux, who, according to the wish of the Prefect Titianus, and in spite of the remonstrance of his master Papias, had been placed among the artists arranging the festival. More than once she had seen the afternoon sun shining as brightly in this theater, and the blue heavens arching as cloudlessly above the open space; but how different was the high platform behind the orchestra!

The pillared front was of variegated marble, and the background represented the same gilded palace as before; but today garlands of fresh and fragrant flowers festooned the columns.

The first artists of the city moved about with tablets and pencils in their hands among some fifty women and girls; while Plutarch himself and the gentlemen surrounding him represented a stately choir, sometimes standing together, and sometimes separated.

Upon the right side of the stage were three purple couches.

One of them was occupied by the Prefect Titianus—who also held tablet and pencil—and his wife Julia.

Verus lay extended upon another, crowned, as usual, with roses. The third was arranged for Plutarch.

The prefect spoke unrestrainedly with all, as if he were the host, and often his remarks were applauded, or created universal laughter.

The figure of the wealthy Plutarch—which once seen was never to be forgotten—was not new to Arsinoe, for a few days before he had visited the factory in company with an architect to consider how the building should be arranged for the reception of the emperor. In their work-room he had stopped to pinch the cheeks of Arsinoe with some flattering words.

And there he waddled upon the stage! He was said to be an old man of almost seventy; was lame, but his limbs were in constant, involuntary motion, and his immensely corpulent body was supported by two stately youths.

His well-shaped head must have been unusually handsome in younger days. Now he wore a wig of long brown curls; his eyebrows and lashes were colored, his cheeks painted with white and rose color, which gave his features the expression of having been stiffened while smiling. He wore a wreath of strange flowers upon his head that resembled clusters of grapes.

Full-blown red and white roses peeped from the breast folds of his ample toga, and were held by golden clasps in which precious stones sparkled. The border of his mantle was thickly set with rosebuds, each one fastened with an emerald gleaming like so many beetles. The youths who supported him seemed a part of his own person. He treated them as if they were crutches, and they appeared to need no directions to know exactly what he wanted, when he wished to stop, when to move forward. From a distance his face looked like that of a youth, but a nearer view made it seem like a head of plaster with automatic eyes.

The sophist, Favorinus, declared one would weep over him, as a corpse moved automatically, if he were not forced to laugh instead; and he himself had been heard to say that he strove by every means to hold on to his faithless youth.

On account of his living crutches the Alexandrians called him the six-legged Adonis. Hearing this nickname, he said:

"I should rather they would call me the six-handed;" and in truth he was of exceedingly kind heart, very generous and benevolent, cared for his work-people like a father, kept his slaves well, made his freedmen rich, and from time to time spent large sums in providing grain for the people.

Arsinoe looked compassionately upon the poor old man, who, with all his skill and all his gold, could neither keep or buy back his own lost youth. In the meager person who spoke often with Plutarch, Arsinoe recognized the relic dealer, Gabinius, to whom her father had shown the door when he tried to buy the mosaic from their family room.

The conversation was interrupted, for the distribution of parts in the group representing "Alexander's entrance into Babylon" was complete. About fifty women and girls were dismissed from the stage, and descended to the orchestra.

The Exegete, the highest functionary of the city, came forward to receive a new list from the hand of Papias. After

rapidly glancing over it, he passed it to the herald, who cried in the ears of the assembly:

“In the name of the high Exegete, I beg the attention of the wives and daughters of the Macedonian and Roman citizens. We now come to a new scene in our representation of the important events in the life of the great Macedonian—‘Alexander’s marriage with Roxana,’ and I request those chosen to represent it to come forward to the stage.”

And in a far-sounding voice he read a long list of names. While thus occupied, every other sound in the great auditorium suddenly ceased.

Also on the stage all were silent, except when Verus whispered a few words to Titianus, or Gabinius sought nervously to impress some long sentence into the ear of Plutarch, who answered him with a nod or movement of the hands.

Arsinoe listened with repressed breath and loud beating of the heart. But she blushed all over, and stared in embarrassment at the flowers in her hand, when she heard the words ring clear and distinct from the mouth of the herald:

“Arsinoe, the second daughter of Keraunus, Macedonian and Roman citizen.”

The daughter of Tryphon, who had been called, left her place instantly, but Arsinoe waited modestly until a few matrons rose, whom she followed across the orchestra and up the steps to the platform.

There the women and girls were placed in two rows, and received respectful attention. Arsinoe soon perceived that she was looked at more than the other girls, and was conscious that she was a subject of discussion among the managers, and that the eyes of many in the audience were fixed upon her. She began to feel ashamed, as though fingers were pointing her out, and yet it was pleasant, and when she cast her eyes to the ground she was conscious that it was as much to hide her own satisfaction as embarrassment.

And when the voice of Verus exclaimed: “Charming! charming! A Roxana who has just stepped out of the picture!” she had an intuitive perception that she herself was the object of his remark.

Hearing her own name, she ventured to look up, thinking it must be the voice of Pollux who had uttered it; but saw only Plutarch on his living crutches, and the lank Gabinius inspecting the group.

As they approached her, and Plutarch with his unequal gait shuffled past, he nudged Gabinius, saying—meanwhile kissing his hand and nodding to Arsinoe:

“I know her! One does not easily forget such faces. Ivory and red coral.”

Arsinoe was frightened, and the blood left her cheeks and all joy her heart, when the old man stopped before her and said:

“See, here is a bud from our factory among the proud lilies and roses. She has come from the workshop to my assembly. But that is no matter. One rejoices in beauty everywhere. I will not ask how you came, and am only glad that you are here.”

Arsinoe partly covered her face, but he tapped on her white arm with his finger and laughed. Gabinius asked, as they passed on:

“Did I hear right? Is there one of your work-people among our daughters?”

“Yes, certainly; one pair of active hands among all these idle ones.”

“Then she has pushed herself in, and we must remove her.”

“Do not disturb her; she is charming.”

“It is an outrage, here in this assembly.”

“An outrage?” broke in Plutarch; “not at all. One must not be too particular, else how could we receive the child of a mere dealer in antiquities?” and went on good-naturedly: “Your own fine appreciation of beauty must be gratified with this lovely being; or do you fear that she may be chosen for the part of Roxana instead of your charming daughter? Let us listen to the gentlemen yonder and see what they are doing.”

These words referred to a loud conversation in the immediate vicinity of the prefect and pretor.

Both these gentlemen, and most of the painters and sculptors, were of opinion that Arsinoe was remarkably adapted to the part of Roxana, and that she was in face and figure much like Action's painting of this gentle daughter of the Bactrian prince, which had been adopted as the model for the representation. Only Papias and two of his brother sculptors were opposed to this choice, and zealously insisted that Praxilla, the daughter of Gabinius, was the only person in the assembly qualified for the part of Alexander's bride.

The three men stood in close business relation to the father of this slender and certainly handsome young woman. Their zeal became vehement when Gabinius, in the company of Plutarch, came so near as to recognize their voices.

“And who is the young woman?” asked Papias, turning to-

ward Arsinoe, as the men came nearer. "There is nothing to be said against her beauty; but her dress is less than simple; she wears no ornaments worth speaking of; and I will bet a thousand against one that her parents are not in condition to furnish the outfit essential for a Roxana on occasion of her marriage to Alexander. An Asiatic should appear in silk, gold and jewels. My friend here would so dress his Praxilla that the brilliance of her costume would have surprised even the great Macedonian; but who is the father of that pretty child to whom the white dress and the blue ribbons in her hair, and the two roses, are all very fitting?"

"Your estimate is correct," said the dealer, with a dry sharpness in his tone; "the girl of whom you were speaking can come no more into question. I do not say this in the interest of my daughter, but from a due sense of the fitness of things. One can hardly conceive how the young creature could have had the audacity to push herself in here. Verily, locks and bolts open to a pretty face. She is—and I beg you not to be frightened—only one of the working people from the papyrus mill of our dear host Plutarch."

"That is not true," broke in Pollux, in contradiction of the statement.

"Moderate your words, young man," answered the dealer in relics; "I call you to witness, noble Plutarch."

"Let her be whoever she is," answered the old man, angrily; "she certainly looks like one of my work-people, but if she had come directly from the pasting-table, with such a face and such a figure she is here and everywhere else excellently in place. That is my opinion."

"Bravo, my handsome friend!" cried Verus, bowing to the old man. "The emperor cares far more for such charming faces as that yonder than for all your old certificates of citizenship and your full purses."

"That is so," added the prefect; "and I am willing to swear she is a free maiden, and no slave. You appeared for her defense, Pollux. What do you know of her?"

"That she is the daughter of the palace overseer Keraunus, whom I have known from childhood," answered Pollux, aloud. "He is a Roman citizen, and from an old Macedonian family besides."

"Perhaps also allied to the kingly race," added Titianus, laughing.

"I know the man," answered Gabinius, quickly. "He is poor, and an arrogant fool."

"I should suppose," interposed Verus, "this were not the

place to discuss the character of the parents of these women and girls."

"But he is poor," cried Gabinius, excited. "A few days ago he offered to sell me his miserable rarities; but I could—"

"We give you our sympathy in the unsuccessful bargain," broke in Verus again, and this time with exquisite politeness. "But we will first consider the persons, and afterward the costume. The father of this girl is then a Roman citizen?"

"A member of the council, and, in his own way, a man of prominence," said Titianus.

"And I," added his wife Julia, "am pleased with the appearance of this young lady, and if she be chosen, and her father is poor, as you assert, my friend, I will undertake the charge of her costume. The emperor will be charmed with this Roxana."

The advocates of Gabinius were silent, while he himself trembled with rage and disappointment; but his fury reached its height when Plutarch, whose influence he had expected to win for his daughter, bowed his corpulent body before Julia, and with a pretty gesture of expostulation, said:

"This time my old eyes have deceived me. The child certainly looked like one of my work-people—very much; but now I see there is a certain something in this face not found in the other. I have done her wrong, and am her debtor. Will you allow me, noble Julia, to add the ornaments to the costume of our Roxana? I may be fortunate in finding something pretty. I am going directly to beg her pardon, and express to her our wish. Will you permit it, noble lady? Do you authorize me, gentlemen?"

A few moments later it was known over the whole stage, and throughout the audience that Arsinoe, daughter of Keraunus, had been chosen to represent Roxana.

"Who was Keraunus?"

"How dared they give the prominent part to any except a child of the richest and best known families?"

"One might expect it, when such liberties are allowed the artist population."

"Where will the poor thing find the talents to purchase the costume fit for an Asiatic princess, the bride of Alexander?"

"The rich Plutarch and the wife of the prefect will take care of that."

"Beggars!"

"Our daughters could have worn family jewels!"

"Are we only going to display pretty masks before the emperor, and not our best possessions?"

“Suppose Hadrian inquires about this Roxana, and some one should tell him that a collection was taken up to buy her costume?”

“Such things can only be done in Alexandria.”

“People will find out if she has worked in Plutarch’s factory. That may not be true, but the old painted good-for-nothing is fond of pretty faces. He has blackened hers here! Believe me, where you see smoke there is fire, and, without doubt, she is in the pay of the old man.”

“For what?”

“If you wish to know you must ask one of the priests of Aphrodite. It is not a thing to be laughed at, for it is scandalous, outrageous!”

Such were the comments with which the news of Arsinoe’s choice to the part of Roxana were received; and bitter resentment was roused in the souls of Gabinius and his daughter.

Praxilla had been appointed to the part of playmate of the bride of Alexander, and accepted it without objection; but on their way, she nodded silently in answer to her father’s word: “Let things go as they please now. A few hours before the beginning of the play I shall report that you are sick.”

But the choice of Arsinoe had also given joy. Keraunus sat in one of the middle tiers of seats, with his legs spread wide apart, his face in a glow, panting and wheezing in the excess of his delight, and too proud even to draw back his feet, when the brother of the archidikastes tried to pass by him, although he occupied two full places.

Arsinoe, whose quick ear had caught the accusation of Gabinius, and the denial of it by Pollux, was, at first, ready to sink under shame and anxiety; but now she felt herself wafted as on the wings of fortune. She had never been so happy, and when with her father she entered the first dark street, she fell upon his neck, she kissed him on both cheeks, and told him how gracious Julia, the wife of Titianus, had been, and with what friendliness she had undertaken to provide her costly costume. Keraunus did not object, and, strange to say, found it quite consistent with his own dignity to allow Plutarch to provide her with jewelry. “They saw,” he said, pathetically, “that we did not hesitate to do as much as the other citizens, but it needs millions to provide a suitable costume for the marriage of Roxana, and I am frank to confess I can not furnish that. Whence it comes is all the same to me; and I know you are to be first among the best of the city. I am quite satisfied, my dear child. To-morrow there will be another gathering, and perhaps Selene may also receive a promi-

ment part. Fortunately, we have enough to provide her costume. When does the wife of the prefect receive you?"

"To-morrow, about noon."

"Then to-morrow early we must buy you a good new gown."

"Will there not also be enough for a better bracelet? This is so small and poor," asked Arsinoe, coaxingly.

"You shall have one, for you deserve it," answered Keraunus, with dignity. "But you must wait patiently another day—the gold-workers sell nothing to-morrow on account of the feast."

Arsinoe had never known her father more cheerful or social, and yet the way from the theater to the Lochias was long, and it was already past the time when he was accustomed to sleep. The gathering in the theater had occupied a long time, for after Arsinoe had left the stage, lights were brought and three more scenes were arranged, and after that the guests of Plutarch were invited to partake of wine, fruit, syrup, sweet cakes, oyster patties, and other dainties. The overseer had eaten freely of the attractive dishes, but as there had not been time for his usual greediness, he left in a better humor than was usual after a feast. Toward the end of their walk he became thoughtful, and said:

"To-morrow the council meet to make the final arrangements for the festivities. Everybody will congratulate me, look at me, ask my opinion, and the gilding of my fillet is worn off, so that in some places the silver has come into sight. Your costume is provided for, and it seems to me necessary that I go to a jeweler and exchange this unworthy article for genuine gold. What a man is, that he ought to appear."

This sentiment pleased him; and when Arsinoe begged him, as they were passing through the gate, only to save enough for Selene's costume, he smiled, and said:

"We hardly need to be anxious any more. I ought to know these Alexandrians, and I think they will now be trying to win my Roxana for a wife. The only son of the rich Plutarch is still unmarried. He is not very young, but is a fine man, and has already a seat in the council."

The dreams of this happy father were interrupted by Mother Doris, who, as they passed the gate-house, called his name.

Keraunus stopped, but when Doris said: "I must speak with you," he answered:

"But I will not hear you to-day or any other time."

"For my own pleasure," said Doris, "I certainly should

not address you, and only wish to tell you that Selene is not at home."

"What did you say?" asked Keraunus.

"The poor child, with her maimed foot, became unable to walk, and was taken into the house of a stranger, where she is now cared for."

"Selene!" cried Arsinoe, falling suddenly from her heaven of joy into fright and distress. "Do you know where she is?"

Before Doris could answer, Keraunus blurted out:

"It is all the fault of that Roman architect and his savage beast. All right! It is well, for now the emperor will certainly support my claim. He will put out of the way one who has injured the sister of Roxana, and prevented her appearance at the festive parade. But it is well, it is excellent!"

"That is sad enough to make one weep," answered the gate-keeper's wife. "Is that all your gratitude for her care of the little children? How is it possible for a father to speak thus, whose best child is lying with a broken leg, in the house of a stranger?"

"With a broken leg?" cried Arsinoe, piteously.

"Is it broken!" asked Keraunus, slowly, and really anxious.

"Where can I find her?"

"She is with one Hannah, who has a little house within the garden of the widow of Pudens."

"Why did they not bring her here?"

"Because the physician forbade it. She has a fever, but will be well nursed. Hannah belongs to the Christians. I can not endure these people, but they do understand nursing better than all others."

"With the Christians! My child with the Christians!" cried Keraunus, beside herself. "Quick, Arsinoe, come with me directly. Selene shall not remain one moment longer than is absolutely necessary among the cursed rabble. Everlasting gods! To think such disgrace should be added to all my other misfortunes!"

"It is not so bad as that," said Doris, good humoredly. "There are excellent people among the Christians—certainly they are honest, for the poor hunchbacked thing who brought the news gave me this money which Hannah found in Selene's pocket."

Keranus put out his hand for the poor wages of his daughter as scornfully as if accustomed to gold and caring nothing for miserable silver; but at sight of the drachmas, Arsinoe began to weep, because she knew that for the sake of this petty sum

Selene had left her home, and she felt intuitively what pain she must have suffered on the way.

"A mere pretense of honor!" cried Keraunus, as he fastened his purse. "I have heard of the shameful doings in the religious meetings of this set. Exchanging kisses with slaves is not exactly the thing for my daughter. Come, Arsinoe, we will find a litter immediately."

"No, no!" exclaimed Doris. "At first you must leave her in peace. This is a hard thing to say to a father, but the physician declared it might cost her life if she were not quiet. With the inflamed wound on her head, the fever, and a broken leg, she is not likely to attend their meetings. The poor, dear child!"

Keraunus brooded silently, but Arsinoe said:

"I must go to her, I must see her, Doris!"

"That I would not think of preventing, my darling," said the old woman. "I went myself to the Christian's house, but they would not allow me to see her. With you it is different, for you are a sister."

"Come, father," begged Arsinoe, "we will first look after the children, and then you will accompany me to Selene. Oh, why did I not go with her this morning? Alas, if she should die!"

CHAPTER XX.

KERAUNUS and Arsinoe went very carefully toward their dwelling, for fear of an encounter with the Molossian, which, however, was to-night in the sleeping apartment of Antinous. They found the old slave woman in great excitement, for she loved Selene, and was also anxious about the other children, who did not seem well. Arsinoe went immediately to their sleeping-room, but the old woman related to her master, while he was exchanging his crocus-colored pallium and his sandals for other articles of a poorer sort, that the darling of his heart, the little Helios, was very sick, and that she had given him some of the medicine Keraunus himself was in the habit of using.

"Idiotic animal," cried Keraunus, "to give my medicine to the child! If you were not so old I would have you scourged."

"But you said the drops were good," stammered the slave.

"Yes, for me," cried Keraunus, hastening, without stopping to fasten his sandal straps, into the children's room. There sat his blind favorite, his "heir," as he loved to call

him, nestling his pretty head against Arsinoe's breast. The child knew his father's step, and moaned:

"Selene was away, I was frightened, and I feel so bad, so bad."

Keraunus laid his hand on the boy's head. Finding it very hot he strode restlessly up and down before the tiny bed, saying:

"So it goes. If one misfortune comes another is sure to follow. Look at him, Arsinoe. Do you remember how the fever began with poor Berenice? Nausea, restlessness, and a hot head. Is your throat sore, my child?"

"No, but I feel so bad," answered Helios.

Keraunus pulled open his little shirt to see if there were any spots on the breast, but Arsinoe said, as she bent over:

"I think it is only a fit of indigestion. The stupid old slave gives him everything he asks for, and he has eaten half the raisin-cakes we bade her bring home as we were going out."

"But his head is very hot," answered Keraunus.

"It will be all right in the morning. Poor Selene needs us more than he does. Come, father, the old woman can stay with him."

"Selene ought to come," whined the child. "Please, please, do not leave me alone again."

"Father will stay with you," said Keraunus, tenderly, for the appeal moved his heart. "None of you realize what we possess in this child."

"He will soon be asleep," persisted Arsinoe. "Let us go at once, else it will be too late."

"And leave the old woman to commit another act of stupidity? It is my duty to stay with this child. You can go to your sister, and take the old slave for company."

"Very well. I will return early in the morning."

"In the morning!" exclaimed Keraunus. "No, no, that will not do. Doris says Selene will be well nursed among the Christians. You can see how she is, carry my best wishes, and then come back."

"But, father—"

"Besides, you must not forget that the wife of the prefect expects you to-morrow, to choose the stuff for your costume. On that account you must not look tired or lose your sleep."

"I can rest some in the morning."

"In the morning! Think of my curls! and your new gown! and the poor Helios! The festivities begin early to-morrow, and you know how it always is then. The old slave would be

of no use in the crowd. You can only see how she is, and you must not stay."

"I will see—"

"Not a word of 'seeing.' Come back directly! I command it. Within two hours you must be in your bed."

Arsinoe shrugged her shoulders, and a few minutes later stood with the slave before the gate-keeper's house. A broad stream of light fell through the open door of the room so cheerful with birds and flowers. She saw that both Euphorion and Doris were there, and so the gate could be opened without delay. The Graces barked, but recognized an old friend, and did not leave their cushions. For many years Arsinoe, in obedience to her father's strict command, had not entered this home-like retreat, and her heart beat more warmly as she looked again on what had been so pleasant in her childhood and never forgotten. There were the birds, the little dogs, the lute hanging on the wall near the Apollo. And on the table, as of old, a golden brown cake stood close beside the wine jar. How often had she stepped in there for some dainty bit, or to find Pollux, whose clever inventions and ready interest gave a fresh charm to all work and all play. And there he sat at this moment, with his long legs stretched out, telling the story of her choice to the part of Roxana, and applying such adjectives to her name as made the blood rush to her cheeks, for she was sure he had no suspicion that she was listening. The boy had become a stately man, and a famous sculptor—but still he was the same good-natured and kind-hearted Pollux. The bold leap with which he sprung from his seat toward her, the fresh laugh interrupting her words, the tender, child-like caresses bestowed upon his mother, and the hearty tone of his sympathy in the misfortunes of Selene—all this so roused the dear old long-absent emotions within her that she clasped joyfully the great hands held out toward her, and if in that moment he had pressed her to his heart, it would have seemed only natural.

Arsinoe had gone into the house of Doris with a heavy weight on her spirits, but something in this atmosphere so softened and dispelled it that instead of the tormenting dread of impending danger, she thought of her sister only as detained by a lame foot, upon a comfortable bed. In place of anxiety came tender and hearty sympathy, and her voice was almost cheerful as she asked Euphorion to open the gate. Doris had quieted her with the assurance that Selene would be carefully nursed in the house of Hannah—but thinking her wish to see her sister only natural, had heartily seconded the offer of

Pollux to go with her, knowing as they did that the streets would be filled with a noisy and wanton crowd soon after midnight, and that a bat would be as effectual in protecting Arsinoe from the drunken slaves they were sure to meet, as this old black scare-crow, who was only a wreck before she had come into the possession of Keraunus.

They walked in silence side by side through the dimly lighted streets, meeting more people the further they went. At length Pollux said:

“Lay your arm within mine, that you may feel more sure of my protection, and that I may better realize that I have found you again, and am permitted to be near you, you wonderful creature.”

These words were not spoken in jest, but hearty earnest, and the deep voice of the young sculptor trembled with excitement, and his tone expressed sincere tenderness. To the young maiden they were as the finger of love knocking upon her heart, and without hesitation she laid her arm within his, saying:

“I am sure you will protect me.”

“Yes,” he said, taking her little hand into his own.

She did not withdraw it, and after they had walked in silence a few moments, he asked:

“Do you know how I feel?”

“How is it?”

“I can not quite express it, but I think as a victor in the Olympian games, or one on whom the emperor had bestowed the purple. But wreath and robe are beggarly in comparison. I have *you* hanging on my arm, and I hold your hand. If the people were not all about, I—I might—I don’t know what I might do.”

She looked into his face, and he raised her hand to his lips, pressing it long and fervently. Then he released it, saying with a deep sigh:

“Oh, Arsinoe, beautiful Arsinoe, how I love you!”

And she only drew his arm closer, laid her head on his shoulder, and whispered:

“Oh, Pollux, I am so happy, and the world is so fair!”

“But I could hate it,” returned Pollux. “To have an old body close by, who hears and sees everything—and to be forced to walk in this crowded street is quite unendurable. I can not bear it much longer. Girl of girls, here it is dark.”

Yes, for the moment they walked in the shadow of a few large houses, though their hearts were in clear sunshine, Pollux flung his arms about her in a quick embrace, pressing

the first kiss upon those pure lips. Arsinoe had clasped his neck, and would have stayed there until the end of the day, had not a train of noisy slaves approached, who were already anticipating the feast day which would for a short space of time release them from duty. Pollux well knew how unlicensed they became in their mirth, and begged Arsinoe to cling as closely as possible to the houses.

"How jolly they are!" exclaimed he, "for the best day of their year is beginning; for us it is the opening of the fairest in life."

"Yes," answered Arsinoe, clinging closer to his arm. Then they both laughed merrily, for Pollux had bid her notice that their old slave had passed on, attaching herself to another couple.

"I will call her," said Arsinoe.

"No, no," said Pollux; "let her be. That pair probably need her protection more than we do."

"How is it possible that she can mistake that little man for you?" asked the girl, laughing.

"Were I only a little smaller!" answered Pollux, with a sigh. "But only think what an excess of burning love and longing such a long vessel can contain!"

She struck him playfully on the arm, and he touched his lips to her forehead. She said reprovingly:

"Don't forget the people," and he returned:

"It is no misfortune to be envied."

This was the end of the street, and they found themselves before a garden which belonged to the widow of Pudens. Pollux recognized it, for Paulina was a sister of Pontius, the chief architect, and had also a fine house in the city. Was it possible that they could have reached the spot so soon, unless brought thither by invisible hands?

The gate of the inclosure was locked, but Pollux waked the porter, who, on learning their names, said he had been instructed to admit any friends of the sick girl inside, and he guided them to a point whence they could see a lighted window in the sick-room. A crescent moon lighted the path strewn with mussel shells, the trees and bushes threw sharp shadows upon the grassy sward, the waves sparkled in the soft beams. As they passed under a shaded arbor, Pollux, opening wide his arms, said:

"Now, one more kiss, as a memento during your absence."

"Not now," begged the maiden. "I can not be merry any more for thinking of my poor Selene."

"There's nothing to say against that," replied Pollux, with

resignation. "But when the waiting is over I shall claim my reward."

"That you can have now," cried Arsinoe, throwing herself upon his breast, and then hastened to the house. He followed, and together they stopped before a lighted window on the ground-floor, which looked into a high spacious room, with a door opening into the uncovered space common in all houses. The walls were of a light green tint, and the only pictured decoration was above the door.

Selene was lying upon a bed in the back part of the room, and near her sat the hunchbacked girl asleep. Hannah was laying a wet cloth upon her forehead.

Pollux whispered:-

"There lies your sister, like the sleeping Ariadne, forsaken of Dionysius. Alas, what grief awaits her awakening!"

"She does not seem to me as pale as usual."

"Look at the curve of her arm, and how graceful the position of her head."

"Go now," whispered Arsinoe; "you should not listen."

"Yes, directly. If it were you lying there no god could move me from the place."

"How carefully Hannah removes the bandage from the poor sick ankle! No eye could be more tenderly treated than this matron cares for Selene's foot."

"Step back, she is looking this way."

"A wonderful face; perhaps a Penelope; but her eye has something peculiar. If I were again to represent Urania gazing at the stars, or a Sappho in her poetic frenzy, I would like that face before me. It makes me think of a sky from which the wind has driven all the clouds."

"Really, you must go," said Arsinoe, drawing back her hand, which he instantly seized again. He noticed that she was annoyed by hearing him praise another woman, and said, good-naturedly, throwing his arm around her: "Be quiet, child; there is not your equal in all Alexandria, or so far as the Greek language is spoken. A perfectly clear sky is certainly not the most beautiful to me—mere light, mere blue, is not enough for an artist. A few moving clouds, tinged by golden and silver beams, give the firmament its truest charm, and if I liken your face to the sky it would not be found wanting in those lovely varieties. This matron—"

"See now," broke in Arsinoe, who had again nestled closely to his side, "how tenderly Hannah bends over Selene and kisses her on the forehead. A mother could not be more

gentle. I have known her a long time. She is so good that I can hardly believe she is a Christian."

"The cross above the door yonder is the sign by which these strange people recognize each other."

"What is the meaning of the dove, and the fish, and the anchor, which surround it?"

"Symbols of the Christian mysteries," answered Pollux. "I do not understand them. The things are wretchedly painted; the followers of the crucified God despise all the arts, especially mine, and they hate all images of the gods."

"And yet there are such good people among these blasphemers. I will go in immediately. Hannah is preparing another compress."

"And how serene and friendly she looks! But there is something in that great bare room foreign and unattractive. I should not like to live there."

"Have you noticed the odor of lavender which comes through the window?"

"Yes, for some time. Your sister is moving and opening her eyes. Now they close again."

"Go back into the garden and wait for me. I only want to see how Selene is, and shall not stay long, for father wishes me to come back soon, and no one can take better care of her than Hannah."

The girl drew her hand out of that of her friend, and knocked on the door. It was instantly opened, and the widow led Arsinoe to the bed of her sister. Pollux at first sat down upon a garden bench, but the joy within his heart made him spring up and stride back and forth along the path he had walked with Arsinoe. A stone table impeded his progress, and he leaped over it again and again. He was once more the merry boy, the lucky child. But while waiting he became quieter and more serious. He said thankfully to himself that he had now found the womanly image of which he had dreamed in his best hours, and that it belonged to him alone. But who was he? a poor rascal, with many mouths to feed. That must be changed. He would not desert his sister, but he must break with Papias and stand on his own feet. His courage was high, and before Arsinoe returned he had resolved to open a workshop of his own, with the bust of Balbilla, and then model one of his beloved. These two heads could not fail of being appreciated.

The emperor would see them, and he already fancied himself refusing a crowd of applications, choosing only the most desirable among them all.

Arsinoe was going home much relieved. Selene was not so badly off as she had feared—she needed no one but Hannah to nurse her—and though she had some fever, yet how could one be very sick who asked after all the little affairs of the house-keeping, and gave so many directions for the comfort of the children?

So thought Arsinoe, as she walked back through the garden, leaning on the arm of Pollux.

“It must do her good to know that her sister is to be Roxana,” said Pollux; but his pretty companion shook her head, replying:

“She is always so peculiar, and never cares about the things which please me most.”

“Selene represents the moon, and you the sun.”

“And who are you?”

“I am the tall Pollux, and to-day it seems to me I can be even greater.”

“If you succeed I must grow with you.”

“That will be your right, for it is only through you I can hope to succeed.”

“What can such an unskillful body do to help an artist?”

“By living and loving me,” he cried, clasping her in his arms.

Beside the garden gate sat the old slave asleep on a curbstone. She had learned from the porter that her young mistress was within, but had not been allowed to enter. Arsinoe did not waken her, and asked Pollux, with a roguish laugh:

“Do you think we can find the way by ourselves?”

“If Eros does not lead us astray,” answered Pollux. And they went on, jesting and exchanging tender words.

The nearer they came to the Loehias and the broad business streets which cut the Canopus at right angles, the fuller became the stream of people. But this was favorable to privacy; for whoever wished to be unobserved had only to mix with the throng. Carried onward toward the central point of the festivities, Pollux and Arsinoe held each other in close embrace, that they might not be separated by the eager crowd of Thracian women, who, faithful to their national traditions, were going together to sacrifice a heifer on this night following the shortest day of the year.

Scarcely one hundred steps from the Moon Street the sound of wild, fantastic songs, accompanied by drums and flutes, the ringing of bells, and loud chants, smote upon their ears; and just at the beginning of the Loehias, where the King Street crosses the Bruchiom, there poured forth a merry crowd.

Foremost among many whom he knew was Teuker, a cutter of gems, and younger brother of the happy Pollux. Crowned with ivy, and bearing a Thyrsus staff, he came forward dancing, and behind him followed a crowd of men and women, shouting and singing in frenzied excitement. Vine, ivy, and asphodel fluttered over a hundred heads; poppy, lotus and laurel wreaths trembled above heated brows; skins of panther, deer, and stag hung loosely over naked shoulders, to be flung into the air by the wind and the motions of their wearers. Artists and rich young lords returning with their mistresses from a feast led the procession with a band of music. And whoever chanced to meet this jovial company was at once swept into their train. Respectable citizens with their wives, laborers, girls, slaves, soldiers, sailors, military officers, flute-players, trades-people, ship-captains, a whole theater-choir, whom a lover of their art had been entertaining as guests, a company of excited women tugging a he-goat to sacrifice—not one of them all resisted the impulse to follow the train. Turning into the Moon Street they kept in the broad space shaded by elm-trees and bounded on each side by a footpath, not used at this time of the night. Shrilly sounded the double flutes; vigorously were the calf-skin drum-heads beaten by girlish hands; merrily played the wind with the loosened hair of the women and the flame of the torches, and loud the shouts of the wanton fellows, dressed to represent Pan and the Satyrs.

Here, a girl was playing on a tambourine which she held high in the air, as she ran shaking the shells on its rim as if she meant to loosen the metallic balls and send them on their own way through the air; there, a handsome young fellow, excited to the very verge of madness, sprung in graceful leaps, bearing the long tail of the heifer which had been fastened to his person, with comical carefulness, over his arm, and blowing lustily through the succession of reeds in his Pan-pipe. Sometimes a bellowing roar came from the midst of the throng that suggested pain rather than pleasure. But it was quickly followed by unrestrained laughter, wild song and merry music. Old and young, high and low, who came near to this procession were by an irresistible impulse constrained to follow it, with some noisy demonstration. Even Pollux and Arsinoe found their feet involuntarily keeping time to the music.

“How merry it is!” cried Pollux; “I am wild with a desire to dance with you.”

Before she had time to answer either “yes” or “no,” he ut-

tered loud the ejaculation, "Io, Io, Dionysius," and swung her high into the air. She was seized by the same impulse, and flinging her hands upward, joined in his shout, and permitted him to take her to a corner of the street where sat a woman selling wreaths. There Pollux crowned her with vine leaves, and she put a wreath of laurel on his head, wound ivy about his neck and breast, and laughed aloud when he threw a piece of silver into the lap of the woman, she meanwhile clinging fast to his arm. All was done without reflection, as in a fit of intoxication, in haste and with trembling fingers. They were near the end of the train. As a group of six girls, crowned with wreaths and arms twined together, passed, Pollux drew Arsinoe in behind them, and with their arms joined, they danced rapidly forward, swinging their free arms, throwing back their heads with song and shout, and, forgetting all around, they believed themselves girdled by sunbeams and lifted by some god far upward among the stars, and into the high ethereal spaces.

And so they went through the Moon Street to the Canopic way, and back again to the Temple of Dionysius by the sea.

There they stopped quite out of breath, and suddenly remembered that he was Pollux, and she was Arsinoe, who must return to her father and to the little brothers and sisters.

"Come home," she whispered, dropping her arms, and beginning with shame to gather up her loosened hair.

"Yes, yes," answered Pollux, as in a dream. Then, loosening her from his clasp, he beat upon his forehead, and cried, turning to the open cella of the temple:

"That thou art mighty, Dionysius, that thou art beautiful, Aphrodite, that thou art charming, Eros, have I long known; but to-day do I learn for the first time how immeasurable are thy gifts."

"We have been entirely filled by the god," said Arsinoe; "and it was wonderful; but another train is coming, and I must go home."

"Then we will pass through the narrow street by the harbor," replied Pollux.

"Yes. I must pick the leaves out of my hair, and no one can see us yonder."

"I will help you—"

"No, you must not touch me," said Arsinoe, with decision.

Then she gathered up her soft, shining tresses, shaking out the leaves which were hidden there like beetles in the many-leaved shrubs. Then she covered it with her veil, which had

fortunately clung to the clasp of her peplum. Pollux looked on, and cried:

“Everlasting gods, how I love you! My heart has been a playful child, but to-day it seems changed into something heroic. Only wait a little—it soon will use weapons!”

“And I shall battle with it,” said she, joyfully, laying again her arm within his own, and they went on, more dancing than walking, to the palace.

The cold gray light of the December sun had already tinted the horizon when they reached the gate, already opened for the entrance of the workmen. They kept on to the Hall of the Muses, and as they were taking leave of each other at the entrance of the passage leading to the overseer’s house, the glimmer of a lamp startled them asunder. Arsinoe quickly disappeared. Antinous came forward. He was waiting there for the emperor, who was still in the watch-tower Pontius had arranged for his use, and had recognized Pollux and Arsinoe. Turning to Pollux, he said, pleasantly:

“I beg your pardon if I have disturbed an interview with your mistress.”

“She is my bride,” said Pollux, proudly.

“So much the better,” said Antinous, with a sigh of apparent relief in his tone. “So much the better. Can you tell me of the sister of this beautiful Arsinoe?”

“Certainly,” answered Pollux, and was gratified when Antinous clung to his arm.

Within the next hour he had completely won the heart of the emperor’s favorite by the cheerful and inspiring words that poured in full stream from his lips.

The girl found her father and her brother Helios, who had no more the appearance of sickness, fast asleep. The old slave arrived within a few moments, and as Arsinoe at last threw herself upon her bed, she slept immediately, and in her dream was again at the side of Pollux, and together they were flying like leaves driven before the wind, high above the dusty earth, to the sound of trumpet and flute and shell.

CHAPTER XXI.

It was after sunrise when Keraunus woke. He had slept as soundly in his arm-chair as he would have done in his bed, but did not feel so much refreshed.

In the common room he found everything as it had been left on the previous evening, and that vexed him, for he was accustomed to find this apartment in complete order. Upon

the table stood the remains of the children's evening meal swarming with flies, and among the dishes and bread-crusts glittered the ornaments which he and Arsinoe had hastily laid down. Wherever he looked were garments out of place, and various other things which did not belong there.

The old slave woman came in yawning—her gray wool in disorder, her eyes bleared, and her step unsteady.

“You are drunk,” cried Keraunus, and this was certainly true, for when she woke from her nap on the curbstone, and learned, through the gate-keeper, that Arsinoe had left the garden, she had been enticed by other slaves into a wine-shop.

When her master seized her by the arm and shook her, she said, with a stupid grin:

“This is a feast-day. All is free.”

“Roman nonsense,” broke in Keraunus; “is my soup ready?”

While the woman was murmuring some unintelligible words, the other slave came in and asked:

“Everybody is merry to-day; can I go out?”

“That would suit me nicely,” answered Keraunus; “this creature drunk, Selene sick, and you on the street.”

“But no one stays at home to-day,” answered the black, timidly.

“Then pack yourself off,” screeched Keraunus. “Roam around until midnight. Do what you please, but don't expect me to take care of you any longer. You can turn a hand-mill, and that is all you are good for—and there may be some one stupid enough to pay a few drachmas for you.”

“Do not sell me,” groaned the slave, lifting his hands imploringly; but Keraunus did not listen, and went on scolding:

“Even a dog is faithful to his master; but you only eat him poor, and when he needs your service you only think of running the streets.”

“I will stay at home,” howled the old slave.

“Do what you please. You have been for a long time only like a lame horse, which makes its rider a sport for the children. When you go out with me people look after us, as if you were a spot on my pallium. And the scabby dog wishes to keep the feast, and make himself great among the citizens!”

“I will stay at home, only do not sell me,” whined the anxious creature, and tried to seize his master's hand; but Keraunus repulsed him, and bade him go to the kitchen and light the fire, and pour water over the old woman to restore her senses.

The slave shoved his companion through the door, and Keraunus went to wake Arsinoe.

In her room there was no light except that which fell through an opening in the roof. The slanting beams of the morning sun rested upon the bed as Keraunus entered. There lay his daughter in a profound sleep, her lovely head resting upon her right arm, the long, loose tresses of soft brown hair falling over her shoulders and down the side of the bed. Her loveliness touched his heart, reminding him of his deceased wife; and it was not simply idle pride but a movement of sincere fatherly love that deepened the wish of his soul into a silent prayer for her continued life and happiness. He was not accustomed to waken her, for she was usually up long before himself, and he felt unwilling to disturb her sweet sleep; but it was necessary, so he called her by name, shook her, and said, as she at last opened her eyes in surprise:

“It is I; get up—remember what is to come to-day!”

“Yes,” she said, yawning, “but it is still too early.”

“Early?” answered Keraunus, laughing. “My stomach asserts the contrary. The sun is already high, and I have not yet had my soup.”

“Let the slave cook it.”

“No, no, child; you must get up. Have you forgotten whom you are to personate? And my curls, and the prefect’s wife, and your new garments?”

“Let them all go. I do not care in the least for the Roxana and the whole performance.”

“Because you are only half awake,” said Keraunus, laughing. “How came that ivy leaf in your hair?”

Arsinoe blushed, felt after it, and said, reluctantly:

“Caught from some tendril, probably. But now go, that I may get up.”

“Yes, in a moment. How did you find Selene?”

“Not so badly off as I feared, but I will tell you more afterward; now I want to be alone.”

When half an hour later she brought the soup to her father, he looked at her in surprise. A change seemed to have come over his daughter. There was a light in her eyes he had never before remarked, and in her expression something so striking as almost to frighten him.

While Arsinoe stirred the soup, Keraunus, with the help of the slave, had taken the children from their beds, and now they sat at the breakfast-table. Among them was the blind boy, fresh and well.

Arsinoe told them of Selene and of the excellent nursing she

received in the house of Hannah. While she spoke Keraunus gazed at her fixedly, and she asked impatiently if there was anything unusual in her appearance. And he answered, shaking his head:

“How strange you girls are! The pride and joy you felt in your selection yesterday to act the part of Alexander’s bride, has changed your looks in one night, but it is certainly not to your disadvantage.”

“Nonsense!” exclaimed Arsinoe, blushing, and throwing herself upon the divan. She was not exactly weary, but experienced a lassitude that was by no means disagreeable. She seemed to have just come out of a tepid bath, and the merry music of the night before was constantly ringing in her ears. Sometimes she laughed, sometimes stared into vacancy, and thought if her lover should call her to dance with him again she would not have the will to resist.

After breakfast was over and the slave had taken the children into the open air, and Arsinoe had begun to curl her father’s hair, Keraunus assumed an air of utmost dignity and said:

“My child!”

The girl let the hot iron drop and asked, expecting one of those extravagances which Selene was accustomed to oppose: “Well?”

“Listen to me attentively.”

That which was about to be spoken had in reality occurred to him only an hour before, while destroying the happiness of his old slave, and, he said, knitting his brows with the air of a sage philosopher:

“For a long time I have been thinking of something that I have decided to tell you. We must have a new slave.”

“But, father,” cried Arsinoe, “think what it will cost to provide for another man—”

“It is not a question of that sort,” broke in Keraunus. “I shall exchange the old one for a younger that will not be a disgrace to us. I said to you yesterday that in the future we must expect to attract more attention, and if we take this black scarecrow with us on the street or wherever we appear—”

“Certainly we can not make any display with Sebek,” broke in Arsinoe, “but we can leave him at home.”

“Child, child,” returned Keraunus, reproachfully, “will you then never consider who we are? How could we appear on the street without slaves?”

The girl shrugged her shoulders, and reminded her father that he was an old inmate, that the children doted on him,

and that he was very careful of them, that a new slave would cost much money, and without most uncomfortable use of authority could not be constrained to perform many duties which the old man did willingly and well. But she spoke to deaf ears. Safe from the remonstrances of Selene, and impatient of opposition as a reckless boy, Keraunus obstinately persisted in his determination to exchange the faithful old fellow for a more showy servant. He did not for a moment think of the sad fate of the old slave who had grown gray in his house. His only hesitation was about using the last money in their possession for something not really necessary. Since Arsinoe had been chosen to personate Roxana he expected to be able to borrow once more, and he thought it his duty to appear well, not to frighten away that son-in-law of his dreams. In case of extremity he always expected to fall back on his collection of rarities. If the false sword of Antony brought in so much, what might not some lover of relics pay for the genuine? It only remained to find the right purchaser.

Arsinoe turned from red to white as her father repeatedly returned to her bargain, but she did not venture to tell him the truth, and repented her deception the more sincerely as her own native good sense showed her the more plainly that the honor conferred upon her yesterday threatened to lead the weaknesses of her father on to some fatal issue.

It was enough for her to-day to know that Pollux loved her, and she would have yielded every claim to the part, which yesterday seemed so valuable, without a shadow of regret. This feeling she expressed, but her father did not believe her in earnest, and laughed in her face, amused himself with obscure allusions to the riches that would not fail to come to them through her; and because dimly conscious that it would be well for him to show that he was not actuated by idleness and vanity, he declared himself willing to make a great personal sacrifice and wear for awhile longer the gilded fillet. Through such an act of self-denial he thought himself fully justified in spending a large sum to procure a better-looking slave. Besides, he had fully persuaded himself that the outlay was a necessity.

Arsinoe's prayers were unheeded, and when, through sympathy for the poor old man she began to weep, he forbade her angrily to shed tears over such an insignificant affair. He thought it childish; besides that, he did not wish to have her go with red eyes to the wife of the prefect.

During this conversation his curls were all in order, and he commanded Arsinoe to arrange her own hair, and then go with

him to purchase the new gown and peplum, visit Selene, and then meet her engagement with Julia, the wife of Titianus.

Yesterday it had seemed to him a little extravagant to hire a sedan, but to-day he suggested a more pretentious vehicle. When left alone another thought occurred to him. The arrogant architect ought to know that he was not the man to let himself be annoyed and insulted without calling down punishment. Therefore he cut a strip of papyrus from a letter he had preserved in his chest, and wrote upon it the following words:

“Keraunus, the Macedonian, to Claudius Venator, Roman architect: My eldest daughter, Selene, has been, through your fault, so seriously injured that she lies now in great pain and danger. My other children are no longer safe in their father’s house. I insist upon your placing the dog in chains. If you decline this reasonable demand I shall put my case into the hands of the emperor. I also make known to you that circumstances have arisen which will lead Hadrian to punish every act of insolence toward me and my daughters.”

After sealing this letter, Keraunus called the slave, and said, coldly:

“Take this to the Roman architect, and then order two sedans. Make haste; and while we are absent take good care of the children. To-morrow or next day you will be sold. Do you ask to whom? That will depend on your own conduct during the last hours of your service here.”

The black fellow uttered a heart-rending cry, and threw himself down before the overseer. Truly the cry pierced his soul, but he was determined not to show himself touched, and also to send him away. But the slave clasped his knees, and, as the children, drawn to the spot by his cries, wept aloud with him, and the little Helios began to stroke his bald head, the vain man felt himself moved, and to guard against his own weakness, cried, vehemently:

“Out with you, and do what you are told, or I will have you scourged!”

And he tore himself away from the unhappy creature, who, with sunken head, left the room, going to the door of Hadrian with the letter. Overawed by the emperor on the former occasion, he dared not knock.

After waiting a long time, with tears in his eyes, Mastor appeared, bearing an empty breakfast-tray. He held out the letter, saying:

“This is from Keraunus to your master.”

“Place it upon the tray,” replied the Jazygean. “But what has hurt you, my old friend? You seem to feel badly. Have you been beaten?”

“No,” whined the slave. “Keraunus is going to sell me.”

“There are better masters than Keraunus.”

“But Sebek is old, Sebek is weak; Sebek can no longer lift or drag; the heavy work will kill Sebek.”

“Have you then had such light service and bountiful provision with the overseer?”

“No wine, no meat, much hunger,” said the old man, piteously.

“Then you ought to be glad to get away.”

“No, no,” groaned the slave.

“You are an odd fellow,” returned Mastor. “Why do you want to stay with the niggard?”

For some time Sebek was silent, then he sobbed, while his sunken chest heaved with the violence of his emotion:

“It is the children—the children—our little ones. They are so dear, and our Helios, our little blind boy, has stroked my hair when he heard I must go—just there,” and he pointed to the spot, “I felt his little hand. And now Sebek will see them all no more than if they were dead.”

These words rolled down like heavy bodies, starting a flood of tears. They touched the heart of Mastor, wakening in him the memory of his own lost children, and also a wish to comfort his fellow-slave.

“Poor fellow,” he said, compassionately. “Yes, the children. They are little, and the door into one’s heart is narrow, and they skip through a hundred times easier than the grown people. I have lost dear children, and they were my own. I can teach any one what pain is, but I know now where there is comfort also.”

And supporting the tray upon his hip and one hand, he laid the other on the shoulder of the slave, whispering:

“Have you heard of the Christians?”

Sebek nodded eagerly, as though something of which he had already learned much and expected more, were mentioned; but Mastor added:

“Come to-morrow morning before sunrise to the plasterers in the court, and you will hear of one who comforts the weary and heavy laden.”

Mastor lifted the tray and went on; but out of the eyes of the old slave glimmered a faint beam of hope. He had no large expectations, but thought there might perhaps be a means of bearing the troubles of life more easily.

Mastor passed the tray to the kitchen slaves, and went back to deliver the letter.

The time was unfavorable to Keraunus, for the emperor was in a gloomy mood. He had been awake until day-break, and took then only three hours of rest. Still he bent with knitted brows over the astronomical tablets, comparing them with his observations of the preceding night; but they did not satisfy him, for he shook his head discontentedly. Once he leaned back in his easy-chair, covering his eyes with both hands, and went over the calculations again, with a result that pleased him no better. The letter of Keraunus lay long unnoticed. At length, for the sake of changing the current of thought, Hadrian tore it open, read, and cast it disdainfully aside. At another time he would have heard of Selene's suffering with hearty sympathy, and laughed at the peculiarities of her father, devising some reply that would tease or frighten him. But this morning the threatening words only excited his anger and increased his feeling of antipathy to Keraunus. Impatient of the silence that reigned in the apartment, he called Antinous, who stood looking out dreamily over the harbor. The favorite came immediately to his side. Glancing at Antinous's face, he said:

"You, too, look as if threatened by misfortune. Is the sky entirely clouded?"

"No, sire. It is blue above the sea, but clouds are gathering in the south."

"In the south?" asked Hadrian, thoughtfully. "From that direction we scarcely anticipate evil. But it is coming fast, and will be here before we think of it."

"You were so long awake, and that has spoiled your mood."

"The 'mood'? What is that?" murmured Hadrian to himself. "It is a condition wherein all the emotions of the soul are taken possession of at the same time by the same cause. To-day my heart is paralyzed with apprehension."

"Have you seen bad tokens in the sky?"

"The very worst possible."

"You wise men believe in the stars," said Antinous. "No doubt you are right, but my weak head can not comprehend what their regular course can have to do with my restless going to and fro."

"Wait until you are gray," answered the emperor. "Learn to comprehend all before you speak of these things, for then only can you understand that every part of the creation—the greatest and the smallest are inwardly knit together—work through and are dependent upon each other. What is, and

what may be in nature, whatever men feel, think, and do, is conditioned upon firmly established eternal causes, and spirits standing between us and the godhead indicate them in golden characters upon the blue vault above. The stars are the letters in this writing, whose paths are as immutable as the causes of all which is and happens."

"Are you sure never to mistake this writing?" asked Antinous.

"I am liable to error," answered Hadrian; "but this time I am not deceived. A heavy misfortune threatens me. There is a peculiarly portentous and remarkable combination."

"What is it?"

"I have received the words of an oracle from that cursed Antioch—whence nothing good ever came to me, which—Why should I keep it secret from you? In the middle of this coming year a heavy misfortune will smite me, as the lightning smites a traveler to the earth, and this very night—Look with me at this tablet. Here is the house of death, here are the planets—but what do you understand of such things? To be brief, in this night, already preceded by one shocking event, the stars have confirmed the oracle as unmistakably as if they had tongues and screeched the prophecy of evil in my ears. Such a prospect is gloomy. And what may the next year bring?"

Hadrian sighed, but Antinous approached nearer, dropped on one knee, and said, in a child-like and modest tone:

"May I, poor foolish wight, teach the great, wise man how to enrich his life with six good months?"

Hadrian smiled as if he knew what was coming, but Antinous kept on, courageously:

"Let the future remain future, and what must come, let come; for even the gods have no control over destiny. When evil approaches, it casts a black shadow forward. This you look at, and allow it to darken the present bright day; I go on my way in careless dreaming, and only notice the misfortune when we come into contact—when it strikes upon me."

"And so you are spared many dark days," broke in Hadrian.

"That is what I wanted to say."

"And the counsel is good for you and all other pleasure promenaders through the Fair of idle life," answered Hadrian; "but he to whom it is appointed to guide millions over a chasm must keep his eye steadily fixed—looking both at the near and the distant, and dares not close them even against the horrors I was destined to see last night."

During these last words Phlegon, the private secretary of Hadrian, entered, bringing letters from Rome. He bowed profoundly and asked:

“Do the stars disturb you, Cæsar?”

“They teach me to be on my guard,” returned the emperor.

“Let us hope that they lie,” cried the Greek, with liveliness. “Cicero was certainly not altogether wrong in distrusting the science of astrology.”

“He was a mere babbler,” answered Hadrian, with frowning brow.

“But is it not then true that a Cnæus, and a Caius, who were accidentally born in the same hour, will have the same disposition, and must meet the same fate?”

“Always the old commonplace, the same old nonsense!” broke in Hadrian, excited almost to rage. “Speak when you are spoken to, and do not trouble yourself about things you do not understand and that do not concern you. Is there anything important among the letters?”

Antinous looked in surprise at the emperor. Why was he angered by Phlegon’s objections, when he had given such friendly answers to his own?

Hadrian paid no more attention to him at present, but read his letters and dispatches with attention—wrote short notes on the margins, signed a decree, and dismissed the Greek.

Scarcely had he left when the joyful shout of many voices was heard through the open window.

“What does that mean?” he asked of Mastor, and learning that the workmen and slaves had just been dismissed to share in the pleasures of the feast-day, he said to himself:

“The people are making merry, putting on crowns, and forgetting themselves in intoxication—and I—whom they all envy—I destroy the short period of life with insignificant affairs, let myself be devoured by gnawing care—”

Here he stopped and cried out, in a changed tone:

“Antinous, you are wiser than I am. Let us leave the future to itself. Let us also enjoy the feast. We, too, will use the day of freedom. We will go well masked. I, as an old satyr, you, as a young faun, or something of that sort, and plunge into the festal whirlpool—empty our cups—wander through the city, and enjoy all the merriment.”

“Oh,” cried Antinous, clapping his hands in joy.

“Evoe Bacche!” cried Hadrian, swinging a goblet that stood on the table. “You are free until evening, Mastor; and you, Antinous, must ask the tall sculptor Pollux to conduct us and

provide our wreaths and finery. I want to see the drunkards and laugh with the jolly before I am emperor again. Hasten, my friend, before new cares come to interrupt my sport!"

CHAPTER XXII.

ANTINOUS and Mastor left the emperor at once. In the passage he beckoned to Mastor, and said, in a low tone:

"I know you can keep a secret. Will you do me a favor?"

"I would rather do three than one," answered the Jazygean.

"You are free for to-day. Are you going into the city?"

"I think so."

"You are not familiar here, but that makes no difference. Take these gold pieces. With one of them buy the handsomest bunch of flowers in the market. Make yourself merry with the second, and take a few drachmas from the third to hire a mule. Let the driver conduct you to the garden of the widow of Pudens, in which is the house of one Hannah, a widow. Have you got the name?"

"Hannah, widow of Pudens."

"In the little house—not the great one—you are to deliver the flowers for the sick girl, Selene."

"The daughter of the fat overseer, whom our Molossian attacked?"

"She, or another," broke in Antinous. "If you are asked who sent the flowers, say: 'The friend on the Lochias,' and nothing more. Do you understand?"

The slave nodded, saying, in a low tone:

"And you also? Oh, these women!"

Antinous motioned him to silence, repeated rapidly his directions, and went to the Hall of the Muses to find Pollux. Through Pollux he had learned where Selene was lying sick, of whom he thought incessantly.

Pollux was not in his usual cage.

The desire to talk with his mother had led him to the gate-house, and now he was standing before her, with his long arms in vivacious motion, relating the events of the previous night. His story was like a song of joy, and Doris sprung up, clapping her little fat hands and crying:

"That was fun! Thirty years ago I had the same sport with your father."

"Not only thirty years ago," answered Pollux. "I remember very well when you, at the great Dionysian feast, seized by the power of the god, rushed madly through the streets, with the deer-skin over your shoulders."

“Oh, yes, that was good, that was delightful,” cried Doris, with shining eyes. “But thirty years ago it was quite different. I have already told you how I went with our maid through the Canopic way to see the procession from the house of my aunt Archidike. It was not far, for we lived near the theater. My father was stage-overseer, and yours one of the chief singers in the choir. We went as fast as we could, but the crowd kept us back, and some drunken fellows tried to jest with me.”

“You also were as handsome as a rose,” broke in her son.

“Only as a very little bud; not like your beautiful rose,” returned the old woman. “I looked so well that the young fellows, disguised as satyrs and fauns, and the cynical hypocrites, under their ragged mantles, thought it worth their while to look at me, and so brought upon themselves some rebuffs when they tried to entice me out, or to steal a kiss. I was not attracted by handsome fellows, for Euphorion had already wooed me with his eyes, though I was kept very strictly, and up to that time we had never exchanged a word. At the corner of the Canopic way and Emporium Street we were forced to stop, for there the yelling and hallooing crowd was packed about the wild Klododen women, who, with other priestesses of Bacchus in a sacred frenzy, were tearing a ram with their teeth. This was a horrible sight, but I was forced to see it, and I shouted and cried with the others. My maid, to whom I clung, was seized by the frenzy and dragged me into the circle directly before the bloody offering. Then two frantic women sprung upon us. One of them seized and tried to pull me down. It was a frightful moment, but I held up bravely and was still on my feet, when your father sprung forward and bore me away. What further happened I can not relate. It was all a blissful dream, in which one must press both hands on the heart to keep it from bursting, or flying straight up toward the heaven and into the midst of the sun. It was very late when I reached home, and within a few weeks I became the wife of Euphorion.”

“We have only imitated you,” cried Pollux, “and if Arsinoe become like my old mother, I shall be well contented.”

“Be cheerful and happy,” returned Doris. “Keep your health. Snap your fingers at trouble and care; be faithful in all common duties; and on every feast-day drink a merry cup to the honor of the god, and all will go well. Who does whatever he can, and enjoys all that is possible, has put life to its best uses, and needs feel no remorse in the last hour. By-gone

is by-gone, and when Atropus cuts the thread, others will step into our places, and the joy will begin again."

"You are right," said Pollux, embracing his mother; "and is it not true that toil is lighter and life happier when two are together?"

"I think so, and that you have chosen the proper companion. As a sculptor you have been accustomed to living simply. You do not need riches, but the daily sight of beauty to refresh your spirit, and that you have found."

"There is no fairer," broke in Pollux.

"No, certainly not," continued Doris. "At first I had my eye on Selene. She also is good looking, and is a model girl. But of late, as I have seen Arsinoe pass here, I have said to myself: 'She is growing up for my boy;' and now that you have won her, I seem to have gone back to her age. The old heart within me is as merry as if Eros had touched it with his wings and his rosy fingers. And if my feet had not become so heavy over the cooking hearth and the wash-tub, really I should seize Euph Orion by the arm and dance with him through the streets."

"Where is father?"

"He has gone out to sing."

"In the morning! Where then?"

"There is a sect which celebrates its mysteries to-day. They pay him well, but he has to sing sad songs behind a curtain, the wildest stuff, of which he understands not one word, and I very little."

"I am sorry, for I want to speak with him."

"He will come back late."

"There will be time."

"So much the better; otherwise, I could repeat it to him for you."

"Your counsel will be as good as his. I want to leave Papias and set up for myself."

"That is right; the Roman architect assured me yesterday that a bright future opens before you."

"I hesitate only on account of my poor sister and her children. If it should go poorly with me in the first few months—"

"We will pull them through. It is time for you to be reaping what you have sown."

"I think so, both for my own sake and for Arsinoe's; if only Keraunos—"

"Yes, there you will have a conflict."

"And a heavy one," sighed Pollux. "The thought of that disturbs my joy."

"That is foolish," returned Doris, "and only a useless anxiety, which is almost as ruinous as remorse. Get your own workshop, and do something there with a cheerful heart worthy to astonish the world, and I will warrant that the silly old fellow will be sorry not to bring out your first work from his collection of rarities—preserved there instead of having been broken to pieces. Go right on and enjoy your good fortune, just as if he were not in the world."

"I will follow your advice."

"One thing more, my boy."

"What is that?"

"Be very careful of Arsinoe! She is young and inexperienced, and you must not ask her to do anything that you would not advise if she were the bride of your brother."

Doris had scarcely finished when Antinous entered the gatehouse, with a request from Claudius Venator that he would guide him about the city.

Pollux hesitated, for he had still so much to do in the palace, and he had hoped to see Arsinoe again in the course of the day. What could an afternoon and evening without her offer after such a morning?

Doris noticed the shrinking, and said:

"Go and enjoy the feast. The architect can give you good counsel, and introduce you to some of his friends."

"Your mother is right," said Antinous. "Claudius Venator is appreciative, and can also be grateful. I wish you success."

"I will go," answered Pollux, who was always powerfully attracted toward Hadrian, and under all circumstances wished a share in the festivity. "But I must first make known to Pontius that I propose to desert the battle-field for a few hours to-day."

"Leave that to Venator," answered Antinous. "And please provide for him, and for me, and also for yourself, if you like, some merry costumes and masks. He will be a satyr, and I want some other disguise."

"Good," replied Pollux. "I will bring what we need from our workshop, where there is a mass of finery suitable to the followers of Dionysius. I will be back again in half an hour."

"Make all the haste possible," begged Antinous, "for my master does not like to wait. And then—another thing"—Antinous became embarrassed, and stepping close to Pollux, with a hand on his shoulder, said, in a low tone, and impressively: "Venator is very intimate with the emperor. Be on your guard as to what you say of Hadrian."

“Is your master a spy of the Caesar?” asked Pollux, looking suspiciously at the youth. “Pontius has already uttered a similar warning; and if that be the case—”

“No, no,” broke in Antinous, hastily; “nothing of that sort; but they have no secrets from one another, and Venator speaks very freely of what he sees and hears.”

“Thank you. I will be on my guard.”

“Do so; I mean it seriously,” and the handsome features of the Bithynian wore an expression of sensitive delicacy, and the offering of his hand to Pollux was done with such an indescribable grace that Doris seized the arm of her son, exclaiming:

“Oh, what beauty! Pollux, my boy, one might believe that a heavenly being was come down to the earth!”

“Look at my old mother!” cried Pollux, laughing. “But honestly, my friend, she has reason to be enthusiastic, and I sympathize with her.”

“Hold him fast,” added Doris. “If he will allow you to make his bust, you would have something to show the world!”

“Will you?” broke in Pollux, turning to Antinous.

“I never could be still long enough to satisfy a sculptor,” answered Antinous; “but I will gladly do you a favor. Only it vexes me that you join in the everlasting commonplace of the others. But I must return to my master.”

After he left the house, Doris said:

“I can not judge critically a work of art, but I know as well as any other Alexandrian woman what is handsome. If this boy will consent to become your model you can make something to charm all the men and turn the heads of the women. Great gods! I feel as if I had been drinking wine. Such beauty is of the rarest! Why is there not some means of preserving such a figure and such a face from old age and from wrinkles?”

“I know one, mother,” returned Pollux, as he went through the door-way, “and that is Art. That can give undying youth to this mortal Adonis.”

The old woman looked after her son with an emotion of pride, assenting to his remark with an emphatic nod. While she fed her birds with many a caressing epithet, and let her special favorites take crumbs of bread from her lips, the young sculptor hastened with long strides through the street. Many an “Ah!” or an “Oh!” echoing behind testified to the vigorous arm pushing its way among the crowd. But he heard them faintly, for his thoughts were absorbed with Arsinoe, or

an occasional one of Antinous, and the position in which the bust should represent him—whether as a hero or a god.

By the flower-market, close beside the Gymnasium, he was recalled to a sense of his actual surroundings by a curious picture. Upon a very small black donkey sat a very large black slave, well dressed, and carrying in his hand a great bunch of handsome flowers. Beside him walked a profusely garlanded and gayly attired man, wearing a comical mask, and followed by two gigantic garden gods and four smartly dressed boys. In the slave Pollux recognized the servant of Venator, and he was quite sure of having before seen the masked gentleman, but did not remember where, and took no trouble to find out; for after a glance at the striking group he passed on, thinking of the things that lay nearer to his heart. Perhaps the donkey-rider found himself forced to listen to something unpleasant, for his eye rested anxiously upon the flowers. And this was a well-grounded anxiety, for the man walking beside him was no less a person than the Roman Pretor Verus, whom the Alexandrians called “the false Eros.”

Having recognized Mastor immediately, whom he had often seen with the emperor, he naturally leaped to the conclusion that Hadrian was in Alexandria, and he was plying the slave with adroit questions. As Mastor attempted stoutly to avoid answering, Verus thought best to introduce himself; and before the great lord and special friend of the empress, Mastor lost his caution. He became entangled in contradictions, and though not actually confessing the fact, Verus became convinced that Hadrian was not far off.

And the flowers in the hand of this slave—naturally they did not belong to him—where then was their destination?

Verus began again to put questions; but Mastor betrayed nothing, until Verus, touching him lightly, first upon one and then upon the other cheek, said pleasantly:

“Good little Mastor, listen to me. I have some propositions to make, and if any one of them pleases you, you have only to bow your head in unison with that of the twice two-footed animal you are riding.”

“Let me go on my way,” begged the Jazygean, with increasing anxiety.

“Go on, if you wish, but I shall follow until I find out what I want. There are many devices in this head, as you will learn. As the first, I ask: Shall I seek out your master and tell him that you have betrayed to me his presence in Alexandria?”

“That you will not do, sir,” cried the slave.

“Well, then: Shall I hang about you with my followers until night compel you to return to your master?”

“That motion of the hand expresses your opinion on this point, and you are right; for the carrying out of this proposition would be as little pleasing to me as to yourself, and would bring the special notice of the crowd upon you. Whisper then, in my ear, where the emperor is lodged, and from whom and to whom you are carrying these flowers. As soon as you accommodate yourself to this proposition I shall let you go, and prove to you that I am as lavish of my gold in Africa as I was in Italy.”

“No gold—certainly, I will take no gold,” cried Mastor.

“You are a brave fellow,” answered Verus, in a different tone, “and know well that I take good care of my servants, and would rather show them kindness than severity. Satisfy then my curiosity without fear, for I promise that no one, and least of all your master, shall learn from me what you will tell.”

Mastor hesitated; but because he could not conceal from himself the fact that he would at last be forced to yield to this adroit questioner, and partly because he knew him to be one of the kindest-hearted of gentlemen, he sighed, and whispered:

“I am sure you do not wish to destroy such a poor wight; so then you may know. We dwell on the Lochias.”

“On the Lochias!” exclaimed Verus. “And now about the flowers?”

“That is mere pleasantry.”

“Is Hadrian, then, in such a cheerful mood?”

“He was very cheerful until last night—”

“What about last night?”

“You know well how it is when he sees bad tokens in the stars.”

“Bad tokens!” repeated Verus, earnestly. “And yet he is sending flowers?”

“He did not send them. How could you imagine that?”

“Was it Antinous?”

Mastor nodded affirmatively.

“Then he begins to find admiration better than being so much admired! What fair one has animated that sleeping heart?”

“I promised not to gossip.”

“Then I promise you the same thing. My power of keeping a secret exceeds my curiosity.”

“Then content yourself with what you already know.”

“Half knowledge is harder to bear than total ignorance.”

“ I can not tell you.”

“ Shall I begin again with my propositions?”

“ Ah, sir, I beg you with all my heart—”

“ Out with it, and I shall go on my way, and leave you to go yours.”

“ It concerns only a pale girl whom you would not look at.”

“ So it is a girl?”

“ Our Molossian dragged the poor thing down.”

“ On the street?”

“ No, on the Lochias. Her father is the palace overseer, Keraunus.”

“ And is her name Arsinoe?” asked Verus, who thought of the pretty child chosen for the part of Roxana with sincere pity.

“ No, she is called Selene; Arsinoe is her younger sister.”

“ Then you are carrying these flowers to the Lochias?”

“ She was away from home, and could not get back, and lies now in the house of a stranger.”

“ Where?”

“ That can be nothing to you.”

“ No, nothing at all. I pray you, tell me the whole truth.”

“ Eternal gods! what is this poor creature to you?”

“ Nothing at all; but I must know where you are going.”

“ Near the sea. I do not know the house, but the driver behind there—”

“ Does it lie far from here?”

“ About half an hour,” answered the driver.

“ So then it is quite a distance. And does Hadrian wish to remain unknown?”

“ Certainly.”

“ But you, his body-slave, whom many others besides me may recognize, intend to ride half through the city on a day when everybody who has legs is out, with that great bunch of flowers in your hand. Oh, Mastor, that is not wise!”

The slave was frightened, but perceiving that Verus was right, he asked, anxiously:

“ What, then, ought I to do?”

“ Come down from that donkey; disguise yourself, and then make merry with these gold pieces to your heart's content.”

“ And these flowers?”

“ Let me take care of them.”

“ Will you do it honestly, and never let Antinous guess that you forced me to it?”

“ Certainly.”

“ There are the flowers, but I can not take the gold.”

“Then I will throw it among the crowd. Buy a wreath and a mask, and as much wine as you can carry. Where is the girl to be found?”

“With one Hannah. She lives in a little house within the garden of the widow of Pudens. Whoever delivers the flowers must say they were sent by her friend on the Lochias.”

“Good. Go now, and be careful that no one recognizes you. Your secret is mine, and the ‘friend from the Lochias’ will not be forgotten.”

Mastor disappeared in the crowd, Verus gave the flowers into the hand of one of the garden gods, swung himself merrily upon the ass, and commanded the driver to point out the way. At the corner of the next street he met two sedans. In the first sat Keraunus in his crocus-colored mantle, and fat as Silenus, the companion of Dionysius, but with a sunny face. From the second peeped Arsinoe, so fresh and beautiful that her appearance quickened the blood of the susceptible Roman. Following a quick impulse, he took the flowers destined for Selene from the hand of his attendant, laid them into her sedan, saying: “Alexander greets Roxana, the fairest of the fair.” Arsinoe blushed, but Verus commanded one of his boys to follow and learn her destination, meeting him at the flower-market. The messenger hastened, and he, turning his ass, soon reached the half circular pillared hall, on the shaded side of a large open space where the best gardeners and flower dealers of the city offered their fragrant wares. Every stall had been furnished more richly than usual to-day, but the demand had been so steady that, though Verus ordered the best flowers remaining, the result was not so handsome as Mastor had secured earlier in the day. This vexed the Roman. A sense of justice to the sick girl led him to devise some way of supplying the defect. The bunches were tied with bright ribbons, and had long streaming ends. Verus took a brooch from his own garment and fastened it within the bow bound about the flowers. Now he was satisfied, and pictured to himself the pleasure which the object of the Bithynian’s devotion would experience in finding the pretty onyx in its gold setting, on which was delicately carved the figure of Eros sharpening his arrows. He commissioned one of the garden gods, a British slave, to deliver the flowers, and then return to wait for him before the house of Titianus; for there, he had just heard, Keraunus and his daughter had been carried.

Here he laid aside his mask, and in the same apartment where Keraunus was waiting rearranged his hair and the disordered folds of his toga before being led into the reception-

room of Julia, where he hoped to see Arsinoe. But instead of Arsinoe he found only his own wife and Balbilla. Lively and graceful as ever, he greeted these ladies, but without any attempt at concealing his disappointment, glanced about the spacious apartment.

Balbilla approached him, asking, lightly:

“Can you be honest, Verus?”

“If circumstances are favorable, yes.”

“And would that suit you to-day?”

“I ought to think so.”

“Then tell me honestly, was this call designed for Julia, or did you expect to find the pretty Roxana?”

“Roxana?” answered Verus, with a roguish smile on his lips. “She was the wife of Alexander the Great, and died long ago; but I associate with the living, and left that merry crowd on the street simply and only—”

“You aggravate my curiosity.”

“Simply and only because my sensitive spirit foresaw the prospect of meeting you, my fairest Balbilla.”

“And do you call that honest?” cried the poetess, striking the pretor with the handle of her feather fan. “Just listen, Lucilla; your husband dares assert that he came here to find me.”

Verus looked at her reproachfully as she whispered:

“So must dishonest men be punished.” And turning to Lucilla, in a louder voice said: “Do you know, Lucilla, if I never marry it will be your husband’s fault?”

“Yes,” broke in Verus, “unfortunately, I was born too late for you.”

“Do not misunderstand me,” cried Balbilla. “How could I dare matrimony, through fear of finding a Verus for a husband?”

“And what suitor would venture to woo Balbilla, could he know how severe she can be toward the simple admirer of her beauty?”

“A husband should not adore beauty in general, but only the one fair being who is his wife.”

“Vestal!” exclaimed Verus, with a laugh, “I shall punish you by holding back a great secret, which concerns us all. No, no, I shall not stay to gossip; but I beg you, wife, to teach her the practice of forbearance, that her future husband may not blame me too heavily.”

“No wife can teach forbearance,” returned Lucilla, “for we only practice it when there is nothing else left for us to do

and the sinner gives us a necessity for recognizing him in this manner."

Verus bowed before his wife, kissed her arm, and asked:

"Where is Julia?"

"She has rescued the lamb from the wolf," answered Balbilla.

"That means?"

"As soon as you were announced she hid the little Roxana."

"No, no," broke in Lucilla. "The tailor was waiting to arrange the costume for that charming child. Look at the beautiful nosegay she brought to Julia. Do you also deny my right to share your secret?"

"How could I?" returned Verus.

"He stands greatly in need of your recognition," said Balbilla, laughing; while the pretor, whispering, related to his wife what he had learned from Mastor.

As Lucilla threw up her hands in surprise, Verus said to Balbilla:

"You see now what a pleasure you have lost through your wicked words."

"How can one be so revengeful, most excellent Verus?" said the poetess, coaxingly; "I am dying of curiosity."

"Live but a few days, fair Balbilla, and the cause of your early death will be removed."

"Wait, and I will be revenged!" cried the girl, threatening him with her finger; but Lucilla led her away, saying:

"Come, now, Julia will be needing our counsel."

"Do so," cried Verus. "I fear, besides, that no one is quite at liberty to-day. Salute Julia from me."

As he went out he cast a look upon the nosegay Arsinoe had given away so soon after its reception, and sighed, saying:

"As one grows older he should learn humility."

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

HANNAH watched with Selene until sunrise, cooling, at frequent intervals, the injured foot, as well as the wounded head.

The old physician was not dissatisfied with the condition of his patient, but commanded the widow to take a few hours of rest, and commit the nursing to her young friend. As Maria, now left alone with the patient, laid the first compress on her head, Selene said to her:

“You were yesterday on the Lochias. Please tell me how you found all things there, who showed you the way to our dwelling, and did you see my little brothers and sisters?”

“You are not yet free from fever, and I know not if I ought to talk much with you, though I would like to do so.”

The words were friendly, and the eyes of the deformed girl were beautiful in their frank sincerity. Their glances expressed not only sympathy and pity, but admiration; for Selene was so beautiful, so very different from herself, that she seemed to be nursing a princess. Her own back had never before seemed so crooked and her brown face so ugly as in contrast with the fair and regular features and delicately formed figure of this girl. But Maria was not envious; she was only happy to serve, to help, to look upon Selene, although she knew her to be a heathen.

She had been secretly praying during the night-time that the Lord would convert this beautiful creature; would restore her to health, and fill her soul with that love which made her own so blessed. More than once she had been tempted to kiss her as she lay, but dared not, for the sick girl seemed made of some finer stuff. Selene was very much exhausted, and in the intervals of pain experienced in this quiet atmosphere of kindness a sensation of peace and rest which was both new and agreeable, though it was interrupted by her usual anxiety for the family.

The presence of Hannah did no good, for she fancied in

her voice, a resemblance to that of her own mother, when she had played with her children or embraced them with unusual tenderness.

At the pasting-table in the papyrus mill the deformed girl had been repulsive, but now she noticed her pleasant eyes and friendly voice; and the tenderness with which she handled her wounds awoke her gratitude.

Her sister Arsinoe was an idle Alexandrian child, and had given this girl the nickname of "Sister Thersites," after the ugliest of the Greeks besieging Troy; and Selene herself had sometimes used the same appellation.

But she remembered no more the shameful word, and recognized the thoughtful kindness of her nurse, while she said:

"The fever can not be very high. And, if you give me something to think of, I shall forget the pain. I long for my home. Did you see the children?"

"No, Selene. When I reached the palace, the friendly wife of the gate-keeper told me at once that both your father and sister were absent, and that the slave had gone to buy cakes for the children."

"To buy cakes!" exclaimed Selene in surprise.

"She said also that the way to the dwelling led through so many spaces where the slaves were at work that her son should go with me. He did so, and when we found your door locked he told me I could trust his mother with a message. That I did, for she looked both clever and kind."

"She is so."

"And she loves you very much, for as I told her of your sufferings, the tears ran down her cheeks, and she spoke as warmly and with as much sympathy as if she had been your own mother."

"I hope you said nothing of our working in the factory," said Selene, anxiously.

"Certainly not, for you had asked me to be silent. The old lady, too, sent you many friendly messages."

"Did the son hear also of my misfortune?"

"Yes. On the way through the palace he was full of jokes; but when I told him that you went out and were unable to return, and how anxious the physician felt about you, he became angry and uttered blasphemous words."

"Do you remember what he said?"

"Not all, but I can tell you one thing. He complained bitterly that the gods created beautiful things only to damage them, and he reviled—"

Maria cast down her eyes, as if uttering something unseem-

ly; but Selene flushed with pleasure, and said zealously, as if wishing to exceed the complaints of Pollux:

“He was right, for those above treat us as if—”

“It is not good to speak so,” exclaimed Maria, reproachfully.

“What do you mean?” asked the sick girl. “You live here quietly, in peace and love. I remember many words that Hannah dropped during our work-hours; and now I see that she looked at things in the same light. You may well think the gods to be kind.”

“God is so to all.”

“Are they kind to those whose every joy they ruin?” cried Selene, with blazing eyes. “When they tear away the mother from the house of eight children? When they daily threaten the only one who is left to support them?”

“Even for such there is one good God,” broke in Hannah, who had returned to the room. “I will some time point to you the kind Father in heaven who cares for us all, as if we were His own children—but not now. You ought to be quiet, and neither hear nor speak what can excite your fevered blood. Now I will rearrange the pillows under your head, and Maria may lay on a new compress, and then you must try to sleep.”

“I can not,” said Selene. “Tell me of your friendly God.”

“At another time, my dear girl. He can be found by all who seek Him, and among all His children He is most tender toward those who suffer.”

“Those who suffer!” cried Selene, in astonishment. “What cares any god—in the midst of Olympian delights—about those who are enduring pain?”

“Hush, child,” broke in Hannah, and with a soothing caress; “you shall soon learn of God’s care, and how another loves you.”

“Another?” murmured Selene to herself, and the flush on her cheeks deepened. She thought of Pollux, asking in her own mind whether he would have been so moved by the news of her misfortune if he had not cared for her, and began to concoct some reasonable explanation of the words she had heard in passing his work-place in the Hall of the Muses. He had never said in so many words that he loved her. And why should not he, a sculptor, a fresh and merry-hearted fellow, joke with the pretty girl, even though his heart belonged to another? No, he was not indifferent to her, that she had perceived on the night when she served as his model, that she plainly read in Maria’s account. And the more she thought, the more she longed for him—this friend of her childhood.

Her heart had never beat for any other man, but since her interview with him in the Hall of the Muses, her whole soul had been filled with his image, and she was sure this must be love—it could be nothing else. Half waking, half dreaming, she fancied that he entered her silent room, sat down beside her bed, and looked into her eyes. Ah, how could he help it? She must rise and stretch out her arms toward him.

“Be quiet, child,” said Hannah; “it is not good for you to move so much.”

Selene opened her eyes only to close them again and dream on, until she was roused by the sound of voices in the garden.

Hannah left the room, and soon they recognized her voice among the others, and as she returned to the side of Selene, her cheeks were flushed, and it was difficult for her to find fitting words in which to relate the occurrence.

“A huge man in a fantastic dress,” she said at last, “desired admittance, and when refused by the gate-keeper he simply put him to one side. He asked for you.”

“For me?” asked Selene, blushing.

“Yes, my child. He brought an immense and beautiful nosegay and said it came with the greeting of your friend on the Lochias.”

“My friend on the Lochias?” murmured Selene to herself, thoughtfully.

Suddenly her eyes became bright with joy, and she asked:

“Did you say that the man who brought the flowers was very tall?”

“That he was.”

“Oh, please, Hannah,” cried Selene, trying to rise, “let me see the flowers!”

“Have you a bridegroom, child?” asked Hannah.

“A bridegroom? No, but there is a young man with whom we played as children, a sculptor, and a good man, who must have sent the flowers.”

Hannah looked at her sympathetically, beckoned to Maria, and said:

“The nosegay is very large. You can look at it, but it will not do to keep it here; the odor of so many flowers might do you injury.”

Maria rose from her seat near the end of the bed, and whispered to Selene:

“Is it the son of the gate-keeper?”

Selene nodded assent, with a smile, and as the two women went together to bring the flowers, she was able to change her own position in the bed; but after doing so, there was a sing-

ing sound in her ears, and shining specks seemed floating in the air before her eyes. It became hard to breathe, but the air seemed to her filled with the fragrance of flowers. Hannah and Maria brought in the gigantic bunch of flowers. Her eyes brightened, and she clasped her hands in admiration, and begged her friends to turn it first on this side and then on that, pressed the flowers against her face, and secretly kissed the tender petals of a half-opened rose. She felt intoxicated with joy, and tears coursed each other down her cheeks. Maria first noticed the brooch within the bow of ribbon, and pointed it out to Selene, who took it into her hand. Blushing, she looked at the delicate carving of Eros sharpening his arrows. She felt no more pain; she was well and joyous, proud and supremely happy.

Hannah was troubled to see her so much excited, and motioned to Maria, while she said:

“That is enough, daughter; we will place it before the window, where you can see it.”

“So soon?” asked Selene, sorry to have it taken away, and breaking off a few roses and violets to lay on the pillow beside her, while she examined lovingly the carving on the brooch. Without doubt, she thought, it had been cut by Teuker, the brother of Pollux. How delicate the carving! How thoughtfully chosen the sentiment they conveyed! The heavy gold setting troubled her a little, so long accustomed to look upon money only as the means of supplying absolute necessities. She said to herself, Pollux ought not to have done it. Still it was pleasant, and would she not gladly have done as much for him? Later, she thought, she might give him some lessons in economy.

The two women returned, after arranging with some difficulty the mass of flowers in the window, and renewed the wet applications without speaking.

She was content to be silent, for her heart was full of tender whispers. And wherever she turned her eyes they met only what was agreeable.

The flowers—the brooch—the kind face of Hannah—even Maria’s plain features were beautiful, for she was not quite a stranger to Pollux, and to her she might speak of him.

Selene knew herself no more—winter had reigned in her soul, but now the spring-time had come—it had been night, but day had dawned; her heart, formerly a parched garden, was gay with flowers and fresh with green leaves.

Often she had been unable to comprehend the cheerfulness

of Arsinoe, and had been almost angry with the mirth of the children; to-day she would have been glad to share it.

There lay the poor creature gazing blissfully at the flowers, without a suspicion that they had been sent by one for whom she cared as little as for the Christian walking up and down before her window in the garden of the widow of Pudens, and fancying, in her rapture, that she possessed the love of a heart which had never been hers, and which was at this moment absolutely filled with the image of her sister. Poor Selene! The dream was one of undisturbed felicity, but with every moment the waking drew nearer, and what a waking it would be!

Keraunus had not succeeded in visiting Selene with Arsinoe before the hour of her appointment with Julia. The attempt to have his child appear there in a dress worthy of her origin had consumed much time, and had, moreover, been fruitless. All the shops and magazines were closed, for merchants, work-people and slaves shared together in the festivities of the day. As the hour approached, Arsinoe still sat in the simple white dress and peplum, trimmed with blue ribbons, which looked even worse to-day than on the preceding evening. The nosegay presented by Verus gave her much pleasure. All girls love beautiful flowers, and there is a sort of kinship between girls and flowers.

The vexation and ill-humor of Keraunus were not diminished by waiting two hours in the antechamber among those who sought audience with the prefect while Julia, the wife of Verus, and Balbilla were selecting the costume of his daughter among the costly and most richly colored stuffs in fine wool, silk, and delicate bombazine.

One peculiarity of this kind of labor is the fact that the more time is consumed the greater the number of helpers.

But at last Arsinoe appeared, glowing with delight over the beautiful things in preparation. As Keraunus rose from his couch to meet her, the door opened to admit Plutarch, garlanded and adorned with flowers as usual, and supported upon his living crutches.

Every one rose at his entrance, and as Keraunus saw that the first lawyer of the city and the representative of an ancient family bowed to him he did the same.

Plutarch's eyes were better than his legs, and proved themselves among the best where pretty women were concerned. On the threshold he noticed Arsinoe, and beckoned to her with both hands as to a familiar acquaintance.

The charming girl had greatly pleased him. Had he been younger, he might have striven for her favor; now he was sat-

ified to make himself agreeable to her. After his usual custom, he was led close to her side, and, patting her upon the arm, asked:

“Well, charming Roxana, has Julia arranged the costume to please you?”

“Oh, she has chosen such beautiful things!” answered the girl.

The washed dress of Arsinoe caught the quick eye of the old man, and since Gabinius had that morning paid him a visit to find out whether Arsinoe did not after all work in the factory, and to repeat what he had said of Keraunus, as a poor, puffed-up, gluttonous fellow, whose collection of rarities—out of which he scornfully specified a few—was of no value whatever. Plutarch instantly asked himself how he could preserve his pretty favorite from the envious tongues of her rivals, whose bitter expressions had already come to his ear.

“Whatever the worthy Julia undertakes will be excellently done,” he said, and added, in a whisper: “Day after to-morrow, when the goldsmiths reopen their shops, I shall see what I can find for you. I am sinking! Hold me up higher, Atlas and Antæus! That is better. Surely, my child, I see better here than from below. Is the large man, standing behind, your father?”

“Yes.”

“Have you no mother?”

“She is dead.”

“Oh!” answered Plutarch, in a tone of pity. Then turning to Keraunus, he said:

“Allow me to congratulate you on having such a daughter. I understand that you must also supply the mother’s place to her.”

“That is unhappily true, my dear sir. She resembles my poor wife. Since her death I have led a joyless life.”

“But I hear that you amuse yourself with collecting rarities. We share the same inclination. Are you willing to dispose of the cup of my namesake Plutarch? Gabinius has told me of its quality. It ought to be an article of genuine worth.”

“It is so,” answered Keraunus with pride. “A gift from the Emperor Trajan to the philosopher, and of handsomely carved ivory. I should regret parting with such a pearl, but”—and here he lowered his voice—“I am under obligations to you for kind offices to my daughter, and as a return—”

“There is no question of that sort,” broke in Plutarch, who understood human nature well enough to perceive from

his bombastic speech that Gabinius had represented him in true colors; "you only honor me in allowing me to assist in furnishing the costume of our Roxana. I beg you to send me the cup, and I consent beforehand to any price you may set on it."

This was a moment of conflict to Keraunus. Had he not been in such pressing need of money, were not his desire for a more showy slave so strong, he would have insisted on making the cup a gift to Plutarch, but, as it was, he cleared his throat, and staring at the floor, said, in an embarrassed manner, and without a trace of his former assurance:

"I shall then be forced to remain your debtor, as you seem to wish this business transaction to be kept apart from our personal relations. Well, then, for a sword of Mark Antony I received two thousand drachmas—"

"Then," broke in the old gentleman, "this cup, the gift of Trajan, is worth twice as much to me, who bear the name of my illustrious ancestor. May I offer four thousand drachmas for your treasure?"

"My desire to gratify you leads me to accept the offer," replied Keraunus, with great dignity, pressing, meanwhile, the little fingers of Arsinoe, who stood close beside him, and had been trying to intimate by the touch of her hand her feeling that he ought to abide by his first suggestion, and make it a gift to Plutarch. As this unequally matched pair left the antechamber, his eye followed them, and he said to himself with a smile:

"For once I am pleased. How little of satisfaction I have in my own riches; and how often, at the sight of some robust bearer of burdens, do I wish I could exchange places with him. But to-day it was pleasant to have as much as I wanted. The most pressing need of these people seems to be a new dress for that charming child, though the old one does not diminish her beauty. I am sure she belongs to me, and that I have seen her at the gumming-table."

As soon as Keraunus reached the street with Arsinoe, he touched her shoulder and whispered:

"I told you it would be so, my girl. We shall yet be rich, and need in no respect stand behind our fellow-citizens."

"If you believed that, father, you should have insisted on presenting the cup to Plutarch."

"No," returned Keraunus. "Business is business; but some time I will repay him tenfold by the gift of my Apelles. And to Julia I shall send the saudal straps of Cleopatra, set with precious stones."

Arsinoe dropped her eyes to the ground, knowing well how much these things were worth, and said: "We will think of that by and by."

They mounted the sedans in waiting—Keraunus thinking that in the future he should always employ one—and were taken to the garden of the widow of Pudens. It was this visit which dispelled the blissful dream of Selene.

Keraunus conducted himself toward Hannah with icy coldness, for it pleased him to make her feel his contempt for everything bearing the name of Christian. When he expressed regret that Selene had been forced to remain in her house, the widow had replied:

"It is better to be here than on the street."

And as he remarked that he should not accept her attentions to his daughter as a gift, but pay her for the nursing, Hannah replied:

"We gladly do for your child what we can, and there is another who will reward us."

"That I shall never allow," cried Keraunus, indignantly.

"You misunderstand me," returned the Christian, kindly.

"I refer to no human being; and the reward we hope to gain is neither in money nor in goods, but in the joyful consciousness of having relieved the suffering."

Keraunus shrugged his shoulders and bade Selene ask her physician how soon she might be carried home.

"I shall not leave you here one moment longer than is necessary," he said, in the same tone he might have used with reference to moving her from an infected house. Then he kissed her forehead, and bidding adieu to Hannah, as carelessly as if flinging her an alms, went away without paying the slightest heed to Selene's remark that she was very comfortable and happy with the widow. The floor had for some time been hot under his feet, and the gold burned his pocket, for he had the means of buying an excellent slave. He thought, perhaps, if old Sebek were thrown in, he might be able to obtain a good-looking Greek, who would teach his children to read and write. In securing the fine outward appearance, the point of chief importance would be gained. If also capable of teaching, he could justify himself in expending a large sum. As he approached the slave-market he said to himself: "It is all for the honor of the house: all and only for the children!"

According to his direction, Arsinoe remained with Selene, and he promised to call for her on the way home.

Hannah and Maria left the sisters together, that they might

speaking without restraint. So soon as they were alone Arsinoe said: "You have red cheeks, Selene, and look very cheerful—and I, too, am so happy—so happy—"

"Is it because you are to represent Roxana?"

"That is also very pleasant; and then, who would have thought yesterday that another day would find us so rich? We really know not what to do with our money."

"We!"

"Yes; for the father has sold two pieces out of his collection for four thousand drachmas."

"Oh!" cried Selene, clapping her hands lightly. "Then the most pressing debts will be paid."

"Certainly; but that is not the best thing."

"What then?"

"Where shall I begin? Oh, Selene, my heart is so full! I am really tired, and yet I could dance, and sing, and whirl all day and until to-morrow morning again for joy. When I think of my good fortune my head fairly spins, and I feel that I must catch at something not to stagger. You do not yet know how one feels whom the arrow of Eros has wounded her. Ah, I love Pollux and he loves me—so much!"

All the blood left Selene's cheeks as her pale lips whispered faintly:

"Pollux, the son of Euphorion; the sculptor, Pollux!"

"Yes, our dear, good, tall Pollux. Sharpen your ears now, and let me tell you all about it. Last night, on the way to see you, he confessed his love for me; and now you must counsel me how soonest to win over the father. He is sure to consent some time, for Pollux always succeeds, and one day he will become more famous than Papias and Aristetas and Nealkes together. That silly freak of his youth—But how pale you are, Selene!"

"It is nothing, really nothing but the pain. Go on," said Selene.

"Hannah said I must not let you talk too much."

"Tell me all; I will be quiet."

"You saw the beautiful head of our mother which he made," continued Arsinoe. "It was before that bust we met and spoke together for the first time in many years, and I felt at once that he was the dearest man on the earth. He fell in love with me, poor stupid thing, at the same time. Then last evening he came here with me. As I went through the streets, leaning on his arm—oh, Selene, it was beyond all words!—you would not believe me! Does the foot give such pain, you poor dear? for I see the tears in your eyes."

“Go on, and tell me more.”

And Arsinoe did as she was bidden, sparing nothing which could broaden and deepen the wound in that heart! Reveling in sweet memories, she described the very spot on the street where Pollux had given her the first kiss, and the bushes in the garden, under whose shade he had clasped her in his arms—their blissful walk in the moonlight. She told her, too, of the crowds gathered for the feast of Dionysius, and how they, inspired by the god, had joined the train, and danced madly through the streets—of the hard parting, at last, and, with a laugh, how her father had found the ivy leaf in her hair.

She chattered on, intoxicated by her own words, and did not see how it affected Selene. What if she had known that it was her words alone which caused that painful twitching about the mouth of her sister? When she afterward described the rich stuffs Julia had chosen for her costume, Selene listened with only half an ear, but was quick to catch the sum Plutarch had offered for the ivory cup, and the fact that her father had determined to exchange the old slave.

“Our good old black stork looks shabby, it is true,” said Arsinoe, “but I am very sorry to have him go away. Had you been at home perhaps father would not have thought of it.”

Selene laughed dryly, and said, with some scorn in her tone:

“Two days before you are turned out into the street you will be riding in a chariot. But go on with your story.”

“You take always the dark view,” said Arsinoe, a little repulsed. “But I assure you all will come out better than we fear. So soon as we are rich enough we will buy Sebek back again, and take care of him as long as he lives.”

Selene shrugged her shoulders, but Arsinoe sprung up, with tears in her eyes. She had been so glad to share all these pleasant things with her sister, and really believed they would enliven the tedium of her sick-room, and be like sunshine in her shadowed soul. And now she met nothing in response but scornful words and gestures.

We are not less injured by the hesitation of a friend to sympathize in our joy than to have him desert us in misfortune.

“If you would only leave one joy unimbittered,” cried Arsinoe. “I know well that you are never satisfied with anything I do, but, nevertheless, we are sisters, and you need not grind your teeth, and spare your words, and shrug your shoulders, when I tell you things in which even girls who were strangers would sympathize. You are so cold and unfeeling, and will perhaps even betray me to the father—”

Arsinoe did not finish her sentence, for Selene looked up with eyes so full of anguish, and said:

“I can not rejoice when it hurts so sorely.” And the tears ran down her cheeks.

New compassion sprung up in the heart of Arsinoe at hearing these words, and bending over she kissed her once, twice, thrice, but Selene only pressed her back, and sobbed:

“Leave me, I beg you—leave me, and go away. I can not bear it any longer,” and turned her face to the wall.

Arsinoe tried again to win her with caressing words and loving touches, but the distressed girl only repulsed her, and cried in desperation:

“I shall die if you do not leave me alone.”

And the girl, so favored of fortune, whose choicest gifts had been scorned by her only sister and female friend, went weeping out of the house, to wait there the return of her father.

When Hannah came back to the care of her patient, she noticed that she had been weeping, but asked no questions. Toward evening the widow suggested her remaining alone for half an hour, that she and Maria might join the brethren and sisters at the evening prayer service, and promised that they would pray for her also.

“Let things stay as they are,” said Selene. “They can not be changed. There are no gods.”

“It is true,” returned Hannah, “that there are no gods. But there is one good loving Father in heaven, as you have already learned.”

“As I have learned,” murmured Selene, in a tone of biting sarcasm.

When alone, she raised herself in the bed and flung the roses and violets that had been lying beside her far into the room, and bending back the fastening of the brooch until it was broken, she let it slide down between the bed and the wall, and then fell back, staring vacantly at the ceiling. With the approach of evening the increased fragrance exhaling from the lilies and honeysuckles before the window became unpleasant to her fevered senses. They were reminders of her shattered joys and witnesses of her present misery.

She drew the covers over her face to shut out this fresh annoyance, but as quickly flung them off, with a sense of suffocation. A strange restlessness took possession of her whole being, which aggravated the pain in her ankle and set her whole head throbbing. Every nerve was keenly alive, every thought increased her distress; her soul was at the mercy of cruel powers, its emotions tossed back and forth, as a storm

beats the crowns of the palm-trees. Without the relief of tears, unable to remain in one position, and yet punished by new agony for every motion, incapable of reasoning or of connected thought, yet persuaded that the odor of the flowers was acting upon her like poison, she dragged her injured foot from the bed, and sat down upon its edge, without heeding either the pain or the warning of her physician. The long tresses of her hair fell about her face and down over her shoulders and arms.

In this position, her thoughts took a new direction. Outwardly, a statue of stone staring vacantly at the floor, yet bitter hostility against her sister, hatred toward Pollux, contempt for the miserable weaknesses of her father and for her own infatuation, made a wild tempest within her soul.

The garden lay in peaceful silence, and the evening wind brought snatches of the pious song from the praying circle in the house of the widow of Pudens to her ear. Selene gave it no heed, but as a stronger breath of the sickly fragrance touched her senses, she clutched her own hair with a violence that produced a cry of pain. Then the question whether this were less rich and beautiful than that of her sister, came into her mind, and with it a wish, sudden as lightning, that she might so clutch her sister by the hair and hurl her to the ground.

Again that odor, that unendurable fragrance! She would not bear it any longer! She rose and with very halting steps succeeded in reaching the window and dashing the flowers to the ground, with the vase in which they stood, which, only a short time before, had cost all Hannah's spare money.

Standing upon one foot, she leaned against the side of the window for support, and heard more distinctly the plashing of the waves upon the stony beach behind the little house of Hannah. With fevered blood, and burning foot, and throbbing head, and her soul consuming with hatred, as by a slow fire, every wave dashing among the pebbles seemed to cry out to her: "Come to me. I can put out the flames; I can refresh and cool your blood." What had life to offer but new torment and misery? But the sea, that dark, blue sea, was vast, and cold, and deep, and the waves wooed her with flattering promise to take away at once the glow of the fever and the burden of life. Selene did not reflect, she weighed nothing; she remembered neither the children to whom she stood in place of the mother, nor the father whose guard and support she had been; and listened only to the gloomy voices which

whispered that the world was bad and cruel—a state where grief and anxiety would never cease to gnaw the soul.

She fancied herself standing in a burning pool that reached her temples; and as one whose garments are in flames instinctively rushes toward the water, so she hoped to find in those depths the goal of all her longings—that fair, cold death in which all is over forever. Groaning and dizzy, she staggered through the door into the garden; and with both hands pressed upon her temples, limped toward the sea.

CHAPTER II.

THE Alexandrians were stiff-necked. Only something very remarkable in a city always full of strange sights could induce them to turn their heads. To-day, especially, each one thought of himself and his own pleasure. Some especially stately or fantastically attired figure might cause a momentary smile or word of applause; but before one had really looked it had passed on, and some new object attracted the eye.

So no one gave especial attention to Hadrian and his two companions, who let themselves be borne with the tide of living beings through the city streets.

Hadrian was dressed to represent Silenus, Pollux as a faun. Both wore masks, and the slender, supple youth supported his character quite as well as the vigorous man at his side.

Antinous represented Eros, wearing a rose-colored mantle and garlands of flowers, the silver quiver over his shoulder as well as the bow in his hand indicating the god he personated. He also wore a mask, but his figure often attracted attention, and many a "Long live Eros!" or "Be gracious to me, beautiful son of Aphrodite!" echoed after him.

Pollux had taken the costumes from the house of his master Papias, who was absent when he went for them—but the question of his consent seemed needless to the youth, for he, as well as the other apprentices, had often, with the knowledge of Papias, used these things for a similar purpose. He hesitated a little over the quiver because it was of real silver, and had been a gift to Papias from the wife of a rich grain dealer, whose image he had cut in marble representing her as Artemis hunting.

"The handsome friend of the architect," said Pollux to himself, as he laid this article in the basket with the other things, which a squint-eyed boy was to carry to Hadrian, "will make a charming Eros, but he must have a quiver, and before the sun rises it will be hanging again on its hook."

But Pollux found little opportunity to rejoice in the beauty of this god of love, for the Roman architect whom he guided had such an insatiable desire to know everything, that this young man, born and brought up in Alexandria, was besieged with questions. Not content with seeing the main streets and public squares, he looked also at the private houses, and asked after the names and position and wealth of their occupants. The clear-headed manner in which he asked to be conducted into this or that part of the city testified to Pollux that he was quite familiar with its plan, and the pleasure and admiration he expressed in the broad, clean streets, the charming open places, and the fine buildings, were most gratifying to the patriotic young Alexandrian.

Hadrian asked first to be taken along the sea, and by way of the Bruchiom to the temple of Poseidon, before which he performed an act of devotion. He looked into the gardens of the kingly palace and its neighboring museum.

The Cæsareum, with its Egyptian gate, excited his admiration not less than the countless statues in the great theater, surrounded by its many-storied arcade. From this they turned to the left toward the sea again, to visit the Emporium, the forest of masts in the harbor of Eunostus, and the handsome quays. The Heptastadium was to the right, and the harbor of Kibotus, swarming with merchant ships, held their attention but a short time. Here they turned their backs upon the sea, going through the quarter called Rhacotis, peopled entirely by Egyptians, and containing much that interested the Romans.

They met first so formidable a procession of priests in the service of the Nile gods, bearing chests of relics, holy vessels, divinities, and images of sacred animals to the Scrapeum as to fill all the neighboring streets. Hadrian did not attempt to reach the building, but he looked at the vehicles going up an inclined road toward the sacred temple, and also the train of worshipers on foot who climbed by a long flight of stairs that grew broader toward the top, and ended in a platform on which four strong pillars supported a skillfully vaulted cupola. The eye could not at once take in all the structures connected with the temple and protected by this gigantic canopy. The priests in their white robes, the lean, half-naked Egyptians with their folded aprons and head-cloths, the statues of animals, and the curiously painted houses in this quarter greatly interested Hadrian and led him to ask many questions that Pollux was unable to answer.

Their visit of observation extended to the southern extremity

of the city, lying along the shores of Lake Mareotis. Nile ships and boats of every shape and size lay at anchor in this deep inland water. Here Pollux pointed out the canal through which merchandise brought up the river was conveyed to the ships, and called attention to the charming country seats and well-nursed vineyards on the shores of the lake. Hadrian remarked, thoughtfully:

“The body of this city ought to thrive, since it receives nourishment through two mouths and two stomachs—I mean the sea and the lake.”

“And two harbors also,” added Pollux.

“You are right,” answered Hadrian; “but it is time for us to return.”

And, going again eastward, they passed through the silent streets where the Christians had their homes, also the Jews’ quarter. Here many houses were closed; and they found nothing of the festal confusion which reigned among all the heathen population; for the strict adherents of the Jewish faith kept themselves apart from the celebration of heathen festivities; while they who lived among them gradually learned to take their share.

For the third time that day, Hadrian and his companions crossed the Canopic way—that great mart of commerce which divided the city into two parts—the northern and the southern; for he wished to ascend the Panium hill and get a view of both parts, and learn their relations to each other.

The carefully kept gardens surrounding this eminence swarmed with living beings, and the winding path leading to the top was crowded with women and children going up to get a view of the most striking spectacle of the day, to be followed by performances in all the theaters.

Before the emperor and his companions reached the Panium, the crowd had become dense, and the cry passed from one to another:

“Here they come!” “To-day they begin earlier!”
“There they are!”

Lictors, with their fasces, cleared the broad streets leading from the prefecture to the Panium, over the Bruchion, giving no heed to the mocking and jeering words elicited by their appearance. One woman, whom a guard pressed back with his fasces, cried in scorn:

“Better give me the reeds for my children than use them against quiet citizens.”

“An ax is hidden within the bundle,” added a scribe in warning.

“Then pass it along to me,” said a butcher; “it will serve in my slaughter-house.”

The blood rose to the face of the Romans; but they remembered the words of the prefect, who, knowing the Alexandrians, had bid them be deaf—seeing, not hearing, all things.

Now there appeared a cohort from the twelfth legion stationed in Egypt, in parade uniform. Behind them walked a double row of chosen lictors crowned with wreaths. Then came many hundred wild animals, led by the dark-skinned Egyptians—leopards, panthers, giraffes, gazelles, antelopes and deer. After this a richly dressed and gayly wreathed Dionysian choir, with tambourine, lyre, double flute, and triangle-clang; and finally, drawn by ten elephants and twenty white horses, a great gilded ship fixed upon wheels, representing the vessel into which Tyrrhenian pirates enticed the young Dionysius, after they had discovered the black-haired youth in his purple garments on the shore. But the evil-doers—so said the myth—were not long permitted to rejoice in their crime, for scarcely had they reached the open sea when the chains of the god fell off, vine leaves grew with miraculous rapidity and luxuriance over the sails, while the tough stalks and the clinging ivy twined like serpents around mainmast and oars, and immense bunches of grapes made the ropes heavy and covered all the sides and decks. Dionysius is equally powerful on land or sea. He himself took the form of a lion, and the frightened pirates, plunging terrified into the sea, were changed into dolphins, who followed their lost vessel. Titianus, who had devised and adorned this to represent the Homeric poem and feast the eyes of the Alexandrians, was, with his wife and many Romans from the suite of the empress, carried in this vehicle through the streets to enjoy the festal demonstrations. Great and small, old and young, male and female, Greeks, Romans, Jews, Egyptians, dark and light skinned strangers, both smooth and woolly haired, pressed with equal zeal to the borders of the streets to see the gilded ship.

Hadrian, with a better appreciation of the mirth than his more sensitive companion, had pushed into the forward row, and as Antinous tried to follow, a Greek boy whom he had pushed to one side, tore the mask from his face, dropped to the ground, and slipped nimbly away with his booty. As Hadrian turned to look after the Bithynian, the ship on which the prefect stood between the pictures of the emperor and the empress, and Julia Balbilla, with her companion and other Romans were seated, was close upon them. His sharp eye had recognized their faces, and as he feared the uncovered face

of Antinous would betray his presence, he cried to him: "Turn around, and step back into the crowd!"

Antinous obeyed the command instantly, and glad to be free from the press, which was in the highest degree annoying to him, sat down upon a bench near the Panium, and fell to dreaming of Selene and the nosegay he had sent her, and neither saw nor heard what was passing around him. When the gay ship left the Panium garden and turned into the Canopic way, the noisy crowd pressed onward with it.

As a brook suddenly swollen by a cloud-burst rushes madly along its channel carrying all before it, so were Hadrian and Pollux forced to follow in its wake. An immensely long colonnade bordered this famous street, which led from one end of the city to the other. Hundreds of Corinthian columns supported its covering, and by clinging to one of these they succeeded in gaining a footing and recovering their spent breath.

The first care of Hadrian was to find Antinous, and as he shrunk from mixing again in the crowd, he begged Pollux to search for him.

"Will you wait for me here?" asked Pollux.

"I have known more comfortable places," sighed Hadrian.

"I also," answered Pollux. "The high poplar and ivy-wreathed door yonder leads into a cook-shop, where even the gods might be well entertained."

"I will wait for you there."

"But I warn you to exercise self-denial, for the 'Olympian Table' of the Corinthian Lykortas is the most expensive eating-house in the city. Only those carrying the heaviest purses are his guests."

"That is good news," said Hadrian, laughing. "Get a new mask for my assistant and bring him back. It will not make me a bankrupt to get a meal for three of us. On a feast-day one expects to pay out something."

"May you not repeat the offer! Such a tall fellow as I can keep his host busy at the wine-tankard and behind the dishes."

"We will see what you can do," cried the emperor after him, as he was hurrying away. "And besides, I owe you a meal in return for your mother's supper of cabbage."

While Pollux sought the Bithynian, the emperor entered the first eating-house of a city famous in culinary art.

The space where the greater part of the guests took their meals was an open court, surrounded by pillared halls, three

sides of which were only covered at the top, and one inclosed by walls.

In this open space were couches, on which the guests reclined, singly, in pairs, or in large groups, ordering the dishes and drinks of their choice, which the slaves—pretty boys with curling hair and tasteful garments—served on small, low tables. Here a party was merry and noisy—there sat some epicure silently enjoying the delicate dainties—yonder a circle of men were more eager to speak than to eat; while out from some inclosed apartment came notes of music and mingled laughter of men and women.

The emperor wished a separate room, but all were occupied, and he was requested to wait a short time for one that would soon be vacated. He had removed his mask, and although there was little fear of his being recognized in that costume, he chose a position behind one of the large pillars on the back side of the hall, which the approach of evening already cast into the shadow. There he ordered wine and oysters; and while partaking of these, he called a head-waiter to arrange with him for a meal, so soon as the two others should arrive. During this conversation the host perceived that he had to do with one accustomed to table luxuries, and politely communicated to him the resources of the establishment. There was much in this immense court to excite the curiosity of an inquisitive person like Hadrian.

Food was prepared before the eyes of the guests, that they might make their own selection from the choicest articles which the market afforded.

Here every variety of vegetable which Egypt or Greece could furnish was arranged in picturesque piles—there, fruits of every form and size—in another place were the preparations in delicate, golden-brown pastry. Those filled with meat, fish, or Canopus mussels were prepared in Alexandria; others containing fruits and flower petals were brought from Arsinoe on Lake Moeris, in whose neighborhood gardening and fruit raising had been carried to the highest perfection.

Meats of every sort were hanging or lying in their appropriate locations. There were juicy hams from Cyrene, Italian sausages, and cuts of fresh meat, also game and poultry in great variety; and one large space was occupied by a tank in which the finest scaly inhabitants of the Nile and of the inland lakes of Upper Egypt, as well as the costly *muraena* and other species of Italian fish, were seen swimming about. Alexandria crabs, mussels, oysters, and varieties from Canopus and Klysmā were kept fresh in running water. The smoked

provisions from Mendes and Lake Moeris were suspended from metal hooks, and in a covered but airy spot were freshly caught fish from the Mediterranean and Red Seas. Every guest of the "Olympian Table" chose for himself the meat, fruit, asparagus, fish, or pastry which he wished to have prepared.

Lykortas, the host, pointed out to Hadrian an elderly man who, in this well-ordered court of still life, was choosing the articles for an evening banquet.

"All fine, all excellent," said Hadrian; "but the gnats and flies, attracted by all this magnificence down there are quite intolerable. The odor of cooking also takes away my appetite."

"In the side apartments," said the host, "it will be better. The party is already breaking up in the one you have engaged. Just behind here the sophist Demetrius and Tancrates are entertaining a few gentlemen from Rome, rhetoricians, philosophers, or something of that sort. They have been at table discussing and contending since breakfast-time, and now lamps are being carried in. There go the guests from the next room. Will you have it?"

"Yes," answered the emperor; "and when a tall young man asks for the Roman architect, Claudius Venator, bring him to me."

"So, then, you are an architect, and no sophist, or rhetorician?" said the host, eying him attentively.

"Silenus—a philosopher?"

"Oh, both the loud-talking men yonder go ordinarily naked, or with ragged mantles over their shoulders. To-day they are being feasted by the rich Josephus."

"Josephus! That is a Jewish name, but the man seems to be bravely attacking the ham."

"There would be more swine in Cyrene were there no Israelites there! They are Greeks, like ourselves, and eat that which suits their tastes."

Hadrian entered the vacated apartment, and after he had seen the slaves drive away the flies which had gathered about the table so lately used, he stretched himself upon a couch, and listened to the conversation of Favorinus, Florus, and their Greek guests. He knew the two first, and his sharp ear followed the whole conversation. Favorinus was praising the Alexandrians in a loud tone, but in fluent and beautifully accented Greek. He was a native of Arelas, in Gaul, but the language of Demosthenes never flowed more smoothly from the lips of a Hellenic Greek. He affiliated much more naturally with the self-poised, keen, and active inhabitants of the

cosmopolitan African city than with the Athenians. These lived only in the past; the Alexandrians dared to rejoice in the present. Here he found independent thought; but on the Ilissus men were only servants, who made a trade of their learning, as the Alexandrians trafficked in the merchandise of Africa and the treasures of India. As he had once fallen into disgrace with Hadrian, the Athenians had overthrown his statue. The favor or the disfavor of princes seemed to them of more consequence than spiritual strength, great deeds, or high desert. Florus confirmed the ideas of Favorinus throughout, and declared that Rome must free herself from the intellectual influence of Athens.

But Favorinus did not yield his point, and insisting that each of them, having passed the period of youth when it is hard to learn anything new, he alluded with mild sarcasm to the famous work of his table companion, in which Florus had attempted to distribute the history of Rome into four parts, corresponding with the four periods of human life, and had forgotten the old age—treating of Rome only in childhood, youth and manhood. Favorinus retorted that, like his friend Florus, he had placed too high a value on the flexibility of Roman genius, and underrated that of the Greeks.

The answer of Florus was in a voice so deep, and with words so bombastic, that the listening emperor felt disposed to assist him, and to ask how many cups had been taken by this very excitable countryman since the hour of breakfast.

As Florus attempted to prove that Rome—under the government of Hadrian—had attained the summit of its vigor, he was interrupted by his friend Demetrius, with the request that he should describe the personal appearance of Hadrian.

Florus did this willingly, and drew also a brilliant picture of his skill in governing, his general knowledge and ability.

“There is only one thing I do not like,” he cried, vivaciously. “He is too little in Rome—now the very heart of the world. He wants to see everything, and travels restlessly through the provinces. I would not like to exchange places with him!”

“You have expressed that idea in verse,” broke in Favorinus.

“Only a jest at a banquet. I make myself comfortable at the ‘Olympian Table’ of this excellent cook-shop every day while waiting the arrival of Hadrian in Alexandria.”

“How do the verses run?” asked Panerates.

“I have forgotten them, and they deserve no better fate,” answered Florus.

“But I remember the beginning,” laughed the Gaul.
 “The first verse runs thus, I think:

“ ‘Caesar to be, I do not covet:
 In savage Britain to wander round,
 In bitter Scythia to be snow-bound,
 Such life I leave to those who love it.’ ”*

Hadrian struck his fist into the left hand with these words, and while the banqueters were speculating as to why he remained so long away from Alexandria, he took the folding tablet he was in the habit of carrying in his purse, and scratched rapidly the following verse in the wax:

“Florus to be, I do not covet—
 Drinking-shops to wander round
 By the Garkoch life so bound,
 Where fat barrack insects feed,
 There to bury thought and deed,
 Florus may—I do not love it.”

Scarcely had he finished writing, with evident internal amusement, when the head-waiter brought in Pollux. He had not succeeded in finding Antinous, but expressed the opinion that the young man had returned home; and he begged the emperor to excuse him from a long attendance at the meal, since he had just met his master, Papius, who had expressed great displeasure at his long absence. Hadrian no longer enjoyed the society of Pollux as he had during the day.

The conversation in the next room was far more entertaining than that with the honest though uncultivated fellow. Besides, he was disturbed by the failure to find Antinous, and inclined to leave early on this account. Antinous could easily find his way to the Lochias, but a remembrance of the evil tokens, seen the night before, flitted, like bats in a banqueting hall, through the air about him, which he tried in vain to scatter. Neither was Pollux so light-hearted as before. He was hungry, and applied himself to the excellent dishes so vigorously and emptied the cups so rapidly that the emperor was astonished, but the more he thought the less he said. The reproaches of Papius had roused him to declare, shortly and decisively, his determination to quit the service of a master and stand upon his own feet, and he was in haste to make this fact known to his parents and to Arsinoe.

While at the table, the advice of his mother, to seek the favor

* Verses of Hadrian and Antinous, preserved by Spartianus, translated by Mrs. C. B. Chambers.

and assistance of the Roman architect, occurred to his thoughts; but he had neglected to do so, partly from an unwillingness to be under obligation to any one, and partly because the long hours of intercourse since morning had only strengthened his impression of the man's superiority to himself rather than increased his familiarity.

He felt a strange shrinking from the restless, inquisitive gray-beard who asked so many questions, and, even while silent, looked so unapproachably profound that one would not venture to disturb him.

The bold sculptor had nevertheless attempted to break through this feeling of restraint, but retired each time with the consciousness of having made an awkward failure. He seemed, in comparison with Claudius Venator, like a dog playing with a lion; a game that could lead to no good result for the dog. So, for many reasons, both host and guest were glad when the meal was over.

Before Pollux went out the emperor gave him the tablet containing the verse, with the smiling request that he would send it, through the gate-keeper of the *Cæsareum*, to Aunœus Florus, the Roman. He begged him also to look for Antinous, and, if he should find him on the *Lochias*, to say that he would soon return thither.

Pollux went on his way. Hadrian, having listened for another hour to the conversation near him, without hearing any new mention of himself, paid his reckoning and went out into the brilliantly illuminated streets, mixed with the jovial crowd, but, depressed and uneasy about his favorite, made slow progress toward the *Lochias*.

CHAPTER III.

ANTINOUS wandered among the crowd, seeking his master. Whenever he saw two especially tall men together, he followed, only to find that he had pursued a false impression. Earnest and persevering effort was not one of his natural qualities; so when he became tired he sat down upon a bench in the *Panium* garden.

Two cynical philosophers, with unkempt hair, bristling beards, and ragged blankets about their shivering bodies, sat down near him, and began to utter loud invectives against that devotion to outward things and low enjoyments which characterized the present day, making sensual indulgence and display, instead of rugged virtue, the end of being. In order to be heard as far as possible, they spoke in loud voices, and the

elder of them swung a knotty staff with all the vehemence necessary to repel an attack of savages.

Antinous was disgusted by their ugly looks, rude manners, and screeching voices; but he thought perhaps Hadrian would have been amused by their appearance. Their remarks were evidently aimed at Antinous, for as he rose to leave they followed him with reviling words, ridiculing his costume and his anointed hair.

The Bithynian made no reply, but sauntered onward, with no special plan, only noticing that the street ran toward the sea, and from thence he could easily find his way to the Lochias.

It was growing dark when he reached the gate-keeper's house, and learned from Doris that the emperor and Pollux had not returned. What could he do alone in the wide, desolate palace? Were not even the slaves free on this day? Why should not he also, for once, roam unrestrained like the others? Pleased with the thought of being his own master, and wandering where he would, he strolled backward until he came upon the booth of one selling wreaths, which reminded him vividly of Selene and the flowers which must long since have reached her. He knew that she was being nursed among the Christians, in a little house near the sea. Pollux had become quite animated in describing his glimpse into the lighted room where she lay.

"Always beautiful," he said; "but never more lovely than lying in her pallor upon the couch."

Antinous determined to venture one more look upon the girl whose image filled his heart and mind, and thinking he might stand in the same place where Pollux had been on the previous evening, he mounted the first sedan which appeared.

The black bearers were too slow for his eagerness, and more than once he flung them as much gold as they ordinarily earned in a week, to stimulate their progress. At last they reached the gate, but seeing several white-robed figures in the garden he ordered the bearers to go further. In a dark and narrow street on the eastern side of the estate of the widow of Pudens, he descended, and bid the sedan wait for him. Before the garden gate he met two men in white robes, and one of the cynics who had sat upon the same bench in the Panium garden. Impatiently striding up and down while he waited for these people to disappear, he passed frequently the space lighted by the lamps hanging at the portal. The wandering eyes of the cynic remarked him, and flinging up his long, bony arms, and pointing toward the Bithynian, he cried, partly to the

Christians with whom he was talking, and partly to the youth himself:

“What does that coxcomb, that fine dandy, want here? I know the fellow with the smooth face, and the silver quiver on his shoulder. One would suppose he thought himself to be Cupid in earnest. Out of the way, you rat! The ladies in here know how to guard themselves from street loafers in rose-colored rags. Out of the way, or you may make acquaintance with the dogs and the slaves of the noble Paulina. Hey, door-keeper! Look out for this fellow!”

Antinous made no reply, but walked slowly toward the place where he had left the sedan, saying to himself: “Perhaps tomorrow, if I can not to-day;” thinking, as he went on, of no scheme through which he might attain his wish. The sedan was not where he had left it. Its bearers had gone into the next street, where was a little house belonging to a fisherman, whose wife sold a species of thin Felusian beer; and Antinous went up to the little inclosure where the black women sat under a cover of twisted fig-branches, and by the light of an oil lamp, to call them. It was quite dark in the street, but at the end of it he saw the moonlight glancing on the water. The plashing of the waves enticed him toward the pebbly shore. As he noticed there a boat tossing between the posts to which it was fastened, the thought struck him that perhaps he might see the house in which Selene was lying from the sea itself. To loosen the boat from its moorings was the work of a moment, and as he took his place within it he laid down bow and quiver and, seizing the oars, rowed with regular stroke along the shore toward the white strip, which seemed also to be the goal of the silver-tipped waves. There lay the garden of the widow of Pudens, and the little white house he could see from here must be the one where the fair, pale Selene was lying; but he could not get sight of the window Pollux had described. Would it not be possible to find some spot where he could put in with his boat and succeed in entering the garden? There lay two boats, but the walled canal in which they rested was closed from the sea by a grated door.

A platform extending into the sea, and surrounded by a columned balcony, made the place unapproachable. But as he looked longer and more intently, he descried a narrow flight of white marble steps parting the wall. Antinous dropped one oar into the water, and was turning the boat toward that spot, when his attention was arrested by the appearance of a white-robed figure, with streaming hair, upon the platform. How strangely it moved! tottering a few steps,

and then standing still, with both hands raised to the head! Antinous instinctively shuddered, and remembered the demons of which Hadrian occasionally spoke—beings belonging partly to the human race, and partly to the gods, and which sometimes appeared to the dying. Or was Selene dead, and could this be her wandering ghost? He held his boat steadily and gazed at the figure with suspended breath, which had now reached the balustrade of the platform, where he could see it distinctly—with both hands pressed against the face, bending over the parapet, and now—

As a star falls from the clear night sky, or in autumn the ripe fruit from the branch, so dropped this white-robed figure from the platform. One loud cry broke the silence, and within the same moment he heard a plashing in the water, and the spirting drops thrown upward played and glanced in the beams of the moon.

Was it the dreamer Antinous who now instantly put his oars into the water, and with a few vigorous strokes brought it to the spot where the drowning figure rose to the surface a few seconds after its plunge, and then bending over the side seized the garments of something, which, being neither demon nor shadow, he drew out of the water? He succeeded in lifting it, but in trying to pull it into the boat lost his balance, the boat capsized, and Antinous slid into the sea. After him plunged the silver bow and quiver. The Bithynian was a good swimmer. Before the white figure again sunk he had seized it with one hand, and, swimming with his feet and the one free arm, succeeded in reaching the marble steps he had before noticed. When his feet touched firm ground he lifted the rescued body with both hands, and hastened up the platform to a bench. The broad marble flagging shone in the light of the moon—seeming almost to shed an independent gleam. As he laid his wet, and, perhaps, lifeless burden upon the bench, a faint groan gave him the hope that his labor had not been in vain. Then, carefully supporting the head upon one arm, he parted the wet hair from the face, and as if struck by lightning, sunk upon his knees before the fair pale face of Selene—for it was she that he had rescued! she before whom he knelt!

Quite beside himself, and trembling from head to foot, he put his ear to her lips, to be sure he had not been deceived, and to learn if any breath found its way through their motionless marble.

Yes, she breathed, she lived!

In a transport of joy he pressed his own cheek against hers.

Oh, how cold, how icy, how death-like! The spark of life glimmered but faintly, yet he could not, would not, let it be extinguished—and, as thoughtfully, as quickly, and decidedly as the most vigorous of men, he raised her in his arms, as though she were a mere child, and bore her to the house whose white wall was revealed by the moonlight.

The lamp in the room Selene had so lately left was still burning, and before the window through which the light had shone to guide his steps, lay the flowers whose fragrance had caused so much misery, together with the fragments of a porcelain vase.

Were these flowers his gift? Perhaps so. And this room, into which he looked, must be the one Pollux had described. The house door stood open, and that into the department he entered to lay Selene on the bed. She looked like one dead, and as he looked upon the face which bore such traces of suffering his heart was touched by a compassion never before experienced. And as a brother might bend over a slumbering sister, so did he bend and kiss the forehead of Selene. She stirred, and, opening her eyes, stared into his face with such terror and bewilderment—the look of her eyes was so glassy and weird—that he stepped back shuddering, and with lifted hands, could only ejaculate: “Oh, Selene, do you not know me?”

She did not seem to hear his question, but her eyes wildly followed his every motion.

“Selene!” he cried again, seizing her limp hand and pressing it fervently to his lips. Then she uttered a loud cry, a shiver ran through her frame, and she broke into sighs and groans. In the same moment a door opened and Maria entered, who at sight of Antinous standing beside the bed of her friend gave expression to a scream of terror; and he, like a startled thief, rushed out of the house and through the garden toward the gate. Here the porter opposed his progress; but he put him aside with one vigorous effort, burst the gate, and though the gray-haired gate-keeper clutched at his garments, he fled, leaving a part of his chiton in his hand, and raced, like a competitor in the gymnasium, through the streets until beyond the reach of his pursuer. The cry of the porter, mingling with the pious songs, startled the Christians assembled in the house of Paulina, a few of whom hastened out to arrest the disturber of their worship.

But the young Bithynian was quicker than they, and thought himself well hidden from pursuit in the midst of a festal train which was moving from the city toward a lonely spot on the

sea-shore, east of Necropolis, for the celebration of some dark mysteries. The point toward which this singing, howling host of drunken fanatics bore Antinous was between Alexandria and Canopus, very far from the Lochias. So it happened that it was long after midnight before Antinous, with torn garments, covered with dirt, and quite breathless, was able to reach Hadrian.

CHAPTER IV.

HADRIAN had been expecting Antinous for several hours, and his impatience and displeasure were outwardly manifested through a frowning brow and threatening glance.

"Where have you been?" he asked, in an imperious tone.

"I tried first to find you, then I took a boat and rowed out into the sea."

"You are telling an untruth."

Antinous answered only by a shrug of the shoulders.

"Were you alone?" asked Hadrian, more mildly.

"Yes."

"Where did you go?"

"I looked at the stars."

"You?"

"May I not follow your example?"

"Why not? They shine as well for fools as for the wise. Even asses are born under good or evil stars. So one grows gray in possession of a hungry grammarian who feeds him on old papyrus, while another, who happens to fall into the possession of an emperor, grows fat, and has time to stare at the sky. How you look!"

"The boat captized with me and I fell into the sea."

Hadrian was startled, and as he noticed the tousled hair, stiff with salt water, and his torn chiton, he said, anxiously:

"Go instantly, and let Mastor rub and anoint you. He came back also looking like a whipped dog, and with red eyes. All heads seem turned on this cursed evening. You look like a slave who has been hunted by dogs. Drink a few cups of wine and go to bed."

"As you command, great Cæsar."

"Really? My 'ass' has made you angry."

"You were wont to find kind words for me."

"And I shall find them again. But not to-night; go now to bed."

Antinous took himself away, but the emperor walked up and down the room with long strides and arms crossed over his

breast, and downcast eyes. His superstitious mind had been made uneasy by a series of bad signs, which not only last night on the sky, but during his return to the Lochias, had met him, and seemed already to be finding fulfillment.

Leaving the eating-house in bad humor, and annoyed by the unlucky signs, if he had done things which he already regretted, they certainly should not have been attributed to the influence of evil demons, but were simply due to his own morose mood. It might possibly have been set down to some outside influence that he was witness of the attack of an excited crowd on the house of a rich Jew, on which occasion he was met and recognized by Verus. Bad spirits may have been busy, but that which happened later on the Lochias would certainly not have occurred had Hadrian been in a happier mood. For that he alone was responsible, and no accident or malicious demon. Certainly that would be an easy way of shifting a burdensome duty, or making a past deed seem good; but conscience is a tablet upon which a secret hand inscribes all our deeds, and pitilessly calls them by their right names. Sometimes we may succeed for a longer or shorter time in blotting or erasing the record, but the characters reappear, depicted with a weird brilliancy which the inward eye is compelled to notice.

Hadrian felt himself constrained this night to read the record of his misdeeds, and though among them he found some bloody wrongs—some frivolities unworthy even of an ordinary man—yet the tablet preserved also the record of many sternly fulfilled duties—of restless striving after great ends, and unwearied effort to stretch the sensitive threads of his spirit to the utmost limits of human thought and sense. But in this hour Hadrian thought of his evil and unworthy deeds, and he made a vow to those gods he sometimes ridiculed with his philosophical points, but toward whom he always turned when strength or means failed—here to build a temple, there to offer sacrifices for the expiation of his sins, and to appease their wrath. He seemed to himself like some great man threatened with disgrace, who seeks by gifts to win back the favor of his superior.

The courageous Roman shrunk from imaginary danger, and knew nothing of the healing smart of repentance. Scarcely an hour before he had so far forgotten himself as to misuse his power toward a weaker man, and the memory of it vexed him; but the thought of humbling himself and of rendering satisfaction to the person wronged never entered his mind.

Sometimes he deeply felt his human weakness—but again, it

was quite possible to believe in the kinship of his own imperial person to the gods. That was easiest when any one had dared to vex him or failed to recognize his superiority. Did not the heaviest punishments of the gods ever fall upon their despisers?

To-day, this mortal Jupiter had again smitten with his thunder-bolt a too bold son of earth, and this time the victim had been the son of Euphorion. Pollux had indeed been so unfortunate as to touch rudely the weak point of Hadrian's character; but one is not often so instantly changed from a friendly well-wisher to a hostile adversary—never—unless, as was true of the emperor, accustomed to spring from one mood into its opposite, and is conscious of the power to carry out his good or bad feelings into deeds. The real ability of Pollux had at first won the regard of Hadrian; his fresh, independent nature had pleased and amused him, but during their intercourse on the street, his confident manner of placing himself upon the same level had become annoying. In the workshop he had seen only the sculptor, and enjoyed his superabundant overflow of vigor; outside, and among men of the ordinary sort, in whom he generally inspired awe, his speech and bearing seemed bold, unbecoming, and almost intolerable. At the table, the vigorous eater and drinker, seeking to amuse by his facetiousness, and careful not to make a gift to the landlord, excited his repugnance.

And then Hadrian, out of humor, and filled with forebodings of evil, had returned to the Lochias without Antinous, and failing to find him there, walked restlessly up and down the Hall of the Muses, disdaining all conversation with Pollux, who was noisily at work behind his screen.

Pollux had been as unfortunate as Hadrian. In the first place, going into the neighborhood of the overseer's house, hoping to see Arsinoe, Keraunus had met and sent him away with contemptuous words. Returning to the Hall of the Muses, he had a contest with Papias, who became angry on hearing a renewed mention of his determination to be independent, and ordered him to pack up his tools and leave the Lochias immediately, and to keep away also from his own house. Unpleasant words had been exchanged, and as Pollux sought Pontius to speak with him over future plans, he had the additional misfortune to find that he had left the palace and would not return that evening. So he determined to follow the command of Papias. Without noticing the presence of the emperor in the hall, he began the separation of his own hammers, chisels and other tools, from those of Papias, throw-

ing them into two separate chests with as much violence as if visiting punishment upon the innocent tools for that which had befallen himself.

At length the bust of Balbilla, made by Hadrian, fell under his eye. The hateful caricature, over which he had laughed the day before, angered him; and after looking at it for a moment, his blood boiled, and he suddenly tore a lath from the wall of his inclosure, and struck upon the image so violently that the dry clay was broken and scattered through the space.

The strange noise induced the emperor to pause and learn its cause.

Unnoticed by Pollux, he witnessed the work of destruction, and became so much enraged that his brows contracted in threatening folds, and a blue vein stood out prominently in his forehead. This master of statecraft could more easily bear complaint of his power to govern than to witness contempt cast upon his artistic work.

He that knows his own work to be worthy can laugh at criticism, but if he be uncertain of its merit, and has reason to fear comment, easily comes to hate the person who makes it.

Hadrian was trembling with wrath, and doubled his fist as he approached Pollux, asking:

“What does this mean?”

Pollux looked at the emperor, and raising his arm for another blow, exclaimed:

“I am putting this caricature out of existence, because it offends me.”

“Come here,” cried the emperor, and seizing with his nervous hand the girdle of the chiton Pollux wore, dragged him before the Urania, tore the lath out of his hand, struck off the scarcely finished head, and cried, imitating the tone of Pollux:

“I am putting this piece of bungling out of existence, because it offends me.”

Pollux dropped his arms. Astonished, as well as irritated, he stared at the destroyer of his work, crying in his face: “Mad man, that is enough. One stroke more, and you will make acquaintance with my fist.”

Hadrian laughed coolly and sarcastically—threw the lath at the feet of Pollux, saying:

“Judgment against judgment; that is only fair.”

“Fair!” cried Pollux, beside himself. “Your miserable dabble, which my squint-eyed apprentice could have made as well as you; and only the creation of an idle hour. Fly upon you! But if you touch my Urania again you will learn—”

“What?”

“That in Alexandria gray-beards are spared only so long as they deserve it.”

Hadrian folded his arms, and stepping nearer to Pollux said:

“Be careful, fellow, if life be dear to you.”

Pollux retreated before the mighty man, and the scales fell from his eyes.

This was exactly the position of the statue of the emperor in the *Cesareum*. The architect Claudius Venator was Hadrian.

The young sculptor turned pale, and said, with drooping head, and in a faint voice, as he turned away:

“Might always makes right. Let me go. I am only a poor sculptor; you are something quite different. Now I am sure you are the emperor.”

“I am he,” replied Hadrian, grinding his teeth; “and if you think more of yourself as a sculptor than of me, I will show you which of us is sparrow, and which eagle.”

“You have the power to annihilate me, and I will certainly—”

“I am the only one here who has the right to *will*,” cried the ruler, “and I *will* that you do not again enter this palace or come under my eyes. I shall consider the fate of your kindred. Not one word more! Away with you, I say, and you can thank the gods that I endure the outrage of an immature creature more leniently than you deserve, in daring to judge the work of one so much greater than yourself, although you knew it to have been only the pastime of an idle hour. Out with you, fellow, and my slaves shall finish the breaking up of your work yonder, because it deserves no better fate, and because—what did you say just now? Ah! I have it; and because it offends me!”

A dry laugh echoed after the youth as he left the hall.

Standing in the shadow of the outside door he found Papias, who had heard what passed between him and the emperor. As Pollux met Doris he cried out: “Oh, mother, mother! What a morning, and what an evening! Fortune is nothing but the threshold of misfortune.”

CHAPTER V.

WHILE Pollux, with his sympathizing mother was waiting the return of Euphorion, Papias seized the opportunity of ingratiating himself with Hadrian, though he pretended still to

think him the architect Claudius Venator. Aurelius Verus, whom the Alexandrians called "the false Eros," had also passed through a serious experience.

In the afternoon he had invited the empress to go out with him and see the festal crowd—in disguise, if she should so choose—but Sabina was in a bad humor, declared herself to be suffering, and assured him that the noisy whirl would drive her out of life. And what better reporter could one have, she asked, than she had in Verus, and so be spared the dust and the bad air of the city, and the confusion of the crowd.

No sooner had Lucilla begged her husband to consider her dignity, and not mingle with the excited populace, at least after dark, than Sabina commissioned him to take observation of all which the occasion offered worthy of attention, and, above all, those things peculiar to Alexandria.

After sunset Verus visited first an eating-house, where he gave a banquet to the veterans of the Twelfth Legion, who had been with him on the battle-field fighting the Numidians. For an hour he drank with the brave old fellows, and left them for a visit to the Canopic way, only a short distance from the banqueting-house.

This street was brilliantly illuminated, and all the great houses behind the colonnade, with one exception, were adorned in honor of the occasion. This house belonged to Apollodorus, the Jew.

In previous years the handsomest carpets had been suspended from his windows. It was as gayly decorated with flowers and lamps as that belonging to any other Jew on the street, who shared in this festivity of their heathen fellow-citizens with as much zeal as if they also rendered homage to Dionysius.

Apollodorus had special reasons for holding himself aloof on this occasion, and without a suspicion of the danger this might entail, he sat quietly in the midst of the princely magnificence of his dwelling, which seemed far more appropriate for a Greek than for a Jew. This was specially striking in the apartments of the men where Apollodorus was passing the evening. The paintings on the walls, and the floor of the handsome room, whose half-opened covering was supported by pillars of noble porphyry, portrayed the loves of Psyche and Eros. Between the columns were busts of the most famous heathen philosophers, and at the further end was a statue of Plato. Among the many portraits and busts there was only one Israelite, and that was Philo, whose clear-cut and striking

features were among the most striking of his illustrious Greek companions.

In this handsome apartment, Apollodorus, a well-preserved man of fifty, reclined upon a luxurious couch, looking with mild but shrewd expression upon a stately old man of the same faith, who walked up and down before him, in animated speech, with his hands in constant motion—sometimes in gesture, sometimes stroking his snowy beard.

A younger and slenderer man, with pale, well-formed features and raven locks and beard, sat opposite his host, with dark brilliant eyes fastened on the floor, where he described imaginary curves and circles with his cane; while his excited uncle, the old man, addressed Apollodorus in passionate and flowing words, who frequently shook his head, and sometimes made a short reply.

It was easy to see that he was painfully affected by what he heard, and that these men of such different temperaments were on the verge of a quarrel.

Though both spoke the Greek language and professed the same religious faith, their views were as diverse as though they had sprung from radically different sources.

When two contestants stand far apart the weapons may clash, but they do not come to bloody wounds, to victory, or surrender. It was for the sake of this old man and his nephew that the house of Apollodorus was to-day left without decoration, for the Rabbi Gamaliel, who had yesterday arrived from Palestine, at the house of this Alexandrian relative, condemned all intercourse with the heathen, and would certainly have left the dwelling of his guest had he ventured to adorn it for the feast of a false god.

The nephew of Gamaliel, Rabbi Ben Jochai, enjoyed a distinction little below that of his father Ben Akiba. As he was considered the wisest sage and expounder of the law, so was his first-born son the first astrologer and most skillful interpreter of the mystical significance of the position of the heavenly bodies among the people of his faith. Apollodorus considered it a great honor to entertain under his own roof the wise Gamaliel and the distinguished son of Ben Akiba, and he had done all he could to make their sojourn in his house agreeable. A strictly Jewish cook had been bought and installed in the place of the Greek who usually served—who was familiar with all the demands of the Jewish law—and instructed to prepare food only according to Levitical rites.

The children of Apollodorus were forbidden to bring their Greek friends into the house during the visit of these guests.

or to use the name of any heathen god in their conversation. Apollodorus himself was the first to break this rule.

He, with all Alexandrian Jews, had received a Greek education. They thought and felt as Greeks; indeed, they were Jews but in name—for though they prayed to the one God of their fathers, instead of the many Olympian divinities, it was no more the mighty and wrathful Jehovah, but the world-animating spirit made known through Plato.

With each succeeding hour of this intercourse the chasm separating host and guests yawned more widely, and the relations of the Alexandrian to the wise men from Palestine became still more uncomfortable, after it became apparent that the object of their visit to Egypt was to win the daughter of Apollodorus as a wife to Ben Jochai. But the fair Ismene was not inclined to listen to the suit of the strict young rabbi. The home of their race seemed to her a barbarous land, the earnest young man excited her fear, and besides all else, her heart was not free. It belonged to the son of Alabarchos, the head of the Jews in Egypt, and this youth owned the handsomest horses in the city, and had won with them many victories in the hippodrome, and he had chosen her out of all the young women in the city. If to any one, she should give her hand to him.

This she confided to her father when he told her of the wooing of Rabbi Ben Jochai; and Apollodorus, who had many years before lost his wife, had neither the skill nor the wish to constrain his pretty darling.

It would indeed be hard for the accommodating nature of this man to return a decided negative to the proposition of his worthy guest; but it must be done some time, and this evening seemed a fitting time for the unpleasant task.

He was entirely alone with his guests. Ismene had gone to the house of a friend, where she could enjoy the display upon the street; his three sons had gone out also; even the slaves had permission to enjoy their liberty until midnight, and no disturbance was expected. So he found courage to decline the suit of Ben Jochai with many warm expressions of regard and deep appreciation of the honor proffered. His child, he said, was too fond of Alexandria to leave it willingly, and his distinguished young friend could hardly be satisfied with a wife who, accustomed to this freer mode of life, would be unhappy in a house where the stricter laws of the fathers were practiced.

Gamaliel allowed the Alexandrian to say all he wished; but as his nephew was preparing to answer he cut him off, saying, while his slightly bowed figure erected itself, and passing a

hand over the blue veins and fine wrinkles of his high forehead:

“Through war with the Romans our tribe has been much depleted; and among those of the same blood Ben Akiba found no maiden who appeared to him worthy of a union with his family. But tidings of the Alexandrian branch of our house and of his prosperity reached us in Judea; then Ben Akiba thought to follow the example of Abraham, and send me as an Eliezer into a strange land, to take a wife for his Isaac. Who he is and what rank he holds among men—”

“I know well,” broke in Apollodorus; “and nothing has brought greater honor to my house than your visit.”

“Nevertheless,” continued the rabbi, “we shall return as we came, without carrying out the wish of him who sent me, for after what I have heard from you within the last hour, we shall be compelled to withdraw our suit. Do not interrupt me. Your Ismene refuses to veil her face, and it is certainly fair to look upon. You have trained her spirit as that of a man, and she chooses her own path. This may be fitting for a Greek, but in the house of Ben Akiba the wife must have no will of her own, but be content to follow that of her husband, as the ship obeys its rudder; and this is in strict accordance with what the law commands, and you have allowed her to despise.”

“We acknowledge its excellence,” answered Apollodorus, “but if the laws Moses received on Sinai are binding on all mortals, those precepts so wisely given to regulate the outward lives of our ancestors are not meant for the children of the present day. At any rate, we can not follow them here, where—though true to our ancient faith—we are Greeks among the Greeks, with whom we live.”

“That I perceive,” returned Gamaliel. “You have exchanged the language itself—that garment of thought—the words of our fathers, the writings, the law—all these you have parted with.”

“You and your nephew also speak Greek.”

“We do that here, because you and yours no more understand the language of Moses and the prophets.”

“Wherever Alexander the Great carried his arms Greek is spoken; therefore, that Greek version of the Scriptures written by seventy interpreters—the Septuagint—is not identical with the original Hebrew text.”

“Would you exchange the stone in your ring cut by Bryaxis, which you showed me yesterday with so much pride, for a wax impression of the same?”

“The language of Plato is no common stuff; but noble as the costliest sapphire.”

“But ours came from the mouth of the Highest. What would you think of the child, who, despising the speech of his father, listened only to his neighbor, and used an interpreter to understand the commands of his parents?”

“You speak of parents who have long ago left their native land. The ancestor can not complain of his descendant, who uses the language of his adopted country, if he continue to act according to its sense.”

“We must live not alone by the meaning, but after the words of the Most High, for no word has gone in vain out of His mouth. The more elevated the thought of a sentence, so much the more do we need accuracy in the words and syllables. A single letter often changes the meaning of the whole sentence. But what a noise there is in the street! The tumult presses even into this distant apartment; and your son finds delight in this heathenish disorder. You do not restrain him with authority from increasing the ranks of the frenzied servants of pleasure!”

“I was once young myself, and think it no sin to join the universal gayety.”

“Say rather the shameful idolatry of the worshippers of Dionysius. Only in name do you and yours belong to the chosen people of the Lord; in reality you are heathens.”

“No, father!” cried Apollodorus, with animation. “You have transposed the relation. In heart we are Jews, though we wear Grecian garments.”

“You are called Apollodorus; that means a gift from Apollo.”

“A name chosen simply to discriminate one person from another. Whoever asks about a word that sounds pleasantly, what it signifies?”

“You, he; every man who has not a dull mind!” cried the rabbi. “Is it necessary, you ask, that Zenodotos, or Hermogenes, the Greek we meet at the bath, should know at once that he with whom he is talking over the latest explanation of some Hellenic myth, is a Jew? And how agreeable you consider the man who asks whether you are not a native of Athens, because you use the language with such a purely Attic enunciation. As we naturally pass over to our children what we most value, so do we choose for them names which flatter our own vanity.”

“By Hercules, father!”

A supercilious and sarcastic smile played over the lips of the shrewd Gamaliel, as interrupting Apollodorus, he asked:

“Is there any specially worthy man of our faith in Alexandria by the name of Hercules? No one associates that oath with the son of Alemene; it has the sense of ‘truly.’”

“Indeed, you are not quite exact in the use of words and names; but where there is so much to see and to enjoy as in this city, one’s thoughts can not always become connected. That is easily comprehended. They are so polite here, also, that truth is easily glossed over. Will you allow me, the barbarian from Judea, to speak very plainly with you?”

“Speak, I beg you.”

“You are Jews, though you would not be such, and look upon your origin as upon an evil that can not be avoided. It is only where you feel the mighty hand of the Most High that you recognize Him, and claim your right to be numbered with His chosen people. In the ordinary course of life you are proud to be among His foes. Do not interrupt me, and answer frankly what I ask. At what moment of your life have you felt the warmest gratitude toward the God of your fathers?”

“Why should I conceal it? It was at the time when my deceased wife presented me with our first-born son.”

“And you named him?”

“Certainly, you are aware that his name is Benjamin.”

“After the favorite son of the patriarch Jacob, and in that hour you were grateful to be permitted to add another link to the chain of your race. You were then a Jew, and our God was your God. The birth of a second son did not move you so deeply, and you called him Theophilus. But at the birth of your youngest you thought no more on the God of your fathers, for you gave him the name of the heathen idol, Hephastion. To sum up—you are a Jew when the Lord is specially gracious, or when He threatens trial; but heathen at every point where your path leads over other than the loftiest heights, or through the deepest abysses. I can not change you; but the wife of my brother’s son, the daughter of Ben Akiba, must feel herself the child of her race, at morning, noon, and night. I seek for my Isaac a Rebecca, and not an Ismene.”

“I did not invite you,” returned Apollodorus, “and if you leave us to-morrow our reverence will follow you. Do not think worse of us because we do more, perhaps, than simply consent to the thoughts and actions of the people among whom we have grown up and prospered. We know how high

our faith towers above theirs. In heart, we remain Jews. But should we not seek to educate and stimulate our spirits wherever we are placed? for the Lord has certainly made them of not less finer stuff than the others. And in what school could they be better trained than in our—I mean than in the Grecian? The knowledge of the Most High—”

“That knowledge of the Most High,” cried the old man, gesturing vehemently, “and all which mere philosophy seeks to fathom, which the mightiest and the purest of the thinkers to whom you refer always expect to grasp by study and research, has been made a gift to every child of our people. The treasure your wise men are seeking so laboriously we possess in our Scriptures, our commandments, our rules of life. We are the people of peoples, the first-born of the Lord, and when the Messiah shall arise from among us—”

“Then,” broke in Apollodorus, “will be fulfilled what I agree with Philo in hoping; we shall become priests and prophets, to call down the blessing of the Most High upon all the nations.”

“For us, for us alone, shall appear that messenger of God to raise our people from the rank of servants, to be a queen of all the inhabitants of the earth.”

Apollodorus looked at the excited old man with surprise and a smile of incredulity, saying: “The crucified Nazarene was a false Messiah; but when will the true one appear?”

“When will He appear?” cried the rabbi. “When? Am I able to tell you? I know only one thing. The worm has already turned to sting the heel of him who has trodden upon it. Have you heard the name of Bar Cochba?”

“Uncle,” cried Ben Jochai, interrupting the speech of the old rabbi, and rising from his place, “do not say what you might repent.”

“Certainly not,” answered Gamaliel, earnestly.

“These people draw that which is divine down to the human level, but they are not traitors.”

Then turning again to Apollodorus, he said:

“Those who have gained power over Israel have set up idols in our holiest places, and constrain the people to worship them, but sooner shall we let them break our backs than bow before such.”

“Are you thinking of another mighty revolt?” asked the Alexandrian, anxiously.

“Answer me; have you heard the name of Bar Cochba?”

“Yes, as the daring leader of an armed host.”

“He is a hero, and perhaps the Redeemer.”

“And is it for him that you have commissioned me to send, in my next grain-ship to Joppa, swords and shields and lance-tips?”

“Shall the Roman alone be allowed to use iron?”

“No; but it would ill become me to equip a friend with weapons against an adversary whom I know would surely annihilate him?”

“The Lord of Hosts is stronger than thousands of legions.”

“Guard yourself, uncle!” again cried Ben Jochai, in warning tones.

Gamaliel turned angrily toward his nephew, but before he could reply he shrunk within himself, for a wild tumult and the noise of violent blows against the brazen door of the house penetrated to this apartment, shaking the marble walls.

“They are attacking my house,” cried Apollodorus.

“The gratitude of those for whom you have broken faith with the God of your fathers,” said the old man, gloomily. Then he raised his arms and cried: “Hear me, Adonai! My years have been many, and I am ripe for the grave, but spare this one, have mercy on him!”

Ben Jochai also lifted his arms upward imploringly, and his black eyes glowed. The prayers of both were short, for the danger pressed nearer and nearer.

Apollodorus wrung his hands and beat his forehead. His motions were convulsive. Anxiety destroyed the fine bearing and measured demeanor he was wont to maintain among his fellow-citizens. He plunged hither and yon, mixing Greek curses and oaths with cries upon the God of his fathers. He sought in vain for the key to his subterranean apartments, but it was in the keeping of his steward, who, with the other servants, were enjoying the evening on the streets or in the drinking-shops. The Jewish cook, to whom the celebration of the Dionysian feast was a sacrilege, plunged into the room screeching, while he tore his hair and beard: “The Philistines are upon us! Deliver us, rabbi, great rabbi! Entreat the Lord of Hosts for us, oh man of God! They come with clubs and spears, and will trample us down as the grass, and consume us in this house, as locusts that are cast into the oven.”

In agony the slave threw himself at the feet of Gamaliel, seizing them with his hands; but Apollodorus cried: “Follow me to the roof.”

“No, no!” howled the slave, “Amalek has prepared fire-brands to cast into our tent. The heathen leap and rage, and the flames which they cast will devour us. Rabbi, rabbi, cry

unto the Lord of Hosts! Righteous God, they are bursting the gates. Lord! Lord! Lord!"

The teeth of the agonized creature chattered, and with groans and howls he covered his face with both hands. Ben Jochai was perfectly collected though trembling with indignation. After his prayer he turned to Gamaliel, saying:

"I knew this would come, and did not withhold it from you. We began our journey under evil stars, and must now endure what He has ordained for us. He will avenge us!"

"Vengeance is His," returned the old man, and veiled his face with the white folds of his robe.

"Into the sleeping-room! Follow me! We will hide under the beds!" cried Apollodorus, pushing back the cook with his foot, and seizing the shoulder of the rabbi to draw him onward.

But it was too late, for the doors of the adjoining apartment were already open, and they heard the rattle of weapons.

"Lost! all is lost!" cried Apollodorus. "Adonai, help us, Adonai!" murmured the old man, clinging to his nephew, who was a head taller than himself, and protected him with his right arm. The danger threatening the lives of Apollodorus and his guests was imminent, and had arisen from the indignation of the excited crowd when attention was called to the fact that the house was without festal adornment.

One word was enough to inflame the hot blood of the Alexandrians, and lead them to break through the restraints of law into acts of violence. Bloody dealing between the heathen and the nearly equal population of Jews was an every-day affair, and they were equally at fault. Since the Israelites had fallen upon their fellow-citizens with cruel rage in Cyrenaica and Cyprus, the distrust and the animosity of those holding another faith in Alexandria had been rekindled.

Besides this, the prosperity of many, and the great wealth of a few individuals, filled the hearts of the poorer heathen with envy, and the wish to strip the possessors, who, it can not be denied, had many times treated their gods with a show of contempt. Within the last few days especially, the dissensions respecting the festival in honor of the emperor had revived the old grudge; and so a sight of the closed and silent house on the Canopic way had excited the populace and suggested the thought of an attack on the palatial residence of Apollodorus.

It was but a single word that excited the frenzy. A tanner named Melampus, an old tippler, passing through the street at

the head of a drunken company, cried out, pointing at the silent house with his Thyrsus staff:

“See the naked barrack! What the Jew used to spend in ornamenting is now hoarded in his chest.” These words kindled a flame that lighted others.

“The rascal is defrauding our father Dionysius!” cried a second citizen. And still another screeched, raising a torch:

“Let us take the drachmas he is holding back from the god; we can use them!”

The sausage-maker, Glaucus, snatched the torch out of his hand, and roared:

“Follow me; we will burn the house over his head.”

“Hold, hold!” cried a cobbler, who worked for the slaves of Apollodorus, planting himself in the way of the mad butcher. “Perhaps they are mourning for the dead. The Jew always illuminates his house.”

“Not that,” answered him a flute-player, in a loud, irritated tone. “The son of the old miser just passed through the Bruchiom in a merry company, with a long purple mantle fluttering behind.”

“We will see which is the redder, the Phœnician stuff he wears, or the glow of a house on fire.”

“Let us try it!” sounded first from one, and then from many voices.

“Into the house!”

“The beggarly extortioner shall remember this day!”

“Fetch him out!”

“Drag him into the street!”

Such were the cries among the crowd.

“Drag him out!” echoed an Egyptian slave bailiff; and a woman screeched the same words after him. She pulled the deer-skin from her shoulders, and swung it above her disheveled black hair in a dizzying whirl, yelling:

“Tear him to pieces!”

“Tear him with your teeth!” shrieked a Mœnad, who, like the most of the crowd, knew no reason whatever for the rage against Apollodorus and his house.

They easily passed from words to deeds; with feet, fists, and sticks, they beat upon the brazen portal; and a sailor-boy of fourteen years old sprung upon the shoulders of a gigantic negro slave trying to mount the roof of the colonnade and fling the lighted torch the sausage-maker had passed to him into the uncovered part of the threatened house.

CHAPTER VI.

THE clashing of arms heard by Apollodorus and his guests came not from the enemies of the Israelites, but from Roman soldiers bringing help to the threatened house.

As Verus passed along the Canopic way, accompanied by a tribune of the Twelfth Legion and his British slaves, they were stopped by the dense crowd before the house of Apollodorus. The prefect, whom he met here, informed the pretor that Apollodorus was one of the richest and most respected Alexandrian citizens. But Verus would not have looked on quietly had the attack been made upon the house of one of the poorest and most despised among the Christians—for every act of lawlessness and trespass upon established order was intolerable to him. And though apparently reckless, and devoted to pleasure, he was both in war or in common life courageous and reliable.

As soon as he perceived the design of the crowd, his fertile brain devised means to upset their plans. Already they had beat upon the door of the Jew's house; already some had mounted the roof of the colonnade with lighted torches. Whatever was done must be done instantly, and fortunately Verus had the power of thinking and acting quickly and efficiently. He sent the military tribune, Lucius Albinus, to summon the veterans, and commanded his slaves, with their vigorous muscles, to force a way for him to the door.

This was quickly done, and what was his astonishment to meet here the emperor, in the very act of snatching the torch out of the hand of the tailor, and ordering them in authoritative tones to leave off their mad pursuit. Unaccustomed to imperial mandate, the Alexandrians only replied by sneering, whistling, grunting. A few drunken Egyptians had already drawn near to lay their hands on this unwelcome guest, when the pretor crossed their path.

Whispering to Hadrian that it was the place of Jupiter to govern the world, and he might leave to inferior beings the defense of the house of a single Jew, and that in a few moments soldiers would arrive, he cried aloud:

“Away with you, sophist! You belong in the museum, or with your books in the Temple of Serapis, but not among sensible people. Am I right or am I wrong, Macedonian citizens?”

A murmur of assent rose among the crowd, changing into laughter, and Verus went on as Hadrian left the place:

“He has a beard like the emperor, and carries himself as if he really wore the purple. You did right to let him run away, for no doubt his wife and children are waiting for him with the soup.”

Verus had mingled with the people in many mirthful adventures, and understood dealing with them. If he could only succeed in diverting them until the arrival of the soldiers, his end would be gained. Hadrian could be a hero, where it was worth his while, but in this case he gladly yielded to Verus the task of quieting the people.

The pretor commanded his slaves to lift him upon their shoulders, and as his handsome, kindly face appeared, the crowd recognized him, and cried out:

“The wild Roman! The pretor! The false Eros!”

“It is I, Macedonian citizens,” answered Verus, “and I will tell you a story.”

“Hear, hear!” “Forward into the Jew’s house!” “Wait a little; give Verus the word!” “I’ll break your teeth, youngster, if you are not quiet!” were among the cries heard in the crowd.

Curiosity to hear the speech of Verus and the really unfounded rage of the people competed for the mastery, but as, at last, the former seemed to be victorious, the noise subsided, and the pretor began:

“There was once a child who received the gift of ten little cotton sheep, cheap articles, such as one can buy of the old woman on the Emporium—”

“Go on to the Jew—we don’t want any baby stories.” “Hush, there!” “Better look out, for the Romans change suddenly from sheep to wolves.” “It will be a she-wolf!” Such were the cries from the crowd.

“Don’t call those shaggy fellows,” said Verus, laughing, “and hear me further. This boy placed his pretty sheep in a row. He was the son of a weaver. Is there any weaver among you here? You? And you? And you, too, in the rear? Were I not the son of my father, I should like to have been an Alexandrian weaver. You need not laugh. But to go back to our sheep. These pretty little things were all pure white, with one exception, and that had an ugly black spot, which displeased the boy. So he went to the hearth and pulled out a glowing coal. He thought he would burn up the black sheep and keep only the pure white ones. But as the flame seized the wooden skeleton of his lamb there came a

strong draught of wind through the window, and drove it along to the next, so that in one moment every one of them was burned up. Then thought the youngster, 'Oh, had I only left the ugly lamb alone! What can I now have to play with!' And he began to weep. But that was not all, for while the little fellow was rubbing his eyes, the flames had spread—they caught the loom, the wool, the flax, the linen, the whole house of his father, the city in which he was born, and I think the boy himself. Now, dear friends and Macedonian citizens, reflect a little. Those of you who own anything will understand the meaning of my story."

"Away with the torch!" screeched the wife of a coal dealer.

"He is right; for the sake of the Jew the whole city would be in danger," cried the cobbler. "The madmen have already flung their fire-brands."

"If you throw any more I'll break your bones," was the threat of the flax dealer.

"Give up the burning, then," commanded the tailor, "but burst the door and drag out the Jew."

These words roused a fresh storm of applause, and the crowd pressed closer toward the house of the Jew. No one listened longer to Verus. He slipped down from the shoulder of his slave, placed himself directly before the door, and cried:

"In the name of the emperor, in the name of the law, let this house alone!"

The words were very earnest, and the false Eros looked as if it might be quite unsafe to jest with him. Still, only a few of the crowd had heard him, and the hot-blooded tailor ventured to lay a hand on his girdle to drag him away from the door. But he was quickly paid for his audacity, when the fist of the pretor smote his forehead, and he fell to the earth as by a stroke of lightning. One of the British slaves struck down the sausage-maker, and matters would soon have ripened into a horrible hand-to-hand combat had not help come to the Roman from two sides. The veterans, supported by many lictors, appeared first, and soon afterward Benjamin, the son of Apollodorus, with his merry companions, who, passing along the Canopic way, had seen the danger that threatened his father's house.

As the wind scatters cloud, so the soldiers drove away the thronging populace, and the young Israelite, with his companions, pressed on so vigorously that they succeeded in reaching the house only a little later than the veterans.

The lictors knocked upon the doors, but as no one came to open, they burst them, with the help of the soldiers, that they

might plant a guard inside against the frantic mob. The tribune and Verus entered with the soldiers, and directly after, Benjamin and his friends, young Greeks with whom he associated at the baths, or in the gymnasium.

Apollodorus and his guests warmly expressed their thanks to Verus; and when the old housekeeper, who, from a hiding-place under the roof, had seen all that happened outside, now entered the apartment of her master, and related all in detail, the pretor was overwhelmed with their gratitude. The old woman painted her story in glowing colors. Meanwhile, Ismene returned, and after she had clasped her father's neck, in tears of excitement and joy, the housekeeper, seizing her hand, led her to Verus, with the words:

"This noble lord—may the blessing of the Most High be upon him!—has risked his own life to rescue us. This beautiful garment was rent for our sakes, and every daughter of Israel should, as I do, kiss it fervently."

So saying, she pressed it to her lips, and would have constrained Ismene to follow her example, but Verus would not permit it, and cried, laughing:

"How could I allow to my garment what I should scarce deem myself worthy to receive from such lips?"

"Kiss him, kiss him," cried the old woman, but the pretor took the head of the blushing girl between his hands, pressed a fatherly salutation upon her forehead, and turning to Apollodorus said:

"Now I am richly repaid for all I was permitted to do."

"We," cried Gamaliel—"I and my brother's first-born son, must leave the great God of our fathers reward you for what you have done for us."

"Who are you?" asked Verus, whom the prophet-like figure of the old man and the pale spiritual face of his nephew filled with admiration.

Apollodorus explained to him how high the rabbi stood among his people in knowledge of the law and of the Cabala, that traditional love of the Hebrews, and how far Simeon Ben Jochai had exceeded his contemporaries in knowledge of the stars. He spoke of his renowned astrological work, "Sohar," and emphasized the mention of his skill in foretelling the position of the stars.

Verus listened attentively and looked intently at the young man, who interrupted the speech of his host with many modest protestations.

He was thinking of the approach of his own birthday, and knew that Hadrian would then consult the position of the

planets, and that the future of his own life would be decided by what he would read there. Would this bring him to the goal of his own ambition or remove him still further from it?

When Apollodorus ceased speaking, Verus extended his hand to Ben Jochai, saying:

"I rejoice to meet a man of your distinction and your skill. What would I not give to possess your knowledge for only a few hours!"

"It is at your service," answered the astrologer. "Make use of all I am, or possess. My knowledge, time, efforts—ask every question your wish. We stand so deeply in your debt—"

"You shall not look upon me as a creditor," broke in the pretor, "and you owe me no thanks, for I only knew you after the rescue, and did what I could, not for the sake of any particular person, but through love of order, and to oppose the outrages of a mob."

"But you were kind enough to deliver us," answered Ben Jochai; "do not be so hard as to refuse our gratitude."

"It honors me, my learned friend; by all the gods, it honors me," returned Verus.

"And, indeed, it is quite possible—it may—will be— Will you have the kindness to follow me toward the bust of Hipparchus? By the help of a science which owes so much to him, you may perhaps render me an important service."

As the two men, separated from the rest of the party, stood before the marble bust of the great astronomer, Verus asked:

"Do you know the manner in which the emperor is accustomed to determine the destinies of men from the stars?"

"Exactly."

"Through whom?"

"Through Aquila, a pupil of my father."

"Can you reckon what the stars will teach him on the night preceding the thirty-first of December, respecting the destiny of a man born on that night, whose horoscope is in my possession?"

"I can only answer 'yes' to your question under certain conditions."

"What prevents an unconditional answer?"

"Unexpected appearances in the heavens."

"Are such appearances frequent?"

"No, they are quite unusual."

"Perhaps my fortune is extraordinary, but I beg you to reckon, after Hadrian's manner, what will be made known on the night specified of him whose horoscope I will send early to-morrow by my slave."

“ I will do this gladly.”

“ When can you bring the work to an end?”

“ In four days at the latest, perhaps sooner.”

“ Excellent! But one thing more. Do you hold me to be a reasonable man?”

“ Should I have had ground for gratitude had you been any other?”

“ Well, then, conceal nothing from me, not even the most cruel and horrible fate, which might poison the life and destroy the courage of others. Whatever you may read in the book of the heavens, of small or great, of good or bad, I wish to hear all.”

“ I will hide nothing from you.”

The pretor offered his hand to Ben Jochai, pressing heartily the delicate and handsomely formed one of the Jew—arranging, as they left, the manner in which he should apprise him of the finishing of his calculations.

Apollodorus, with his guests and children, excepting Benjamin, who was entertaining his Greek friends in the banqueting-hall, accompanied the pretor to the door.

As Gamaliel heard the singing and shouting, he said to Apollodorus, with a shrug of the shoulders:

“ They praise the God of our fathers in Alexandrian fashion.”

All was now silent about the house, except the steady tread of the soldiers on guard.

In a neighboring street Verus met the tailor whom he had struck to the ground, the sausage-maker, and other instigators of the riot, on their way to prison. Verus would gladly have given them their freedom, but he knew the emperor would expect him to report on the next morning that they had received justice. At another time they would have been sent home unpunished, but just now he was mastered by a wish stronger than his kind-heartedness or his frivolity.

CHAPTER VII.

AT the Cæsareum, Verus found the chamberlain waiting to conduct him to the empress, who, in spite of the late hour, wished to see him. She was in a state of great excitement, and not, as usual, lying upon her couch, but striding with unwomanly steps up and down the apartment.

“ It is good that you have come,” she said to the pretor. “ Lentulus is sure that he has met Mastor, and Balbilla asserts— But it is not really possible.”

“Do they think the emperor is here?” asked Verus.

“Have they said the same thing to you?”

“No. I do not stop when you call, and I have something important to relate. A little while ago, also— But you need not be frightened.”

“Let there be no useless words.”

“A little while ago there met me, in his own person—”

“Who?”

“Hadrian.”

“And are you not mistaken? Have you seen him?”

“With these eyes.”

“That is incredible, unworthy, shameful!” cried Sabina, so loud and so passionately that she was frightened by her own voice. Her dry, lank figure shook with excitement, and everything in her appearance was without grace, without womanliness, and absolutely repellent; but Verus, accustomed from childhood to look upon her with kindness, was only pained by the exhibition.

There are women who, like the drooping flowers, or fading lights, or vanishing shadows, do not thereby lose their charms; but the large-boned, stiff-necked Sabina had nothing of the flexible tenderness of those lovely beings. The decay of her powers made her less attractive. Especially when the dry harshness of her embittered soul was thus exposed. She was enraged by the disgrace she fancied her husband had brought upon her in not only having a separate residence put in order for himself, but in coming to the city without acquainting her with the fact.

Her hands trembled with passion, and it was with a stammering voice that she asked Verus to prepare her quieting draught. When he brought it she was lying on the couch, her head turned toward the wall, and she said, piteously:

“I am very cold. Spread the covering over me. I am a miserable, abused being.”

“You are sensitive, and take things too hard,” replied the pretor. But she was irritated, and went on cutting off his words and in every way treating him as if he were a criminal and she his judge.

She soon learned that Verus had met Mastor and knew from him that Hadrian was on the Lochas, that he had taken part in the festival, under disguise, and been in serious danger before the house of the Jew. Also she became acquainted with the manner in which the house of the Jew was saved, and whom he had met within the dwelling; and Sabina had seriously reproved him for the frivolous and irresponsible manner in

which he had risked a life destined to the highest position. Verus had not interrupted her words, but here he bent over, kissing her hand, and said:

“Your kind heart sees in my future what you yourself desire. There is a shimmering light upon my horizon. Is it an after-glow from the past, or the breaking dawn of a coming day of splendor? Who can tell? I am waiting patiently for what time must soon decide.”

“That is true; this uncertainty will soon end,” murmured Sabina.

“Rest now, and try to sleep,” said Verus, with a hearty kindness in his tone. “It is past midnight, and the physician has often forbidden these long watches. Good-bye; dream sweetly, and remain to the man what you have always been to the child and the youth.”

Sabina drew back the hand he had seized, and said:

“You must not leave me; I need you; I can not spare your presence.”

“I will stay beside you until morning, and always, if you allow me.”

The pretor sighed as he again took her hand, and held it long to his lips.

“You are my friend Verus, I am sure of it,” she said, at last breaking the silence.

“Oh, Sabina! my mother,” he answered, heartily. “As a boy you spoiled me by your kindness. What can I do to show my gratitude for it all?”

“Remain to me what you are to-day. Will you do this, whatever your destiny?”

“In sorrow or in joy, always the same friend, ready to give up his life for you.”

“Always in spite of my husband, and even when you think yourself no more in need of my favor?”

“Yes, always; for without you I am nothing. I am wretched.”

The empress drew a long breath, and raised herself higher upon the cushions. At length, as if taking a resolution, she spoke, uttering each word slowly and impressively:

“If nothing unprecedented should appear in the sky on your birth-night, you will be our son, and Hadrian’s heir and successor. I swear this.”

Her voice was solemn, and her small eyes stretched wide open.

“Sabina, mother, guardian spirit of my life!” cried Verus, falling on his knee before her. She looked with much emotion

into his handsome face, laid her hand upon his brow, and touched his dark hair with her lips. There was a dewy glimmer in eyes unused to tears, and in a soft, imploring tone, such as one never heard before from her, she said:

“In fortunate days, after the adoption and when you wear the purple, will all be the same between us? Tell me. Will it be so?”

“Ever, ever,” cried Verus, “and if our wish be fulfilled—”

“Then,” broke in Sabina, and a chill ran over her, “you will be to me the same you are to-day—but truly, a temple would be empty if mortals had no more requests to make.”

“Oh, no, they will then carry thank offerings to the gods,” answered Verus, looking into her face, but Sabina avoided his smiling gaze, and turning away, said, anxiously:

“No play with words—no more talking and jesting! Not now, in the name of the gods! For this hour and this night are to other hours and nights what a consecrated temple is to ordinary houses, what the sun is to other lights. You can not know my feelings. I scarcely know them myself! No empty words now!”

Verus looked at the empress with growing astonishment. She had always shown herself more gracious toward him than all others, and he was bound to her by gratitude and childish associations.

As a boy he had been the only one among his playfellows who, instead of being frightened away, had clung to Sabina. But who had ever seen her as now? Could this be the harsh, bitter woman whose heart seemed filled with gall, whose tongue was like a dagger toward every one?

Could he be deceived? Genuine tears filled her eyes as she went on:

“Here I lie, a poor, sickly woman, as sensitive in both soul and body as though covered with wounds. All contact with most people, even the sound of their voices, hurts me. I am old, much older than you think, and more wretched than you can understand. Neither as a child, nor in girlhood, have I been happy; and as a wife—everlasting gods!—every gracious word Hadrian ever bestowed upon me I have paid for by a thousand humiliations.”

“He treats you always with high respect,” broke in Verus.

“Yes, before you, before other people! But what do I care for respect! A little unselfish love is what I want, and were I only sure—dared I hope you would give me this, I should thank you with all I have—this hour would be blessed above every other of my life.”

“How can you doubt me, mother, my truly loved mother?”

“That does me good,” answered Sabina; “your voice is never too loud, and I dare believe you. This hour makes you my son, and me your mother.”

Deep emotion stirred the withered heart of Sabina and lighted her eyes.

She was like a young mother whose heart sings as she looks at her first-born child: “It lives—it is mine—I am a mother.”

Blissfully she looked into the face of Verus, and cried:

“Give me your hand, my son; help me up, for I can no more lie still. How happy I am! Yes, this is the joy given to other women, before they are gray-haired. But, child, my dear, only one, you are to love me not alone as a mother. I am too old for tender caresses, but I can not bear that you look upon me only with childish reverence. You must be also my friend—whose heart understands my need—who can laugh with me to-day, or mourn to-morrow—and whom I can be sure rejoices to meet my look. You are now my son, and soon you will be called such by others. For one evening this is enough of good. Now not one word more! This hour is like the perfected work of a painter. Every added stroke might detract from its beauty. Kiss my forehead, I will kiss thine; then I will go to rest, and when I wake in the morning I shall say to myself that I possess something worth living for—a child!—a son!”

When the empress was alone, she raised her hands to pray, but found no words of gratitude. She had indeed enjoyed one hour of pure pleasure, but how many days, months, and years of joylessness and suffering lay behind! So soon as gratitude knocked upon the door of her heart, bitter defiance awoke. What was one good hour against a ruined existence?

Foolish woman! She had never sown love, but cried out against the gods as cruel and unjust, because they forbade her to reap it. And upon what ground had the seeds of her maternal love fallen!

Certainly Verus left her joyous and rich in hope, and the interview with Sabina had moved his heart. He honestly meant to be true to her after the adoption, still the glance of his eye was not so much that of a happy son as the sparkle of one confident of victory.

In spite of the late hour, his wife had not retired to rest. She knew he had been called to the empress, and waited in some anxiety, not accustomed to expect anything very friendly from Sabina. His quick step echoing against the slumbering walls announced his arrival, and she ran to meet him on the

threshold. She was so beautiful in the flowing white robe, and his heart was so full, that he clasped her in his arms, with all the warmth and enthusiasm of their early married days. She also loved him not less than in former days, and rejoiced when he returned to her unchangeably true heart as the home-coming mariner to his welcome haven.

“Lucilla,” he cried, freeing his neck from her clasping arms, “such a night as this has been! I have estimated Sabina differently from you, and from boyhood she was good to me. But now all is clear between us. She has called me her son, and herself my mother. The purple is ours, and I shall owe it to her. You are the wife of a Caesar, certainly, if no strange tokens appear to frighten the emperor.” With rapid words, out of which not only the joy of success, but real emotion and gratitude were manifest, he described his interview with Sabina. His fresh, confident joy put to silence her hesitation and fear of such a destiny. She saw in imagination her husband and her son upon the imperial throne, and the ostentatious diadem on her own brow of the woman she hated with all the vigor of her nature. The friendly relations of the emperor toward Verus had never disturbed her; but a wife can more easily forgive hatred and persecution than the love of another woman toward her husband. There was another thought, buried for years in her heart, that now forced itself into expression.

Hadrian had been responsible for the death of her father, though no one dared assert that he had killed the noble Nigrinus. Yet in this hour the old suspicion awoke in her soul, and raising her right hand as if for an oath, she cried:

“Oh, destiny! my husband the heir of my father’s murderer!”

“Lucilla,” broke in Verus, “it is wrong to indulge such a cruel suspicion, and madness to give it expression. Do not express it a second time, and least of all to-day. Whatever may have occurred in the past, do not destroy the present and the future for ourselves and our children.”

“Nigrinus was the grandfather of these children,” cried the Roman, with flashing eyes.

“That means you wish to inspire the wish for vengeance in their souls.”

“I am the daughter of the strangled man.”

“But you do not know the murderer, and the purple weighs much more than one life, for with many thousand lives is that often paid. And then, Lucilla, you know I like cheerful faces, and vengeance has a gloomy brow. Let us be

happy, oh, wife of a Cæsar! To-morrow I shall have much to tell you. Now I must go to a banquet given by the son of the rich Plutareh; I can not stay with you, truly I can not, for I have been long expected there. If we return to Rome, you are never to speak with the children of those dark old stories. I do not wish it."

As Verus with his torch-bearers passed through the garden of the Cæsareum, he saw a light in the room of Balbilla, and cried, cheerily:

"Good-evening, fair muse!"

"Good-night, false Eros!" she returned.

"You adorn yourself in borrowed plumes," answered he, laughing. "Not you, but the malicious Alexandrians, invented that title."

"Oh, yes! and still better ones. It is hard to give credit to all I have heard and seen to-day."

"And will you commemorate it all in your verse?"

"Only a small part, and that in a satirical song I think of dedicating to you."

"I tremble."

"With joy, I trust. My poem will carry your name down to remote posterity."

"That is true, and the more ill-natured your verses, the more certainly will future ages believe Verus to be the Phaon of Sappho Balbilla, and that despised love filled the gentle songstress with resentment."

"Thanks for the warning. To-day, at least, you are safe, for I am utterly tired out."

"Did you venture upon the street?"

"It was not dangerous, for I had a safe companion."

"May I ask who it was?"

"Why not? The architect Pontius went with us."

"He knows the city."

"And I would trust myself under his guidance to descend like Orpheus into Hades."

"Happy Pontius!"

"Happier Verus!"

"How shall I understand this word, charming Balbilla?"

"The poor architect has the honor of being an excellent guide, but to you belongs the whole heart of your fair wife Lucilla."

"And mine to her, so far as it is not occupied by Balbilla; sleep well, coy muse."

"Sleep ill, you irreclaimable spirit of torment," cried the girl, as she drew the curtains over her window.

CHAPTER VIII.

To the sleepless, whom misfortune has visited, future life appears to be a sea without limits, upon which he is drifting like a wreck; but as the dawn breaks, the friendly light of a new day reveals a rescuing boat at hand, and in the distance a hospitable coast.

So Pollux watched throughout the night with sleepless eyes, for his whole future seemed to have been destroyed on the previous evening.

The workshop of his former master was closed to him, and he did not even possess the tools indispensable for practicing his art. Only yesterday he had confidently hoped to stand upon his own feet; to-day it was impossible. As he opened the purse he was accustomed to lay under his pillow, he could but smile in spite of his trouble, for his fingers could find within its depths only two copper coins and the dried breast-bone of a chicken he had placed there to carry to his little niece.

Where could he now find the money he was in the habit of taking to his sister on the first of every month?

Papias, who had been a witness of the emperor's rage, and who was of exactly the disposition to use this scene to his injury, was socially connected with all the sculptors of the city, and it was natural to suppose he would warn them all against him, and make it very difficult to gain a new position.

Few feel sympathy for those in disgrace with the ruling powers, least of all those who are striving for their patronage. If Hadrian should throw off his concealment, it would be very easy to make him feel his power.

Would it not be wise for him to leave Alexandria, and seek to earn a living in some other Grecian city? It was only a thought of Arsinoe that made him unwilling to do this. He loved with the passionate devotion of an artist, and his courage would not have been so easily daunted had not the events of the last evening thrown the hope of possessing her into a further distance. How dared he venture to bind her to his uncertain and threatened future? What reception could he expect, should he now ask her hand? When these thoughts and questions overpowered him, he sprung from his bed, to walk up and down the little bedroom, and press his forehead against the wall.

The morning twilight was grateful, and as he eat the soup

his mother set before him, with tearful eyes, he determined first of all to visit Pontius. This was the friendly boat which appeared for his rescue!

Doris shared the morning meal of her son, but quite unlike herself had little to say, and sometimes laid her hand caressingly upon his hair.

Euphion was measuring the room with long strides, trying to compose an ode which he would sing before the emperor and use as a prayer for his son's forgiveness.

After breakfast, Pollux slipped over to the terrace, among the busts of the queens, hoping to get sight of Arsinoe. The singing of a verse in a loud tone attracted her to the balcony, where they exchanged greetings, and Pollux made a sign, asking her to come to him. This she would gladly have done, but her father also recognized the voice and sent her back into the chamber. Still the mere glance had done good to Pollux.

Scarcely had he returned to the house when Antinous appeared.

This was the hospitable coast toward which the eyes of the young sculptor turned! Hope came back to his soul, and hope is the sun before which despair flies away as the shadows of night when the day-star appears.

His artistic power was again called into play, and had a fair field for exercise, as Antinous declared himself at his disposition until noon, because his master or the emperor, as he did not now hesitate to call him, would be busy. Titianus had arrived with such a mass of documents as would occupy not only themselves but the private secretary.

Pollux conducted Antinous into a room on the north side of his father's house, where lay the wax and the smaller tools belonging to him. His heart was heavy and his nerves unstrung as he began to work. Strange thoughts disturbed his soul, but he knew that only when he concentrated his attention upon the work would he succeed. And he must succeed. Failure to-day, with such a model before him, would be inexcusable.

It was not long before the Bithynian's beauty waked his artistic nature to devotion, and seizing the pliant stuff he made a model of striking likeness to the original.

For a whole hour not a word was spoken between them; only a sad sigh heaved sometimes the breast of Pollux.

Antinous at last broke silence, speaking of Selene, whose image filled his soul; indeed, his only reason for coming to Pollux was to be able to speak of her. While Pollux shaped the pliant wax, Antinous related the events of the previous evening. He expressed deep regret at having lost, through

his plunge into the water, the silver quiver—as well as the injury to the rose-colored chiton, which was torn by his pursuer from the garden of the widow Hannah.

A single exclamation of surprise, another of sympathy, a momentary rest of the hand from labor, was the only notice the sculptor seemed to give to the sad fate of Selene and the loss of his master's costly possessions: for the creative work of his hand seemed to absorb his whole attention. The further it progressed, the higher rose his admiration. As under the influence of noble wine, he seemed incorporating his highest ideal. The artistic passion fired his blood, and drove out every other thought and feeling. Nevertheless, he must have comprehended what was said, for some time after he exclaimed, rather as if speaking to the work under his hand, than in reply to Antinous: "Wonderful creature!" and a little later: "There is something heroic in this unfortunate being."

For almost four hours he worked on incessantly; then drawing a long breath he stepped back from the table, looking intently at his work, and then at Antinous, asking:

"Will it be correct?"

The Bithynian gave lively expression to his satisfaction; and, in truth, Pollux had accomplished wonders for so short a space of time. The wax gave a very positive impression of the whole form of the handsome youth. It represented him as Dionysius led away by the pirates, and bore a striking resemblance to the figure carried through the streets on the gilded ship of Titianus. Pollux had said to himself on the day before, in noticing the softly rounded yet vigorous outlines of his youthful companion, that an artist could find no better model for the Nysæan god.

While Pollux was thus giving definite shape and exact measurement to his work, a sound of clashing arms was heard at the palace gate, and immediately afterward the yelping of the Graces.

As Doris called back the dogs, another female voice was heard speaking with her.

Antinous seemed to notice something unusual, for he suddenly left the position in which the sculptor had placed him, going to the window. Then he said to Pollux, in a repressed voice:

"Surely, I was not mistaken; Sabina, Hadrian's wife, is speaking with your mother."

This was true; the empress had come to the Loebias. She had left her chariot at the gate, for the pavement of the court was still unfinished.

Sabina hated the dogs, of which her husband was so fond, and the clever little beasts instinctively requited the aversion. On that account, Doris found it unusually difficult to reduce her pets to submission, and Sabina, who was really terrified, commanded her to call them off in a most peremptory manner. The chamberlain, who supported her, kicked at the unruly creatures, which only increased their excitement. But at last they were shut up in the house, and Doris turned to the stranger quite out of breath, and without any suspicion of the dignity of the person before her—for she had never seen the empress, and had formed quite a different impression of her appearance—said: “Forgive me, my good woman; the little rogues are good at heart, and would not bite even a beggar; but they do not like old women. Whom do you seek here, mother?”

“That you will soon learn,” answered Sabina, harshly. “What a commotion, Lentulus, the activity of Pontius has made here! And how it would look within if this shanty should remain to disfigure the entrance? It must go, together with its inhabitants. Order this woman to lead us to the Roman lord dwelling here.”

The chamberlain did as commanded, and Doris began to suspect with whom she had to do, and said, as she smoothed out her garment and bowed profoundly:

“What great honor is this, your highness? Perhaps you are wife of the emperor. If that be the case—”

Sabina made a gesture of impatience toward her chamberlain, who interrupted the speech of the old woman with the words:

“Hush, and show us the way.”

Doris was more sensitive than usual, and her eyes, still red from weeping over the misfortune of Pollux, again filled with tears. No one had ever spoken to her in such a tone, but for her son’s sake she restrained herself from making answer in the same contemptuous coin.

She trudged on silently before the empress, leading her to the Hall of the Muses, where she relinquished her charge to Pontius. The reverence he showed the stranger convinced Doris that her suspicion was correct—this could be no other than the empress.

“A perverse vixen!” said Sabina, as she went out, pointing her finger at Doris.

That was too much. The poor old woman threw herself down upon a seat, buried her face in her hands, and wept bitterly. The earth seemed giving way under her feet. The

emperor had threatened her son, and now the most powerful woman in the world had become the enemy of herself and her house. She saw the family cast into the street, and asked what would become of them all should she lose her position. Her husband's memory was growing weaker, his voice was less satisfactory, and her own vigor was diminishing with the years. The sum laid aside for a day of need was very small. The fresh and cheery old woman was in despair. And it was not alone the threatening need which so pained her. It was the disgrace which would follow, it was the injury to her sensibilities that she, who from youth every one had met with kindness, should have so excited the displeasure of the woman whose favor she needed to gain.

Sabina's entrance had driven the good spirits from the Lochias.

This Doris was learning, but she was not one of those who yield to hostile powers without resistance.

For a few moments she gave way to sorrow, and sobbed like a child, then she dried her eyes, and found in her lightened heart the benefit of tears. Gradually she was able to think more composedly, and said to herself:

"Only the emperor has authority here, and it is said that he does not always agree with his ill-natured wife, or ask after her wishes. He is angry with Pollux, yet he has always seemed friendly to me. My dogs and my birds pleased him, and has he not also eaten of my food? If I can only get an opportunity to speak with him alone, perhaps all will come out right."

With these thoughts she rose. As she reached the vestibule she met Gabinius, the relic-hunter, who had come to the Lochias in accordance with the request of Pontius.

Since the previous evening a suspicion of the emperor's presence in Alexandria had been in circulation. Where it started, and on what grounds it rested, no one could say. It was simply there, spreading through all circles, and growing in strength. There is no growth so rapid as that of a rumor, and yet it is a poor foundling that knows not its own parentage.

The relic dealer looked at her in surprise, as he passed on into the palace, while she was considering whether to wait here for the emperor or return to her own house. Before reaching a decision, Pontius appeared, who had always shown himself so kind that she ventured to relate to him her son's experience with the emperor.

This was not new to Pontius, but he advised her to wait un-

til Hadrian should be in better mood, and promised, in any event, to do what he could for Pollux, who had won his love and respect. At present he was compelled to go away from the city on a commission for the emperor, who, in passing Mount Casius, had seen a monument erected on the spot where the great Pompey had been murdered. This monument had fallen into decay, and he determined to set up a new one in its place, and had commissioned Pontius to undertake it, leaving the unfinished work upon the Lochias to his own direction. Gabinius had been summoned to his aid.

While they were speaking, Hadrian and his wife approached. The instant Pontius recognized them, he said, in a lower tone:

“I will see you again, little mother. Step one side, the emperor and empress are coming,” and quickly disappeared.

Doris slipped behind a curtain which hung across a door-way, for she would as willingly have come into contact with a wild animal as to meet again the proud woman from whom she could expect only insult and injury.

The interview with Hadrian had lasted barely quarter of an hour, and could not have been agreeable, for the face of the emperor was hotly flushed, and the lips of Sabina were colorless, while one might have seen a restless twitching of her painted cheeks.

As they passed by Doris heard Hadrian say:

“In smaller things I let you act as you please; the greater decisions, as in this case, I make exclusively according to my own judgment.”

These words were the fiat of destiny to the gate-house and its inhabitants, for among the “smaller things” to which Hadrian alluded was the removal of the gate-house and its inhabitants.

Sabina had demanded this of her husband, because it was disagreeable to every one visiting the Lochias to be met by such a threatening megera, and attacked by her dogs. Doris had so little suspicion of the significance of the emperor’s words that they actually gave her pleasure, for how could she imagine that the disposition of her house and the destiny of her family could belong among the “smaller things.”

Sabina had now left with her chamberlain, and Hadrian stood alone with Mastor. The old woman thought she would not easily find a more favorable moment in which to approach and beg the emperor’s generosity toward herself, and his forgiveness for her son.

He stood with his back toward her. Could she have seen the terrible look upon his face she must have remembered the

advice of the architect, and would have postponed her request.

How many destroy their own good cause by insisting upon some immediate decision, because they have not strength enough to wait a favorable moment!

Present uncertainty seems oftentimes harder to bear than an adverse fate in the future.

As Doris stepped out of the side room the kind-hearted Mastor, wishing to spare the good woman's humiliation, made her a sign to go back and not disturb the emperor, but she was so preoccupied by her anxiety and her wishes that she did not notice it.

As Hadrian turned to leave she took heart, and placing herself before the door, attempted to fall upon her knee before him. That was hard for the old bones, and Doris was forced to support herself against the door-post not to lose her equilibrium. Hadrian recognized the petitioner, but to-day he had no friendly word, and the look he cast upon her was anything but gracious. How had he ever seen anything agreeable in this forlorn old creature?

Ah! the poor Doris was indeed quite another person, in her own little house, among the flowers and birds and dogs, than in the wide space of a grand palace. Thousands who command respect and awaken pleasure in their appropriate surroundings excite quite different feelings when thrown into those where they do not belong. Doris had never made so unfavorable an impression upon Hadrian as on this day, in this decisive hour of her life.

She had come directly from the kitchen hearth, at the summons of the empress, after her sleepless night, with her gray hair in disorder, and her good, clear eyes, the ornament of her face, red from weeping. The neat, wholesome, motherly Doris was anything but herself to-day, and to the eyes of Hadrian seemed only one of the old hags whose meeting in going out of a place always foreboded ill-luck.

"Oh, Cæsar! great Cæsar!" she cried, lifting her hands, soiled from contact with the cooking utensils; "my son, my unfortunate Pollux!"

"Out of the way!" said Hadrian, roughly.

"He is a sculptor, a good one, who already exceeds some of the masters; and if the gods—"

"Out of the way, I say. I will hear nothing of the insolent boy!" cried Hadrian, disdainfully.

"But, great Cæsar, he is my son, and you know a mother—"

“Mastor,” broke in the emperor, “remove the old woman, and give me peace.”

“Oh, sire! sire!” said the distracted woman, with streaming tears, while the slave lifted her aside; “how can you be so hard? Am I not the same old Doris with whom you jested, and whose food you enjoyed?”

These words recalled to Hadrian the hour of his arrival on the Lochias. He perceived that he was in the debt of the old woman; and, accustomed to act with generosity, he added:

“For your good dish you will receive a sum large enough to buy a new house. An allowance shall be paid you, but within three hours you must leave the Lochias.”

The emperor spoke rapidly, as if wishing to hasten through an unpleasant affair, and passed on by Doris, who was now standing upon her feet, and leaning, half stunned, against the door-post. Were he still present and waiting for her words, she could not have spoken.

To the emperor belonged the attributes of Jupiter: and as lightning hurled by the father of the gods, so had his fiat shattered all the happiness of one peaceful home.

Doris shed no more tears. The frightful shock which had convulsed her soul took away also her physical strength. Her knees trembled, and feeling herself unable to go home, she sunk down upon a bench, staring helplessly, and yet trying to think what she ought to do.

In one of the lately renovated halls stood Hadrian. He had begun to repent his harshness toward the woman who had shown herself so friendly both to him and to his favorite.

“Where is Antinous?” he asked of Mastor.

“He went to the little house of the gate-keeper.”

“What is he doing there?”

“I believe he will— He had there, perhaps—”

“The truth, fellow.”

“He is with the sculptor Pollux.”

“Has he been there long?”

“I do not know exactly.”

“How long, I ask?”

“He went out just after you shut yourself in with Titianus.”

“Three hours, three full hours, in the house of that braggart whom I turned out of the palace!”

Hadrian’s eyes flashed with rage while he said this. The vexation about his favorite, whose companionship he felt unwilling to share with any one, and least of all with Pollux, choked every kind feeling, and with indignation bordering on

rage, he commanded Mastor to summon him at once, and then see to it that the gate-keeper's house was vacated.

"Take a dozen slaves to help," he cried. "For aught I care, the people can carry their goods to a new house, but I will never again see the howling old woman or her idiotic husband. I have given the sculptor to understand that the emperor has a firm tread, and easily tramples down the snakes that creep across his path."

Mastor went away sad. Hadrian went to his work-room, and said to his private secretary, Phlegon:

"Write! A new gate-keeper is to be appointed for this palace. Continue the pay of Euphorion, and let half a talent be paid him by the prefect. Also, give to the man immediately what is necessary, for in one hour neither he nor his family must be found on the Lochias. Hereafter let no one speak to me, or write to me, of any one of them. We consign the whole race to the company of the dead."

Phlegon bowed, and said:

"The relic dealer, Gabinus, is in waiting."

"He comes at an opportune moment," cried the emperor. "After all these vexations it will do me good to hear of beautiful things."

CHAPTER IX.

IT was certainly true. The appearance of Sabina had driven the good spirits from the palace on the Lochias. The command of the emperor fell upon the little house at the gate like a whirlwind among a heap of withered leaves. Its inhabitants had not time to fully realize their misfortune, for instead of lamentation active work was necessary. The tables, chairs, couches and musical instruments, the baskets, flower-pots, bird-cages, the kitchen utensils and chests of wearing apparel, were hurried pell-mell into the court—and Doris gave direction to the slaves Mastor brought with as much clearness and carefulness as though simply moving from one house into another. A glance of sunny cheerfulness shone again in her eyes. She said to herself that what had occurred belonged to the inevitable, and it was wiser to think of the future than of the past. She seemed to have quite recovered her old self, and as she saw Euphorion sitting in a broken attitude, staring hopelessly at the floor, she called out to him:

"After the sad days come always the joyful ones again! Let them not succeed in making us unhappy! We have done nothing wrong, and so long as we do not believe ourselves

miserable we shall not be so. Only hold up the head! Up, old man, up! Go to Diotima and ask her to entertain us and our goods for a few days."

"If only the emperor should not carry out his threat!" suggested Euphorion, gloomily. "What is life?"

"A wretched affair, indeed, and therefore it is wise to enjoy still what we possess. Pour out a cup of wine, Pollux, for me, and for your father. But to-day it need not be mixed."

"I can not drink," sighed the musician.

"Then I will take your share!"

"Do not, mother," begged Pollux.

"Mix it, my boy, mix it a little, but do not carry such a despairing face. Is it fitting for a fresh young fellow who carries a trade in his vigorous hand and the fairest of girls in his heart?"

"For my own sake, mother," returned the young sculptor, "I am not anxious. But how can I go to Arsinoe in the palace, or deal with the mad Kerannus?"

"Ask that question of 'Time,'" answered Doris. "She is able to give both good and bad answers. The best always to those who wait for her in the vestibule Patience—"

"A very poor waiting-place for such as I," sighed Pollux.

"Only sit still and knock on the door," answered Doris, "and before you can look round Time will call out 'Come in!' Now show the people how to handle the statue of Apollo, and be again my cheery-hearted boy!"

Pollux did as she bade him, but he thought: "She speaks well, but there is for her no Arsinoe left behind. Had I at least only arranged to meet Antinous again!" But after the command of the emperor, the youth seemed like one who had received a blow on the head, and he staggered in going out as one on his way to the altar of sacrifice.

The confidence of Doris seemed to be not without grounds, for Phlegon now came in to inform her of the regular stipend and the half talent the emperor had ordered paid to Euphorion.

"Do you not see," she cried, as the messenger departed, "that a good day is already dawning? A half talent! Such rich people as we are now have nothing to fear from want. What do you think? Would it not be fitting that we pour out half the cup of wine before the gods, while we drink the rest?" She was cheery as if preparing for a wedding, and Pollux soon caught her spirit, for he felt that a part of the burden was lifted from his parents and his sister. The drooping heart needed but a few drops of friendly dew. He thought again of

his art, determining at once to finish the statue of Antinous so well begun.

While in the house superintending the removal of his work, Papias entered the court, on his way to put a few finishing touches to the work in the palace, and wished to make another attempt to ingratiate himself in the emperor's favor. He was anxious lest Pollux should now betray how little share of the work which had brought him more praise than all his former undertakings really belonged to himself. It would have been to his advantage to set aside his pride, and by some generous offer induce Pollux to return to his service; but he had been so carried beyond himself on the previous evening, in speaking of the young sculptor to the emperor as a poor workman, and had given such lively expression to his joy on being freed from him that he could not retreat.

Now there remained to him the alternative of removing Pollux from Alexandria, or in some other way making him harmless. The thought occurred to him of hiring an assassin to commit murder; but Papias was a peaceable citizen, and unwilling to overstep the law, so he rejected that thought as unworthy and abhorrent. He was not very scrupulous in the employ of means, not hesitating to work in an underhand manner, or to calumniate a fellow-being, and in such ways had often gained a victory over some hostile fellow-artist. He hated the son of the gate-keeper less than he feared him, and did not hide from himself the fact that if his efforts failed, and Pollux should succeed in establishing himself, and showing what he was capable of, he could not prevent his proclaiming the assistance rendered to his master in these last years. His attention was arrested by slaves carrying the household goods of Euphorion into the street. Soon learning what had happened, and rejoicing in this exhibition of the emperor's ill-will, he stood still, and asked some one to call Pollux. Master and pupil exchanged greetings with coolness, and the former said: "You have forgotten to return the things you took yesterday without my permission. I want them to-day."

"They were not borrowed for myself, but for the great lord and his companion in the palace yonder. If anything be lost, he is responsible. I am sorry that I included the silver quiver, for the companion of the Roman has lost it. So soon as I have finished this work, I will bring all the articles to you, and also remove whatever of my own is in your workshop."

"Very well," answered Papias, "I will expect you an hour before sunset, and then all things can be arranged."

Without a parting salute, he turned his back and entered

the palace. This confession of Pollux that he had taken some of his property without permission, and among them one article of considerable value, might furnish an opportunity for putting him out of the way.

He remained scarcely half an hour in the palace, and then—while Pollux accompanied his parents to the residence of his sister—he went to the general officer of the night police. Papias was on intimate terms with this man, and since he had made a sarcophagus for his deceased wife, and an altar decorated with pictures in relief for his apartments at a reasonable rate, he dared venture to rely on his kind offices.

When he came out he held an order for the arrest of Pollux in his hand, on the charge of having stolen from him a quiver of solid silver. The officer had also promised to send two of his agents to convey the evil-doer to the prison.

Papias went home with a lightened heart.

Pollux returned to the palace, after having seen the household goods of his parents in order, and there to his joy he met Mastor, who brought the articles borrowed by Hadrian and Antinous. The Jazygean also related, with tears in his eyes, a sad story which deeply moved the young sculptor, and in spite of every danger would have induced him to enter the palace but for the appointment with Papias, the time for which was close at hand. Wishing nothing else, and scarcely thinking of anything else than a speedy return to the Lochias, where his presence was needed, and where the heart led him, he took the packet from the hand of the slave and hastened onward, arriving at the house of Papias quite out of breath. His old master had taken pains to send every other person from the house, and received Pollux alone. He named the articles piece by piece, with an icy coldness of manner, demanding their restoration.

“I have already told you,” cried Pollux, “that the great lord from Rome—you know very well who he is—is responsible for these articles, and will not fail to make reparation for the torn chiton and the missing quiver.”

Then he began to relate to him how Antinous had ordered the masks and costumes in the name of his master. But Papias cut him off in the outset, vehemently claiming the bow and quiver, whose value Pollux would not be able to earn within two years. The youth, whose heart and thoughts were all on the Lochias, and at no price wished to be detained longer than necessity required, begged at first, politely, that Papias would release him, promising to bring full satisfaction the next day, after claiming a just remuneration from the Roman.

But as Papias again and again interrupted, obstinately insisting on the immediate replacement of his possessions, the excitable blood of the young artist rose, and he made passionate reply to his attacks and questions. One word led on to another. Papias at last spoke of people who laid hands on the silver of others, and when Pollux retorted by reference to some who claimed the work of other people as their own, Papias struck heavily upon the table with his fist, and going toward the door, far enough to be safe from the vigorous arm of the excited youth, exclaimed:

“You thief, I will show you how such persons are treated in Alexandria.”

Pollux turned pale with rage and plunged after him, but Papias had called to the bailiff hidden in the vestibule:

“Seize the thief, chain him, fetter him, drag him to prison. He has stolen my silver, and lifted his hand against his master.”

Pollux was too much astounded to understand the meaning of this scene. Like a bear confronted by its hunters, he stood at bay. Should he plunge upon his persecutor and tear him to the ground? or should he inactively wait to see what would happen? He knew every stone in the house of his master. The room they were in, like all the others, was on the ground-floor. While the bailiff was coming nearer, and Papias handed to the lictor his order for arrest, his eye fell upon a window opening on the street, and, filled with the one desire to gain freedom and fly to the help of Arsinoe, he sprung through it.

“The thief! stop the thief!” rang after him as he plunged forward.

The passionate cry within his heart: “To the Lochias! to Arsinoe! Only keep free for her sake to help her!” was louder than the voice of his pursuers, and impelled him forward in long leaps. The fresh salt air from the sea touched his glowing cheeks, and he knew the narrow, empty streets would lead him to the wharf, where among the high piles of wood he might lie concealed from his pursuers. But turning into one of these, an Egyptian cattle-driver thrust a goad between his legs, over which he stumbled and fell to the ground. Instantly one of the dogs in pursuit tore the chiton from his body, and many men plunged upon him. One hour later he found himself, bitten, bruised, bound, in prison, among vile fellows and genuine thieves. The night had fallen; his parents were expecting him, but he did not appear.

Upon the Lochias, which he had not succeeded in reaching, were trouble and misery enough, and the only person who

might have carried comfort to the despairing Arsinoe was missing.

CHAPTER X.

THE recital of the slave Mastor, which had so deeply moved Pollux and occasioned his reckless flight, was one of events occurring in the quarters of the palace overseer simultaneously with the removal of Euphorion and his household goods to the narrow dwelling of Diotima.

Keraunus certainly could not be classed among the cheerful, but on the morning of Sabina's visit to the Lochias he had the appearance of inward content.

Since his visit to Selene, on the previous day, he had no more anxiety on her account. She was not dangerously sick, was well nursed, and the children did not seem to miss her. He did not quite like to confess it to himself, yet it was true that he felt freer and lighter in the absence of this stern mistress, and the thought would come that it was pleasant to live in this easy way with Arsinoe and the children. He frequently rubbed his hands together in a satisfied way and smiled to himself.

As the old slave brought in a large dish of eakes he had ordered her to buy and place near the morning soup of the children, they gave vent to such lively delight that his great body shook with pleasure.

And he had good reason to be joyful. Plutarch had sent a heavy purse of gold, in exchange for his ivory cup, and a magnificent bunch of roses to Arsinoe. He could well afford to give the children a pleasure, and to buy a fillet of real gold for himself, and to dress Arsinoe as handsomely as though she were the prefect's daughter. His vanity was satisfied in all respects.

And then what a handsome fellow was the slave, who now offered him the roast fowl with such a very respectful bow, and would walk behind him, in the afternoon, to the council! The great Thessalian, who carried the documents of the archidikastes into the judicial court, was scarcely more stately than his body-servant.

He had bought the fellow yesterday, and at what a cheap price!

The full-grown Samian was scarcely thirty years old. He could read and write, teach the children, and play the lute. It is true there were some ugly spots on his past record, and that was the reason he cost so little. He had several times

been detected in stealing, but the brands and the stripes he bore were all hidden by the new chiton, and Keraunus fancied himself able to correct entirely this evil disposition.

After charging Arsinoe to leave nothing of value lying about, since their new inmate might not be perfectly reliable, he answered the scruple of his daughter:

“It would, of course, be more satisfactory were he as honorable as the old skeleton I threw into the bargain for this one; but I reason in this way: if my body-servant does really purloin a few drachmas I need not regret my purchase, since it was on this very account I obtained him several thousand drachmas under price; and a school-master for the children would certainly have cost more than he can steal. I will lock up our gold in the chest, with the papers. That is safe, and one would need a crowbar to pry it open. Probably he will not steal anything for awhile, as his former master was not mild, and he may have driven the evil trait out of him. It is well that in the sale of such a fellow one must state the crimes of which he has been guilty, and, if it be omitted, later possessors can claim damage. Lykophron has certainly concealed nothing, and, if one could overlook the thievish disposition, this Samian is in every other respect an excellent fellow.”

“But father,” answered Arsinoe, “it is very unpleasant to have a dishonest person in the house.”

“That you do not understand, child,” returned Keraunus. “For us, life and honesty are synonymous terms; but a slave! King Antiochus is reported to have said that he who wishes to be well served must be served by a rogue.”

When Arsinoe was attracted to the balcony by the song of her lover, and called back by her father, Keraunus showed no unkindness, but stroked her cheek and said, smilingly:

“I believe the gate-keeper’s son, whom I once drove away, is looking after you, since you have been chosen to the part of Roxana! Poor fellow! We have now quite other suitors in view, my girl. What if the rich Plutarch sent these roses, not on his own account but to greet you in the interest of his son? I know he would gladly marry, but the fastidious fellow has not yet found any Alexandrian girl handsome enough.”

“I do not know him, and he cares nothing for such a poor thing as I am,” said Arsinoe.

“Do you believe that?” asked Keraunus, laughing. “We are as high in rank, perhaps even higher than Plutarch, and the fairest best fit the richest. How would you like a long purple robe, a chariot with white horses, and runners in advance?”

Keraunus drank two cups of strong wine with his breakfast, in which he allowed Arsinoe to pour only a few drops of water.

While she was curling his hair a swallow flew into the room. That was a lucky omen, and stimulated the courage of Keraunus.

Well dressed, and with a full purse, he was just ready to betake himself with his new body-servant to the council, when the latter introduced the tailor Sophilus, with a female assistant, who came to beg permission to try the costume ordered by the wife of the prefect for Roxana.

Keraunus received him with amazing condescension, and allowed his slaves to bring in the great packet containing the garments. Arsinoe, who was with the children, was called in. She was constrained and anxious, and would gladly have resigned her part to another, but she was very curious about the new clothes.

The tailor requested that she would allow her servant to array her in the costume, suggesting that his assistant should be present to explain the Asiatic style of arrangement.

"Your dressing-maid," he added, turning to Arsinoe, "will learn to-day how she is to arrange the garments for the great occasion."

"My daughter's maid," answered Keraunus, with a crafty side glance at Arsinoe, "is not at home?"

"Oh, I need no assistance," cried the seamstress; "I can also well arrange the hair, and will gladly do it for such a lovely young lady."

"It is a pleasure to work for her," added Sophilus. "Some are made handsome by their garments; your daughter will give a charm to whatever she may wear."

"You are very polite," said Keraunus, as Arsinoe retired with the seamstress.

"Intercourse with stylish people has taught me many things," answered the tailor. "The ladies in high life who honor me with their custom wish not only to see, but to hear, that they look well. Unfortunately, some among them have been poorly endowed by nature, and such especially desire flattering words. You know it pleases the poor much more than it does the rich to be thought well off."

"That is well said," cried Keraunus. "I myself am not overabundantly supplied with the wealth befitting my origin, and I willingly live within my means. Meanwhile my daughter ought—"

"Julia has chosen the costliest stuffs for her."

"As the occasion demands. Yet, when this festival is over,

my daughter ought to appear both at home and on the street in suitable and handsome, if not costly, garments."

"I have already said that natural grace needs no external adornment."

"Would you be willing to work for her at a moderate price?"

"With pleasure; I shall be under obligations to her; for every one will admire Roxana and inquire for her tailor."

"You are a reasonable man. What would you charge for a garment?"

"We will speak of that at another time."

"No, no, I beg you sincerely."

"Allow me first to consider your wishes. Simple garments are more difficult to arrange, and become handsome women much better than showy ones. But to make a woman believe that, I can sing a song of their foolishness. Many a woman rides in her chariot whose garments and jewels are the only furniture of her house, as well as of her body."

Such was the conversation between Keraunus and the tailor, while his assistant dressed the hair of Arsinoe with strings of imitation pearls, which she had brought for the purpose of trying their effect, and fitted on the rich blue and white silk suitable for an Asiatic princess. Arsinoe was at first silent and timid. She did not care to adorn herself for other eyes than those of Pollux, but the garments purchased for her were very beautiful—and how wonderfully the dress-maker understood bringing out all her best points!

Many hearty words of admiration came from the lips of this skillful woman, and soon Arsinoe shared her enthusiasm. As the shrub which the breath of spring adorns with flowers seems to rejoice, so did this simple child find pleasure in her own beauty and in the costly apparel provided for her. She clapped her hands, she viewed herself in the mirror, and expressed her feelings with the unrestrained freedom of a child.

"If Pollux could only see me!" she thought. "After the exhibition, perhaps I can show myself to Selene, and then she will be reconciled to my pleasure in the occasion. It is nice to be so pretty!"

The children stood about her while she was being dressed, and gave loud expression to their delight with the addition of each article.

The blind boy begged permission to feel her garment, and she allowed his little hands to pass over the soft and shining folds. She was now ready to show herself to her father and the tailor. Walking with head erect like a veritable king's

daughter, and yet carrying the throbbing heart of a poor maiden, accustomed only to the protection of a father's house—about to show herself to a thousand staring eyes—she went toward the common room. But she drew back the hand placed upon the latch when she heard voices of men who must have lately come in to her father.

“Wait a little, there are visitors,” she said, and put her ear to the door.

At first she comprehended nothing of the conversation, but at last it became so fearfully intelligible that to her dying day she could never forget.

Keraunus had engaged Sophilus to make two new dresses for Arsinoe, beating him down in price, and promising immediate payment, when the slave, Mastor, entered, announcing the arrival of his master and Gabinus, who wished to speak with Keraunus.

“Your master,” he said, proudly, “can come in. I think he regrets his injustice to me; but Gabinus must never cross my threshold: he is a knave.”

“It would be well for you to request this man to leave,” continued the slave, pointing to the tailor.

“Whoever visits me must consent to meet any one I allow to enter my house.”

“No,” cried the slave, earnestly, “my master is higher than you suppose. Please ask the man to leave.”

“I know all that,” said Keraunus, laughing. “He is an intimate of the emperor. We shall see after the representation in his honor, for which we are all preparing, whether Hadrian will justify him or me. The tailor has still something to do here, and will remain. Take a seat in the corner, my friend.”

“A tailor!” cried Mastor, incensed. “I tell you he must go away.”

“He *must!*” repeated Keraunus, irritated. “A slave presume to give orders to me in my own dwelling? We shall see about that.”

“I will go,” broke in the sensible tradesman; “you shall not get into trouble on my account. I will return in quarter of an hour.”

“You shall stay,” reiterated Keraunus. “The impudent Roman demeans himself as if the Loehias belonged to him. I will show him who is in command here.”

Mastor was not confused by these lofty words; but seizing the hand of the tailor, he led him away, whispering:

“Follow me if you would escape an evil hour.”

And Keraunus did not seek again to detain them, for the thought had occurred to him that the presence of the tailor would bring him little credit.

He wished to show himself to the architect in his full dignity, and remembered also that it would not be wise to irritate this peculiar man with his savage dog. Excited, and not free from anxiety, he walked up and down the apartment.

To increase his courage, he twice filled and emptied a goblet from the wine-jar upon the breakfast-table, and stood with folded arms and flushed cheeks awaiting his visitors.

As the emperor entered, he passed by Keraunus without a word, as though he were merely a pillar or a piece of furniture. For a full minute, Keraunus sought language to express his sense of the outrage. Gabinius followed the example of Hadrian, passed directly to the mosaic for which he had offered so high a sum a few days before, and said:

“I beg you to examine this masterpiece.”

The emperor looked; but scarcely had he begun to inspect the painting, whose exceeding beauty he well knew how to value, when he heard behind him, in the thick speech of Keraunus:

“In Alexandria, it is customary to greet the people one visits.”

Hadrian only half turned his head, saying, in a tone of scorn:

“In Rome also, one salutes honest people.”

Then turning his attention to the mosaic, he said to Gabinius:

“A rare work truly, and of inestimable value.”

At this reply of the emperor, the eyes of Keraunus seemed starting from their sockets. With deeply flushed face and colorless lips, he stepped nearer to Hadrian, and as soon as he could gather breath enough to speak, he asked:

“What have—what can your words mean?”

Hadrian turned quickly and squarely toward the overseer. In his eyes was that annihilating glance few were able to bear, and his deep voice filled the apartment, as he said to the unfortunate Keraunus:

“My words signify that you have been an unfaithful steward, that I know more than is agreeable to you of the manner in which you have dealt with that committed to your trust.”

“That I?” asked Keraunus, trembling, and going nearer to the emperor.

“That you,” continued Hadrian, looking into his face,

“have attempted to sell the mosaic painting from this floor to Gabinius; and, expressing the thing in short space, that you are a simpleton and a rascal!”

“I—I—” stammered the overseer, striking his breast. “I a—a—you shall retract those words!”

Hadrian laughed coldly and scornfully, but Keraunus sprung with a celerity scarcely to be expected from one of his weight upon Gabinius, seizing him by the collar of his chiton, and shaking the lank fellow as he would have shaken a slender sapling, screeching, meanwhile:

“I will make you swallow your own calumny, you serpent, you malicious viper!”

“Madman!” cried Hadrian, “let the Ligurian alone!”

“Repent!” stammered Keraunus. “You will be the one to repent as soon as the emperor arrives. Then we shall have a reckoning as to the slander, the insolence, the disturbance of a household, the too easily credited charges—”

“Man—man,” broke in Hadrian, sternly, but without passion, “you know not to whom you are speaking!”

“Oh, I know you only too well. But I—shall I tell you who I am?”

“You are a blockhead,” replied the monarch, with a scornful shrug of the shoulders.

Then he added, coldly, with the air of stately indifference belonging to high rank:

“I am the emperor!”

For a few seconds Keraunus stared without a sound into the face of Hadrian. Then he shrunk together as if seized by a convulsion; and, as a rock moved by an earthquake loses its equilibrium, so he fell backward upon the floor with a loud gurgling in his throat.

The building quaked with his fall. Hadrian was startled, and as he saw him lying at his feet motionless, he bowed over him, less perhaps through any feeling of compassion than to test his own medical skill.

As he lifted his hand to feel the pulse, Arsinoe plunged into the apartment. She had listened breathlessly to the latter part of the conversation, and hearing her father's fall, rushed past Hadrian to his side. When his distorted and bluish-colored features revealed to her what had happened, she burst into a passionate cry. The little brothers and sisters cried also, for no better reason at first than because Arsinoe had set the example, though the sight of their father lying upon the floor filled them with vague terror.

The emperor, who had neither son nor daughter, found usu-

ally the crying of children an insupportable annoyance, but he was too much occupied in learning the condition of Keraunus to notice it for awhile.

“He is dead,” said Hadrian, in a few moments. “Throw a cloth over his face, Mastor.”

Arsinoe and the little ones wailed anew, which now seemed to disturb the emperor. When his eyes rested upon Arsinoe, whose partly sewed garments of rich and heavy stuff were falling apart, in consequence of her rapid motions, he turned away with a feeling of disgust at the gaudy trumpery of her apparel in these circumstances of sorrow, and left the room. Gabinius followed, with an ugly leer upon his face. He had called the attention of Hadrian to the mosaic, and while boasting his own honesty, had charged Keraunus with having proposed to sell it to him.

Now the calumniated man was dead, and he felt sure the truth would never come to the light. That thought was pleasant, but he found still greater satisfaction in the fact that Arsinoe could not now appear as Roxana, and the possibility of securing the part for his own daughter reopened.

Hadrian walked before him thoughtfully and in silence. As they entered the work-room of the emperor, Gabinius said: “Verily, great Cæsar, the gods punish a wrong-doer with severe hand.”

The emperor let him finish the sentence, then with a sharp and scrutinizing look at his face, said:

“It seems to me better to break off all intercourse with you, and give the commission I had planned to some other man.”

“My emperor!” exclaimed Gabinius “in truth, I knew nothing—”

“But I think you attempted to lead me wrong, and put a fault of your own upon the shoulders of another,” broke in the monarch.

“I! great Cæsar I should—” broke in the Ligurian, with ashy lips.

“You have played the overseer a shabby trick,” answered Hadrian; “but I know men, and am sure no real thief dies because he has been called a rascal. Only an undeserved charge would destroy life.”

“Keraunus was full-blooded, and the shock of learning that you were the emperor—”

“That undoubtedly hastened the event,” broke in Hadrian; “but the mosaic in his dwelling is worth a million sesterces; and now that I look you straight in the eye, I know you are not the man to decline such an opportunity, no matter

under what circumstances. If I am not mistaken, Keraunus repulsed an attempt of yours to secure the treasure. That is certainly the truth. Go, now; I wish to be alone."

Gabinius retired backward, bowing as he went toward the door, and left the palace on the Lochias, muttering curses.

The new body-servant of the overseer, the old black woman, Mastor, the tailor, and his slave, assisted Arsinoe in drawing the body of her father upon the couch. The slave closed his eyes—he was dead.

Each one said this to the despairing girl, but she could not, she would not believe it. When she lifted his heavy, inflexible arm, it dropped back like lead. She drew the cover from his face, but was glad to hide again from sight the features death had distorted. Then she kissed the cold hand, and bid the children do the same, saying, with a sob:

"We have no more a father. We shall never, never see him again."

The blind boy touched the cold corpse, and asked:

"Will he not wake early to-morrow morning, and let you curl his hair, and toss up his little Helios?"

"Never, never. All is over with him—all."

Mastor entered the apartment on an errand from the emperor. He had not forgotten the blessed message learned from the foreman of the pavement-layers, promising a blessed life beyond the present, and stepping nearer, he said:

"No, no, children. When we are dead, we shall become beautiful angels with bright wings, and all who have loved each other on the earth will meet together there, with the good God in heaven."

Arsinoe looked displeased, and answered: "Of what use is it to deceive the children with fables? The father has gone, not to return, but we shall never forget him."

"Are there no angels with red wings?" asked the youngest daughter of Keraunus.

"I want to be an angel!" cried the blind boy, clapping his hands. "Can the angels see, too?"

"Yes, dear child," answered Mastor, "and their eyes are especially clear, and what they have to look upon is very beautiful."

"Have done with the Christian nonsense," begged Arsinoe. "Ah, children, when our father's body has been burned, there will be nothing left of him but a little gray ashes."

The slave took the little boy up in his arms, and whispered in his ear:

"Only believe me, you will see him again in heaven!"

As he placed Helios again upon his own feet, he gave Arsinoe a purse of gold the emperor had sent, with the request that she would seek a new lodging, and after the burning of the body on the next day, leave the Lochias, with her brothers and sisters.

Arsinoe opened the chest in which were the papers of her father and the money Plutarch had paid for the ivory cup. She laid the heavy purse sent by Hadrian beside it, saying to herself that at least they would be for a long time above want. But where should she go with the children? What place would furnish them shelter? And what would become of them after the gold was used up?

Thanks to the gods, she was not deserted! She had friends! With Pollux she would find love and protection, and motherly counsel in Doris. She was not quite desolate, and soon she could weep on the breast of her lover!

Quickly she dried her eyes, and exchanged the unfinished dress of silk for the simple garment she had worn in the papyrus mill. After loosening the pearls from her hair, she started for the gate-house. When within a few steps of it she began to wonder why the three Graces did not spring out to bark at her; why there were no flowers or birds in the windows. Was she deceived, or dreaming, or the victim of mischievous spirits? The door of the home-like little house stood wide open. No forgotten article or stray leaf from the growing plants was lying upon the floor—for Doris had left all in the same order as if she were expecting to return on the morrow.

What had happened here?

Where were her friends?

A strange anxiety took possession of her. She felt the pangs of desolation. As she sat down upon a stone bench, thinking to wait the return of those who must be coming soon, the tears again filled her eyes, and fell in heavy drops upon the hands lying idly upon her lap. While she sat there, a crowd of slaves approached the deserted building, and their master ordered her to leave the bench, saying they had been sent to pull down the little house, and telling her that Euphorion and Doris had been dismissed from service and sent away from the Lochias, with all their goods. But no one knew where they had gone. Arsinoe felt like a mariner whose vessel had been driven upon the rocks, and feels with terror the planks and beams loosening and giving way underneath him.

As usual, when in any perplexity, her thoughts turned to Selene, and she determined to hasten to her for advice.

It was already twilight.

With rapid steps, and often wiping away the tears with her peplum, she returned to the dwelling for the veil, without which she dared not venture so late into the street.

Upon the steps where the Molossian had attacked Selene, she met some person evidently in great haste.

In the dim light she fancied a resemblance to the slave her father had bought the day before, but did not think very much about it, having so much else to occupy her attention. She found the old slave woman sitting beside a lamp in the kitchen, with the children huddled about her, and near the hearth were the baker and the butcher, come to claim the payment of their long accounts, for the news of sorrow has swifter wings than a joyful message, and so they had already learned of Keraunus's death.

Arsinoe begged them to wait a moment, and went into the room where lay the corpse of the man who, only a few hours before, had stroked her cheeks and looked lovingly into her eyes.

How glad she felt to be able to pay all his debts, and rescue his name from dishonor! Confidently she took the key from her pocket to open the chest.

But what met her gaze?

She was quite sure she had locked it before going out, and yet there it stood wide open. The cover, thrown back, hung awry upon one hinge; the other was broken.

A frightful suspicion chilled her blood. The lamp trembled in her hand as she bent over the chest, to which had been trusted their whole dependence.

There lay the old manuscripts carefully rolled together, but the two purses containing the gold were missing. She carefully took up one article after another, and ended by turning out everything in the chest. But the gold was really gone.

The new slave had burst the cover, and stolen from the orphans of the man who had taken him into his house only to satisfy his vanity, their whole fortune.

Arsinoe uttered a loud cry, calling in the creditors, and told them all what had happened, begging them to pursue the thief. When they only listened with an unbelieving shrug of the shoulders, she swore that she was speaking the truth, and promised, whether the slave were overtaken or not, to pay them with her own and her father's ornaments.

She told them the name of the trader who had sold Samier to her father, and at last persuaded them to attempt the pursuit.

Again she was alone. Without tears, but shivering, and scarcely able to maintain her self-control, she seized the veil, wound it about her head, and hastened through the court and the streets to her sister.

Certainly, since the appearance of Sabina in the palace on the Lochias, the good spirits had departed.

CHAPTER XI.

IN a dark corner, under shadow of the wall inclosing the garden of the widow of Pudens, stood the cynic who had encountered Antinous in so unfriendly a manner, defending himself zealously against the charge of another man, who, like himself, wore a ragged mantle, and carried a beggar's scrip, and who seemed to belong to the same company.

"Do not deny," said the latter, "that you are an adherent of the Christians."

"Listen to me," was the earnest reply.

"I do not need to listen, for this is the tenth time I have seen you slip out of their assembly."

"Have I denied it? Have I not openly declared that I seek truth everywhere, if there be only a shimmer of hope to guide me toward it?"

"Like the Egyptian, who, wishing to catch a strange fish, cast his line into the sand."

"That man acted sensibly."

"Give us an example."

"A wonder is not found where all are seeking it. In search after truth, one must not shun a bog; and the Christian doctrine is just such a miry thicket."

"It may be so, for all I care."

"Then look out that you do not get stuck in the morass."

"I will take care of myself."

"You said lately there were some good people among them."

"A few individuals. But the majority? Eternal gods! Mere slaves, beggars, poor trades-people, common folk, uncultivated, unphilosophical heads, a crowd of women—"

"Then avoid them!"

"You are the last one to give me such counsel."

"What do you mean by that?"

He stepped nearer to his companion, and asked, in a whisper:

"Where do you suppose I get the money for our food and lodging?"

“ So long as you do not steal, I do not care.”

“ If I give it up, will you then ask?”

“ Certainly not. We are striving after virtue, and should do all we can to become independent of Nature and her demands. But they will sometimes assert their rights. So out with the matter. Where do you get the money?”

“ Money burns the purses of those people in yonder. Almsgiving is their duty and their sincere pleasure. So they bestow upon me from week to week a few drachmas, for my brother in need.”

“ Pshaw! You are the true son of your departed father.”

“ All men are brethren, say the Christians; therefore I am able, without falsehood, to call you mine.”

“ Go in then, on my account,” was the laughing response, with a slap on the shoulder of his companion. “ What if I should follow your example, and join the Christians also? Perhaps they might give me, too, a weekly stipend for my hungry brother; then we should have a double supply.”

The cynics laughed aloud as they separated; one going toward the city, the other into the garden of the Christian widow.

Arsinoe had passed by these dishonest philosophers, and, without any detention by the porter, gone toward the house of Hannah. The nearer she came to the end of her walk, the more earnestly she sought to devise some means of letting her sick sister know, without danger, the frightful events she must learn sooner or later. On the way she had shed no tears, but had often moaned. A woman, walking near, supposed her suffering from headache, and looked on her with compassion. Once she stopped short, with a half purpose first to seek Pollux and ask his help. But maidenly timidity restrained her, as well as the doubt about finding him. And besides, no person could give better advice than Selene. So she hastened forward again. When she reached the house of the widow, and stopped again to think what she would say, her grief broke forth anew.

Both before and behind her, many men and veiled women, singly, in pairs, or larger numbers, were passing into the garden of the widow of Pudens.

They had come from workshops and counting-rooms; from little houses in the neighboring streets, and from the finest residences of the city. Each of them, the opulent merchant as well as the slave who did not own so much as the coarse frock or the poor apron he wore, entered with a certain dignity and earnestness.

Each greeted every other within that gate as a friend. The lord gave to his servant, the slave to his master, the fraternal kiss, for the community to which all belonged was as one body animated by the spirit of Christ, and each treated every other member as an equal, however they might differ in bodily or spiritual gifts, and in worldly possessions.

Before God and the Saviour, the ship-owner and the wise, gray-bearded scholar stood no higher than the unprotected widow, or the ignorant and crippled slave.

Yet, a difference of rank was recognized among them, but it was founded on the measure of grace received from the Lord, bestowed as His special gift, and pertaining to their inward condition.

On Sunday, the day of the Lord's resurrection, the Christians assembled, without exception, for a service of worship.

On this day (Wednesday) all who were able came to attend a love feast at the country house of Paulina.

She herself resided in the city, and had a hall capable of containing several hundred people arranged in her villa for the use of her fellow-believers.

The proper religious service would be attended on the following morning.

After the work of the day, the Christians assembled at a common table to eat together, or at stated times, to celebrate the Lord's supper.

After sunset, the elders, deacons and deaconesses—the greater part of whom were confined by necessary labor during the hours of daylight—came together for consultation.

Paulina, the widow of Pudens and sister of the architect Pontius, was a woman of wealth and a prudent housekeeper, who would not have considered it honest to diminish the inheritance of her son.

This son dwelt in Smyrna, and was nominal partner in the business of an uncle. He avoided Alexandria, because he did not like his mother's connection with the Christians.

Paulina carefully guarded the capital, which naturally belonged to him, and paid only her own share toward the support of the community, like the other wealthy members of the circle who assembled in her house.

The opulent brought more than they needed for their own maintenance, and the poor were always made welcome, and not oppressed by the benefit received, being often reminded that their host was not a human being, but the Saviour, who invited all that believed in Him to be His guests.

The hour was near at hand which called Hannah to the as-

sembly. She was compelled to be present as a deaconess, and also one of those who had charge of distributing alms and providing nurses for the sick.

She moved quietly about the room, making her preparations. She placed the lamp behind the water-pitcher, that the light might not strike the face of Selene, and gave directions to Maria about the medicine.

Aware that her patient had attempted to destroy her own life on the day before, and suspecting her reason, she yet asked no questions, and disturbed as little as possible the girl who slept much or dreamed with eyes wide open. The old physician wondered at the strength of her constitution, for the fever had subsided since her plunge into the water, and the injured limb was only slightly worse. Hannah could but hope the best for Selene, unless some unforeseen accident should retard her recovery. To avoid this, the unhappy girl could not be left alone, and Maria was glad to take her place in the sick-room whenever she was obliged to be absent.

The meeting of elders and almoners had already begun, when Hannah, taking the tablet upon which was recorded her weekly expenditure for the needy into her hand, bade good-bye to the sick girl and Maria with a friendly look, whispering to the latter:

“I shall remember you, true soul, in my prayers. In the cupboard you will find something to relieve hunger. It is scanty, for I must save now all I can; the last medicine was costly.”

In the little vestibule a lamp was burning, which Maria had placed there as the darkness fell. The widow stopped before it, considering whether she should put it out, to save the oil, when a light knocking upon the house door arrested her attention.

Before she could answer it, Arsinoe stepped inside. Her eyes were full of tears, and with difficulty she found words to return the greeting of Hannah.

“What has happened, my child?” asked the widow, seeing her distress.

“Ah, Hannah, all is over. Our poor father—”

Suspecting the blow which had fallen on the sisters, and anxious about its effect upon Selene, the widow interrupted her, saying:

“Hush, my child. Selene ought not to hear this. Come out with me, and there you shall tell me all.”

When outside the door, Hannah put her arm around

Arsinoe, and, drawing her tenderly to herself and kissing her on the forehead, said:

“Now speak, and confide all to me, as if I were your mother or sister. The poor Selene is too weak to counsel or to help you. Keep up your courage. What has happened to your father?”

“Dead, from a stroke of apoplexy,” sobbed the girl.

“Poor, dear orphan,” said the widow, in an under-tone, clasping her closely. For some time she let her weep in silence, then she said:

“Now, give me your hand, daughter, and tell how it happened so suddenly. Yesterday your father was well, and now? Truly, my dear girl, life is earnest; you are forced to learn that in your youth. I know you have six younger brothers and sisters, and, perhaps, insufficient means of support. That is no disgrace. I am certainly poorer than you are, and still I hope, with God’s help, to counsel and assist you. I shall do all in my power, but you must first tell me how it is with you and what you need.”

There was so much friendliness, so much to give comfort and inspire hope in the voice of this Christian woman, that the girl willingly yielded to her request. At first pride held her back from confessing how utterly destitute they were. But the questions of Hannah soon brought out the truth, and when Arsinoe saw that it would be useless to attempt concealment, she gave way to the desire to relieve her own soul by expression, and described their forlorn condition, without reserve, to the attentive and kind-hearted woman who made herself acquainted with the need of each one, and also inquired who was taking care of the children during the absence of Arsinoe.

On learning that the old slave woman, to whom they were trusted, was crippled, and half blind, she shook her head thoughtfully, saying, with decision:

“Here instant help is a necessity. You must soon go back to the little ones. Selene ought not yet to know the death of your father. When your destiny is in any degree fixed, we will break the matter gradually. Follow me now. The Lord has sent you hither at the right moment.”

Hannah led Arsinoe to the house of Paulina, bidding her await her return in a little room where the deaconesses were accustomed to leave their veils and outside garments; and where she would be safe from inquisitive eyes and questions that give pain.

To join the deaconesses it was necessary to pass through the

room where the elders and deacons were assembled, for men and women were not permitted to hold counsel jointly.

The chairman or bishop of the presbyters was upon a raised seat at the head of a long table, with a row of elderly men to the right and left. A few of these were of Jewish and Egyptian, but the larger proportion of Hellenic origin.

Hannah passed these men with a gesture of reverence, and as the door closed behind her the bishop, a handsome old man, with a full white beard, raised his mild eyes, and after gazing for a few moments upon the tips of his raised fingers, addressed the presbyter who had admitted several to the body of believers within the past year, setting them apart by baptism:

“The greater part of your proposed catechumens depend truly on the Redeemer. They believe in Him and love Him. But are they striving after that sanctification obtained through the new birth, which alone gives us the right to receive them through baptism into the fold of the Good Shepherd? We must be on our guard against scabby sheep which mar the whole flock! Truly there have been such in these latter years who have gained admittance to our number, and yet bring disgrace upon the Christian name. Shall I give you an example? There was an Egyptian in Rhacotis; few seemed to strive more earnestly than he after the forgiveness of sin. He fasted many days, and yet so soon as baptized, broke into the shop of a goldsmith. He was sentenced to death, and before his death sent for me to visit him, where he told me that in earlier years his soul had been defiled by many robberies and murders. Through the act of baptism, the immersion in water, he expected forgiveness, and not through repentance and the new birth into a pure and consecrated life. And he had committed the new crime in dependence upon the unwearied grace of our Saviour. Others, educated to the practice of ablutions necessary for initiation into the heathen mysteries, looked upon baptism as an act of cleansing, or a mystical, soul-purifying process, and as such, sought it eagerly. Here in Alexandria, the number of such erring ones is great; and where can a superstitious soul find more favorable ground than in this abode of partial culture, and superfluous culture, of the service of Serapis, of star worship, of mystic unions, of visionary fanatics, of demon conjurers, and that incredulity so closely allied to credulity. So be on your guard against allowing baptism to those who seek it as a protection or means of success. Consider that the same water which makes the graces of a sanctified heart flourish, brings death to the sordid soul. You have opportunity to speak, Irenæus.”

“I only wish to say,” remarked the so-called younger Christian, “that I have also met lately among the catechumens, some who crowd in upon us from the lowest motives. I refer to the idlers who have received our charity. Have you noticed the cynic, whose hungry brother we support? The Deacon Clemens has ascertained that he is the only son of a father—”

“We will search this matter more closely when we come to speak of the alms-giving,” answered the bishop. “We have before us the requests of several women, who desire to have their children baptized. We can not decide the question here, for it belongs to the next Synod. It is too serious to be decided in our small assembly. As for me, I am not inclined to refuse this request of the mothers. For what is the highest aim of the Christian life? I think it lies in becoming more perfectly conformable to the example of the Saviour. And He? Was He not a man among men, a youth among other youth, and a child among children? Has not His existence consecrated every period of life, and especially childhood? He commanded the children to be brought to Him, and promised them the Kingdom of Heaven. Why then should we exclude and deny them baptism?”

“I can not share your opinion,” answered a presbyter, with high forehead and deep eyes. “We ought certainly to follow the Saviour; but whoever enters that path, must do it from free choice, out of love to Him and after consecration of his soul. What can a new birth signify in a life scarcely begun?”

“Your words only confirm my opinion,” returned the bishop, “that this matter ought to come before a larger assembly. We will close here our discussion of the point, and hasten to that of caring for the poor. Call in the women, Justinus.”

The deaconesses entering, took their seats at the lower end of the table. Paulina occupied the place directly opposite the bishop. She had heard from the kind nurse of Selene of the destitute condition of the family of Keraunus, and promised to do something for their relief.

First the deacons reported upon their own activity among the poor. After them, the women were allowed to speak. Paulina, a tall, slender woman, with black hair lightly streaked with gray, drew from the folds of her soft white woolen garment, utterly without ornament, a tablet which she laid upon the table before her, and slowly lifting her eyes to the assembly, said:

“The widow Hannah has a sad history to relate. You will kindly allow her to speak.”

Paulina seemed to feel herself the hostess among her brethren. She bore the appearance of suffering, for her lips were contracted by an expression of pain, and heavy shadows lay under her eyes; yet the tone of her voice was severe and decided, and her glance anything but soft and winning.

After her the story of Hannah seemed a tender song. With feelings as though they were her own daughters, she described the two sisters so different, and yet each so deserving of sympathy. With touching pathos she spoke of all the orphans left to such grief in their tender years, one of whom was a beautiful blind boy, and she closed with the words: "On the second daughter of the overseer—she is sixteen years old, and so very pretty as to be exposed to peculiar temptations—lies now the whole burden of providing for six younger brothers and sisters. Can we decline the hand of help? No; as we love our Saviour, we must not. Do you agree with me? Let us not delay assistance. The second daughter of the deceased Keraunus is now in this house, and early to-morrow morning the children must be removed from the Lochias, and while I am speaking to you they are left under very poor guardianship."

The words of Hannah met a hearty response, the presbyters and deacons resolving to recommend their case to the assembly at the love-feast.

As they had still so many points to discuss, they commissioned Paulina and Hannah to lay the matter upon the hearts of the richer members of the community.

The poor widow first led her wealthy hostess into the room where Arsinoe waited with growing impatience. She looked paler than usual, but in spite of her tear-stained and downcast eyes, was so strikingly beautiful as to move the heart of Paulina.

She had been the mother of two children, one of whom had died in the bloom of girlhood, and no hour passed when Paulina did not think of her.

For her sake she had been baptized, and devoted herself to a series of sacrifices. She sought with all her energy to be a good Christian, believing that the self-denial practiced in taking voluntarily upon herself, while so feeble, the heavy cross of renouncing the quiet life she loved, and making her country home a scene of confusion, would insure her own entrance into that heaven where she hoped to find again her innocent daughter.

Arsinoe reminded her of Helena, whose image—though in

truth she had been much less beautiful than the overseer's daughter—had become glorified in the faithful mother-heart.

Since the departure of her son, she had often thought of adopting some young person, whom she might attach to herself, and educate for an offering to the Lord.

Her daughter had died a heathen, and nothing distressed Paulina so much as the loss of her soul, and that she could not carry her own struggles and efforts to the other side of the grave.

No sacrifice seemed too great to purchase future blessedness for her child, and when she stood before Arsinoe, touched with admiration for her beauty, she was seized by a thought that instantly ripened into determination. She would win this lovely creature for the Saviour, and with incessant prayer implore Him to save her child in exchange for the soul of Arsinoe. And it seemed to her that she had entered into a covenant with the Redeemer, when, fully resolved upon her course, she stepped up to the girl, asking:

“Are you entirely alone, and without other relatives than your brothers and sisters?”

Arsinoe bowed her head affirmatively, but Paulina continued:

“And do you bear this loss with resignation?”

“What is resignation?” asked the girl, timidly.

Hannah laid her hand upon the arm of the widow, whispering:

“She is a heathen!”

“I know that,” answered Paulina, shortly, adding kindly but decidedly. “Through this death of your father you have lost both parents and protection. In my house you can have a new home, and, in exchange, I only ask your love.”

Arsinoe looked up in astonishment at the proud woman. She felt no attraction toward her, and was unconscious that the only gift asked was one that could not be forced even from the best intentions and the most loving nature.

Paulina did not wait her answer, but motioned Hannah to follow her to the love-feast of the community.

Quarter of an hour later, both women returned. The children of Keraunus had found protection. Two or three Christian families would gladly receive them. Several kind-hearted women had asked for the blind boy in vain, for Hannah claimed the right to take him at first into her own house. She knew how Selene clung to the child, and hoped his presence might be useful to the chilled and depressed heart of her patient. Arsinoe did not resist the arrangements of the

woman. She was really grateful, for she felt again firm ground beneath her feet, though she perceived at once that it would be full of sharp stones. The thought of separating from her brothers and sisters was cruel torture, and did not leave her for a moment while returning with Hannah to the Lochias.

On the next morning her good friend came again and conducted the little flock to the city house of Paulina. All the possessions of Keraunus were divided among his creditors. Only the chest containing the papers followed the girl to her new home.

The hour in which the little group of children were scattered, taking one here, another there, was the most painful Arsinoe had thus far experienced, or in later years could live to see.

CHAPTER XII.

WITHIN the inclosure of the *Cæsareum*, the present residence of the empress, was a lovely garden. Balbilla was very fond of it, and since the sun on this twenty-ninth day of December was especially clear, the sky and its unframed mirror, the sea, shone in such indescribable beauty, and the fragrance of many flowering shrubs had stolen through her window as an invitation to leave the house, she had sought a sunny spot under the light shadow of an acacia. This seat was separated by shrubbery from the most frequented paths. Promenaders not seeking Balbilla would not notice her; yet, through a gap in the foliage, she was able to overlook a path strewn with mussel shells. But to-day the young poetess was not inclined to curiosity. Instead of watching the bright-colored birds among the foliage, or looking into the clear air, or toward the sea, her eye was fastened on a roll of yellow papyrus, and she was busied in impressing some very dry things upon her memory.

She had undertaken to redeem a promise given to learn to read, write, and rhyme in the *Æolian* dialect of the Greek language. As her teacher, she had chosen the famous grammarian, Apollonius, surnamed "*Dyscolos*." And the work she was striving to master was from the famous library of the Temple of Serapis, which, since the siege of Julius Cæsar, when the great library of the museum was burned, far exceeded the other in completeness.

Whoever looked upon Balbilla would not imagine her to be studying. There was no mark of effort in her eye or upon her

forehead; and yet she read attentively, line after line, but not as one climbs a mountain, in the sweat of his brow; rather as the pleasure promenader in the main street of a great city notices all the new and striking objects.

Whenever she came upon any unfamiliar form of words she experienced such delight as caused her to clap her hands, and break into a low laugh.

Her profound teacher had never before met such a joyous pupil, and it vexed him, to whom study was such an earnest pursuit. But she seemed to make of this, as of all other things, only a sport, and it lowered her in his eyes. After sitting an hour upon the bench, and studying after her own fashion, she rolled the papyrus together and rose for a little respite. Sure of being unobserved, she stretched her limbs with a feeling of satisfaction in the work accomplished, and then peeped through the gap in the shrubbery to see what booted man was stalking up and down the path. It seemed to be the pretor, and yet it was not he. *This* Verus, at least, met her gaze for the first time. Where was the smile that was wont to sparkle, like a diamond flash, in his eye, and play about his saucy lip. Where was the unruffled cheerfulness of his brow, the challenging audacity of his handsome figure?

With a gloomy sparkle in his eye, with wrinkled brow and drooping head, he went slowly up and down, and still there was no outward grief to burden him. Just as he passed by Balbilla he had snapped his fingers in the air as if to say: "Let come what will! I am alive to-day and can laugh the future in the face!"

But this flaring-up of the old reckless frivolity held no longer than until the snapping fingers had separated. When he passed her again, he looked, if possible, gloomier than before. Something very unpleasant must have destroyed the good humor of her friend's frivolous husband.

That gave the poetess sorrow, for though she suffered each day from the wanton audacity of the pretor, she forgave it on account of the pleasant manner in which he covered his impertinence.

Balbilla wished to see him joyous once more, so she stepped out of her hiding-place. So soon as she appeared, his whole expression changed, and cheerily as ever he cried to her:

"Welcome, fairest of the fair!"

She pretended not to recognize him, and said as she passed by, dropping her head:

"I greet thee, Timon."

"Timon?" he cried, seizing her hand.

“ Ah, it is you, Verus,” she answered, feigning surprise. “ I thought the Athenian man-hater had left Hades to promenade our garden.”

“ You saw right,” answered the pretor; “ but as the trees dance when Orpheus sings, and the muse makes Bacchanals of the dull, lifeless stones, so, when Balbilla appears, Timon is instantly changed with the fortunate Verus.”

“ This wonder should not surprise me,” said the girl, laughing. “ But may one learn what spirit of darkness practices such sudden power of transformation as to change the favored husband of the fair Lucilla into a Timon?”

“ I shall be very careful not to expose the fiend, else might the cheerful Muse Balbilla easily become the dark Hecate. Besides, the mischievous demon is very near, and hides within this little roll.”

“ A document of the emperor?”

“ Oh, no, only the letter of a Jew.”

“ Probably the father of some fair daughter?”

“ The poorest guess possible.”

“ You excite my curiosity.”

“ Mine has been satisfied through this roll. Horace was wise in saying one ought not to fret himself over future things.”

“ Is it an oracle?”

“ At least something of that sort.”

“ And does that destroy for you this rare morning? Have you ever seen me sad? And yet my future is threatened by an oracle, a terrible decree—”

“ The destiny of a man is quite different from that of a woman.”

“ Would you like to hear what was foretold me?”

“ What a question.”

“ Then listen. I received it from no less a person than the Delphian Pythia:

“ ‘ What to thee dearest and highest was, that thou wilt lose,
And from Olympian heights descend to earth beneath.’ ”

“ Is that all?”

“ No, there follow two consolatory lines.”

“ How do they run?”

“ ‘ But under the flying dust a careful look will discover
Solid building of stone, with marble and rocky foundation.’ ”

“ And have you any disposition to complain of this oracle?”

“ Is it very charming to wade in the dust? One has enough

of that here in Egypt. And ought I perhaps to rejoice in the prospect of hitting my foot against the stones?"

"What is the interpretation?"

"Only stupid stuff."

"You have not yet found the true one; but I perceive the meaning of the oracle."

"You?"

"Yes, I. The strict Balbilla will at last descend from the high Olympus of her coyness, and no longer despise the firm ground—the worship of her faithful Verus."

"Oh, this ground, this rocky foundation!" laughed the girl. "It seems to me more rational to promenade the surface of the sea yonder."

"Only try it."

"It is unnecessary. Lucilla has made the experiment for me. Your interpretation is poor. The emperor gave me a better."

"What was that?"

"That I should give up writing poetry, and apply myself to scientific study. He advised astronomy."

"The knowledge of the stars," said Verus, becoming more earnest. "Farewell, fairest, I must go to the emperor."

"We were with him yesterday, upon the Lochias. How all has changed there! The gate-keeper's pretty little house has been taken away. Nothing more is to be seen of the jolly crowd of architects and artists, and the bustling work-rooms are now only ordinary halls. The screen in the Hall of the Muses has been taken down. My bust, began eight days ago, has disappeared with the blustering young fellow who took the field so vigorously against my curls that I was on the point of sacrificing them—"

"Without them you would no more be Balbilla," cried Verus, with zeal. "The artist may reject what is not of permanent beauty, but we prefer those adornments in which the other children of our race find pleasure. The sculptor may array a goddess after the style of more serious days and the laws of his art, but mortal women will follow the dictates of fashion if they are clever. But otherwise I am heartily sorry for the fresh, skillful fellow. He insulted the emperor, was driven out of the palace, and can not be found."

"Oh," cried Balbilla, "the poor, magnificent fellow! And my bust! we must hunt him up. When an opportunity offers, I shall beg the emperor—"

"Hadrian will hear nothing of him. Pollux irritated him."

"How did you learn this?"

“From Antinous.”

“We saw him yesterday, also,” exclaimed Balbilla, with animation. “If ever a human being was permitted to walk in the figure of a god among mortals, it is he!”

“You are extravagant!”

“I think no one could look upon him with indifference. He is a gentle dreamer, and the expression of suffering we noticed in his face yesterday is doubtless only the mute pain of a perfect being who has lost the pleasure of growth and maturity in the embodiment of the ideals of his own species.”

The poetess uttered these words with an expression of rapture, as if the figure of a god stood before her eyes.

Verus listened, laughing, and interrupted her, saying, with a threatening motion:

“Poetess, philosopher, most charming young woman, beware of falling down from Olympus to the level of this boy. When fancy and visionary dreaming meet, they make a pair which floats in the clouds, and never touch that firm ground of which your oracle speaks, or even suspect its existence through the fog.”

“Foolishness!” cried Balbilla, indignantly. “To fall in love with a statue it must have been animated with spirit and fire by Prometheus.”

“Sometimes, indeed,” answered the pretor, “Eros steps into the place of that unfortunate friend of the gods.”

“The true Eros, or the ‘false’?” asked Balbilla, irritated.

“Certainly not the ‘false,’” returned Verus. “This time he only plays the part of friendly Monitor, and acts for the architect Pontius, of whom your worthy matron is afraid. They say you carried on as earnest a conversation during the mirthful confusion of the Dionysian feast as two gray philosophers walking the Stoa among their listening disciples.”

“With sensible men one talks sensibly.”

“And gayly with those who are not. How I rejoice to be counted among the witless! Farewell, in the hope of another meeting, fair Balbilla,” said the pretor, as he departed, mounting his chariot, and going toward the Lochias. His charioteer held the reins. He himself gazed thoughtfully at the roll in his hand. This contained the result of the astrological calculations of Simeon Ben Jochai, and was well adapted to disturb the good nature of the most frivolous man. If the emperor, in the night preceding the cradle-feast of the pretor, should observe the position of the stars with reference to the latter, he would find that to the end of the third hour after midnight all the planets foretold a happy lot, prosperity

and distinction. But at the entrance of the third hour Ben Jochai asserted disaster and death would possess the house of his prosperity. In the fourth his star would disappear, and whatever else might appear during the night would have nothing to do with him or his destiny. The emperor's star would overcome his own. Verus understood little of the tabulated process, but that little confirmed the written exposition. The horses of the pretor were hastening forward, while he was considering what remained possible for him to do, if he would not relinquish the highest goal of ambition. If the calculation of Ben Jochai should prove correct—of which he had no doubt—his hope of the adoption must be baseless in spite of Sabina's influence. How could Hadrian choose for his successor a man appointed to die before himself? How could he, Verus, expect the emperor to connect his fortunate star with that of one destined for an earlier death? These thoughts and questions brought him no light, and still he could not avoid them, when suddenly his charioteer stopped the horses at the outside edge of the carriage-dike, to leave the way free for a procession of Egyptian priests on their way to the Lochias. The vigorous grip with which his servant reined in the fiery steeds excited his admiration and suggested the thought of thrusting his own hand between the spokes of the wheel of destiny.

When the priestly delegation no longer detained him he commanded his charioteer to drive slowly, that he might have time for reflection.

"To the third hour after midnight," he said to himself, "all is of good augury, toward the fourth there will appear some signs unfavorable to me. It is only natural that the sheep will play about the dead lion, and even the ass dares insult him with a kick, so long as he is sick. In that short space between the third and fourth hours, all the disastrous signs crowd together. They would appear; but"—and with this "but" came a sudden illumination over the pretor—"need the emperor see them?"

The heart of the troubled man beat faster, his brain worked more vigorously, and he commanded his charioteer to make a long circuit, that he might gain time for the thoughts within to spring up, to grow, and to ripen. Verus was no intriguer.

With light and careless step he entered everywhere through the main portal and despised the back gate. Only for this greatest aim of life was he willing to relinquish his tastes, his comfort, his pride, and serve himself without regard to the means employed. For this end he had already done some things he regretted—and he who steals one sheep from a fold,

is sure to be followed by others also. Upon the first unworthy action of a man crowds easily another, and still another.

That which Verus now set himself to do he looked upon as a simple act of self-defense. What matter if he should prevent the emperor from one idle hour of star-gazing!

There were only two persons who could assist him in this matter: Antinous and the slave Mastor.

He thought first of the latter; but the Jazygean was true to his master, and would scarcely allow himself to be bribed. And then! Fy upon it! He could not make common cause with a slave! He had even less reason to hope for the assistance of Antinous.

Sabina hated this favorite of her husband, and on her account Verus had never met the Bithynian with special friendliness. He fancied also that the silent, dreamy fellow kept out of his way. Only through intimidation might he perhaps put him to service. At any rate, the next thing to be done was to visit the Lochias with open eyes.

Should he find the emperor in good humor, he might perhaps induce him to appear at a banquet he would give in the latter part of the night, in celebration of his birthday, and which would furnish much that was agreeable both to see and to hear.

A thousand favorable and helpful accidents might also arise.

Besides, the rabbi had augured for the next year undimmed prosperity. Gay and careless, as if the future lay sunny and unclouded before him, he looked about as he descended from the chariot into the newly paved court, and was conducted into the anteroom of the emperor. Hadrian was no longer on the Lochias as an architect from Rome, but resided as monarch of the world in the rejuvenated palace. He had shown himself to the Alexandrians, and been received with jubilation and unprecedented marks of respect.

The joy over this imperial visit was everywhere manifest, and sometimes found expression in extravagant forms.

The council even resolved to change the name of December to "Hadrianus," in perpetual commemoration of the month when his arrival had honored their city.

The emperor was obliged to receive deputation after deputation, and to hold repeated audience. On the next morning the dramatic representations, the processions and games were to begin, which promised to occupy many days, or, as Hadrian expressed it, threatened to steal from him hundreds of good hours.

Yet the monarch found time to discharge all public business,

and in the night to question the stars as to what destiny awaited himself and all parts of his empire within the coming year.

The palace on the Lochas now presented an entirely different aspect.

In place of the cheery little house at the gate, stood now a great tent covered with rich purple stuff, and occupied by the imperial body-guard. Opposite to this another has been erected, for the use of lictors and messengers. The stables were also filled. Hadrian's favorite horse, the noble stallion Borysthenes, already too long confined, stamped impatiently upon the ground of a space appropriated to himself, near which, in hastily erected inclosures and kennels, were his setters, boarhounds, and harriers.

Within the first court soldiers were quartered. Beside the walls squatted Egyptian, Greek, and Jewish men and women who wished to present petitions. Chariots were driven in and out; sedan-chairs and litters waited; chamberlains and other officers of the court hastened hither and thither. The antechamber was filled with respectable citizens hoping to be received by the emperor. Slaves, who offered refreshment to those waiting, or stood lazily about, failed at no point; and officers, with rolls of documents under their arms, passed from one set of apartments to another, or left the palace to execute the orders of their superiors.

The Hall of the Muses had been transformed into a banquetting-room.

Papias, now on his way to Italy with a commission from the emperor, had replaced the broken shoulder of the Urania. Between the statues stood chairs and couches, and beneath a canopy in the back part of the wide space had been erected a throne where Hadrian sat when holding audience. On such occasions he always wore the purple, but in his private room, which remained the same as at first, he laid aside the mantle and was as simply dressed as the architect, Claudius Venator.

In the dwelling of the late Keraunus there now resided a childless and unmarried Egyptian, a severe and circumspect man, who had rendered faithful service as a house-steward to the Prefect Titianus.

The main room of the former family looked dreary and uninhabitable. The Mosaic paintings which had been the innocent cause of Keraunus's death was already on its way to Rome, and the new overseer had not thought it worth while to fill or even cover with a mat the ugly, broken, and dusty space left by its removal. The only cheerful sound now heard in the deserted house was the twitter of the birds that still came every

morning and evening to the balcony where Arsinoe and the children had never failed to scatter crumbs for them.

Whatever of cheer and attraction had been visible in the palace disappeared after the visit of Sabina; even Hadrian was no longer the same person as a few days before.

Imperial and unapproachable in public, he was serious, gloomy, and unsocial with those admitted to his private apartments.

The oracle, the stars, and other prognostics foretold with an assurance not to be ignored some heavy disaster within the coming year. His wife, whose bitter disposition repelled him even more in Alexandria—where all was animated and pleasing—than it had in Rome, had coolly demanded that he should no longer postpone the adoption of Verus.

He was troubled and discontented. A desert without bounds seemed to yawn before him when he turned his eye inward, while the future of his outward life promised only a series of frivolous occupations which could not fail to interfere with his incessant desire for active or intellectual effort. Even his handsome favorite, Antinous, whose vegetative life, untouched by either the trouble or the pleasure of ordinary mortals, and whose society had been a solace and refreshment to his spirit, had undergone a change.

The youth appeared often perplexed, restless, and disturbed. Foreign influences seemed to have affected him, for he was no longer contented to hang as a shadow upon the person of his master. He sought freedom, and had several times slipped away to the city, presumably for the pleasures ordinarily sought by those of his own age, and which he had formerly avoided.

The cheerful and obliging Mastor was also different.

Only the Molossian remained unchanged in obedient loyalty. And Hadrian himself? As he had been ten years before, so was he to-day, exhibiting different character with each passing day and hour.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN Verus entered the palace, Hadrian had returned thither from the city only a few moments before. The pretor was led directly through the reception-room to his inner apartment, and had not long to wait, for Hadrian wished to speak with him immediately. He was in such a bad mood that Verus dared not invite him to attend the banquet. The emperor walked restlessly up and down the room, while Verus

answered his questions respecting the last business before the Senate in Rome. Sometimes he stopped, and looked into the next room. As Verus ended his report, Argus gave a howl of joy, and immediately Antinous appeared. Verus retreated at once to the broad window, and pretended to be examining the harbor.

“Where have you been?” asked the emperor, without noticing the presence of the pretor.

“A little way into the city,” was the answer of the Bithynian.

“You know that I do not like to find you absent on my return home.”

“I supposed you would stay out longer.”

“Try to arrange it so that I shall find you at any time. I am sure you do not like to see me discontented.”

“No, sire,” answered the favorite, raising his hands, and with an imploring look at his master.

“Let it pass now. I have something else to say. How came this little vial into the possession of Hiram, the relic dealer?”

And the emperor held up before his eyes the little vessel of vasa murrhina which the youth had given to Arsinoe.

Antinous turned pale, and stammered in great embarrassment:

“It is incomprehensible— I can not recall—”

“Then I will help your memory,” said the emperor, with severity. “The Phœnician seemed a more honest man than Gabinus. In his collection, which I have just visited, I found this gem, that Plotina—do you hear, boy?—that Trajan’s wife, Plotina, the never-forgotten friend of my heart, gave me years ago. It was among my choicest treasures, and yet not too precious for your last birthday gift.”

“Oh, sire, my dear sire!” cried Antinous, faintly, with beseeching eyes and hands.

“Now I ask you,” went on Hadrian, sternly, and without being softened by the imploring look of his favorite, “how came this vessel into the possession of the daughter of Keraunus, as Hiram just now asserted?”

Antinous sought in vain for words, but Hadrian helped him by asking in a more excited tone:

“Did the girl steal it from you? Out with the truth!”

“No, no,” answered the Bithynian, quickly and resolutely. “Certainly not. I shall remember— Yes—but wait a moment—now I have it. You know certainly that it contained the excellent balsam, and when the Molossian threw Selene—

Selene is the name of Keraunus's daughter—down the stairs, and she lay wounded on the ground, I brought the vial and gave her the balsam."

"With the vessel?" asked the emperor, looking darkly at Antinous.

"Yes, sire. I had no other."

"And she kept it, in order to sell it at once."

"You know that her father—"

"A thievish set!" exclaimed Hadrian, grinding his teeth.

"Do you know what has become of the girl?"

"Ah, sire!" cried Antinous, trembling with anxiety.

"I shall let the lictors arrest her," declared the incensed monarch.

"No," cried the youth, with decision; "you will certainly not do that."

"Not do it? You will find that I shall."

"No, certainly not, for when you learn that Keraunus's daughter Selene has—"

"Well, what?"

"She threw herself in despair into the water—yes, into the water, at night, into the sea."

"Oh," cried Hadrian, more mildly, "that certainly alters the case. The lictors would hunt in vain for shadows, and the girl has suffered the severest of all punishments. But you? What shall I say of your conduct? You knew how dearly I prized it, and still let it go into such hands!"

"But it contained the medicine," stammered the youth. "Besides, how could I think—"

The emperor interrupted his favorite, saying, while he beat his own forehead: "Yes, the thinking; unfortunately we have long ago found out that thinking is not your vocation! This little vessel has already cost me quite a handsome sum; but since it was yours, I return it. Only I desire that in future you should be more careful. Some time I shall ask for it. In the name of all the gods, boy, how you look! Am I so terrible that a question out of my mouth is enough to drive all the blood from your cheeks? Truly, if the thing had not come from Plotina, I should have left it with the Phœnician, and made no such ado over it."

Antinous approached the emperor, seeking to kiss his hand; but he pressed his forehead with fatherly tenderness, saying:

"Silly boy! If you want to have me satisfied with you, be again as you were before we came to Alexandria. Leave it to others to prepare annoyances for me. The gods created you for my delight."

During these words a chamberlain entered to announce the arrival of a delegation of Egyptian priests come to do him homage.

The emperor immediately assumed the purple robes, and betook himself to the audience-room, there to receive with courtly honors the prophets and sacred fathers from the various temples of the Nile valley who came to swear allegiance to him as a child of the sun god and assure themselves of his favor toward their religion. He granted their request to bless, by his consecrating presence, the sacred temples they served; but the question in what place the lately discovered Apis should be nurtured he left for awhile undecided. This reception occupied several hours. Verus avoided the obligation to present himself with the prefect and the other dignitaries, and remained standing at the window.

Turning, after Hadrian left the room, he found himself alone, as Antinous went out with the emperor. He had noticed the lingering of the pretor, and left for that reason, feeling always repelled in presence of the supercilious mocker. Besides, the anxiety he endured, with the consciousness of having for the first time dealt dishonestly and underhandedly with his good master, and soiled his hitherto untainted soul, quite threw him off his balance. He wanted to be alone, for he could not talk of commonplace affairs without pain, and to pretend interest would have been hypocrisy. He sat leaning upon a little table in his own room, with his face buried in his hands.

Verus did not follow immediately, for he perceived what was going on within him, and felt sure that he could not escape him. For a few moments all was still in both the great room and the little one. Then the pretor heard the door which opened upon the corridor quickly moved, and the voice of the Bithynian, saying: "At last, Mastor; have you seen Selene?"

With two long, noiseless steps Verus approached another door leading into the same apartment and listened for the answer of the slave, which an ear less sharp than that of the pretor would have caught distinctly:

"How could I see her? She is still suffering, and remains in her bed. I gave your flowers to the deformed girl who nurses her. But I will not do it again, though you should coax more than you did yesterday, and promise me all the treasures of the emperor. What do you want of this poor, wan, innocent thing? I am only a slave, but I can tell you—"

Here the voice dropped suddenly, and Verus guessed rightly

that Antinous had remembered his proximity and commanded the Jazygean to silence.

But the listener had heard enough.

The favorite had deceived his master, and the suicide of the overseer's daughter was a fiction. Who would have believed this silent dreamer to have such self-possession and such cunning gift of invention?

The handsome face of the pretor shone with pleasure as he made this observation, for now he held the Bithynian in his hand. He saw at once, too, how he could accomplish that which he had at heart. Antinous himself had shown the way when, with a tenderness impossible to have been feigned, he had rushed toward the emperor to kiss his hand. He loved his lord, and on this love Verus could base his attempt, without showing himself or being in danger of betrayal to the emperor.

With a steady hand the pretor knocked on the door of the next room, and stepped with bold self-assurance toward the Bithynian, explaining, as he did so, that he had something important to say, and begging him to go with him into the emperor's room, remarking so soon as they were alone:

"I am sorry not to be able to count you among my special friends, but we share one important sentiment—we both love the emperor."

"I certainly love him," answered Antinous.

"Then it will lie as close to your heart as to mine to shield him from depressing anxiety, and prevent fear from paralyzing the free flight of his great spirit."

"Most certainly."

"I was sure I should find a helper in you. Look at this roll. It contains the calculations and tabulations of the greatest astrologer of our time; and foretells that in this coming night, between the end of the second and beginning of the fourth hour after midnight, the stars will reveal to our master a most terrible misfortune. Do you understand me?"

"Unfortunately, I do."

"Later, the bad signs will disappear. If it be possible to prevent the observations of Hadrian during that third hour, he would be saved from life-destroying torment. Who knows but the stars lie? Or, if they reveal the truth, a disaster foretold only falls before its time. Do you agree with me?"

"Your proposition is sensible. Yet, I think—"

"It is sensible and wise," broke in the pretor, firmly and decisively. "It rests on you to hinder Hadrian from follow-

ing the course of the stars between the second and fourth hours after midnight."

"On me?" cried Antinous, frightened.

"On you, since you are the only one who can do it."

"I?" asked the Bithynian, dismayed. "I disturb the emperor during his observations?"

"It is your duty."

"But he never allows an interruption, and should I attempt it, he would only drive me away. No, no, what you desire is impossible."

"It is not only possible, but necessary."

"But it can not be so," answered Antinous, striking his own forehead. "Only hear! Hadrian has known for many days that a heavy disaster threatens. I heard this from his own mouth. If you know him, you have not failed to perceive that he consults the stars, not alone to anticipate blessings, but to learn how to prepare for threatened misfortune. What would kill a weakling serves only to sharpen his spirit for consent. He can bear everything, and it would be wrong to deceive him."

"But a greater wrong to allow such gloom to shadow his heart and mind," returned Verus. "Think of some means for drawing him away for an hour from his observations in the watch-tower."

"I can think of nothing, can invent nothing."

"Nothing?" asked Verus, stepping closer to the Bithynian.

Antinous grew pale, but the pretor continued:

"In order to secure Selene from the lictors you invented a plunge into the sea."

"She flung herself into the sea as truly as the gods—"

"Hold, hold," interrupted the pretor, "do not perjure yourself! Selene is alive—you send her flowers; and if it should please me to lead Hadrian to the house of the widow of Pudens—"

"Oh, oh!" cried Antinous, piteously, seizing the hand of the Roman; "you will not, you can not, oh, Verus, you will not do that!"

"Simpleton!" cried the pretor, touching the distressed youth lightly on the shoulder, "what would it profit me to destroy you? I have only one object in mind—to guard the emperor from this anxiety and distress. Keep him busy during the whole of that third hour after midnight, and you can count on my friendship; but if through timidity or ill nature you refuse, then you do not deserve the favor of your master, and will constrain me—"

“No more, no more,” broke in Antinous, in great distress.

“Then do you promise to fulfill my request?”

“Yes; by Hercules, what you desire shall be done. But, eternal gods, how shall I begin that the emperor—”

“That, my young friend, I resign with full confidence to your cleverness.”

“I am not clever, I can not devise.”

“What you accomplish through fear of your master, will succeed still better through love,” returned the pretor.

“Your work is easy. Still if you fail in it, I shall hold it my duty to point out to Hadrian how well Antinous understands looking out for his own, and how poorly for his master’s interest. I will see you in the morning, my friend! Should you wish to send any more flowers, my slaves are at your service!”

With these words, the pretor went out, leaving Antinous crushed in spirit, and leaning his forehead against the cold porphyry column beside the window.

What Verus exacted was not exactly wrong, yet it was not right.

It was treason to the noble man whom he ardently loved, as a father, as a wise, good friend and teacher, and venerated as a god.

Craftily to hide threatened danger, as though he were a weakling and no man, was repugnant, was disgraceful, and would be regarded as a fault of unlimited magnitude in the far-reaching estimate of his master. Other reasons now occurred to his mind for resisting the pretor’s demand, and with each new thought he cursed his own tardy spirit, which only perceived the right path after it was too late to take it. His first error had already led to another. He was angry with himself, he beat his forehead with his fist and sobbed in his pain, yet he did not weep.

In the midst of his self-accusation he heard also the flattering words: “It is only to guard the sovereign from trouble, and that which is asked of you is not wicked.” As often as he lent his ear to this voice, he began anew to rack his brains for some means through which he could entice the emperor away from the watch-tower during the time specified. But he could think of nothing practicable.

“It can not be done; no, it can not,” he murmured to himself, and then began to query if it were not his duty to defy the pretor, and confess to Hadrian that he had deceived him.

If only it were not for that vial! Could he confess to have given away carelessly the gift of his lord? No, that was too hard, and might cost him the love of his master. And then,

should he persist in the half truth, and, simply to anticipate the threat of the pretor, confess that Selene was still living, the daughters of Keraunus would be ruined. Selene, whom he loved with the passion of a first devotion, and in spite of the great distance between them, would fall into trouble and disgrace.

To confess his fault, therefore, was impossible, entirely out of the question. The longer he thought over the matter, trying to discover a way out of his perplexities, so much the more confused he became, so much the weaker his power of resistance. The pretor had wound him about with bands and cords, and every attempt to make himself free only fastened them closer and more inextricably. His poor head began to ache. And how unending the emperor's absence! He feared, and yet longed for his return. When at last he appeared and motioned to Mastor to remove his ornamental robes, Antinous pressed him back, and rendered silently and carefully the service belonging to the slave. He was restless and troubled, yet he forced himself to be cheerful while sitting opposite Hadrian at the evening meal.

When, a short time before midnight, the emperor started for the watch-tower at the northern end of the palace, Antinous begged permission to carry his instruments, and Hadrian stroked his curly locks, saying:

"You are after all my dear and faithful companion. Youth has a right sometimes to go astray, if only it do not forget the path of duty."

These words touched the heart of Antinous, and he secretly pressed his lips to the folds of the emperor's toga, who was walking in advance. It seemed as though he would atone beforehand for the offense not yet committed.

To the end of the first hour after midnight he remained silently beside the emperor, wrapped in his mantle. The fresh wind of the night relieved his aching head, and incessantly he sought some pretense to draw Hadrian away from the tower, but in vain. His poor brain was like a dried-up well, into which he sent down bucket after bucket, but nothing brought back the drink he needed.

Once he summoned up courage and asked:

"Will you not go down earlier to-night, for you take too little rest, and will injure your health?"

Hadrian listened kindly and answered:

"I shall sleep in the morning; if you are tired go now to rest."

But Antinous remained, looking also at the stars. He knew

not many of those brilliant wanderers by name, but a few were dear to him, especially the Pleiades, which his father had pointed out, and they always reminded him of his old home. How quiet and peaceful had been that life compared with the tumultuous beating of his heart to-day!

“Go to your sleep, the second hour has already struck,” cried Hadrian to him.

“So soon?” he returned; and as he thought how little time remained in which to do what Verus had demanded, and again looking into the sky it seemed to him as if all the stars were loosened from their places in the blue vault, and crowded in wild confusion betwixt the sea and the sky. In distress he closed his eyes, and wishing his master good-night, he descended from the tower, lighted by a torch that flared in the wind. Pontius had put up this tower for the nightly activities of the emperor, which rose like a tall steeple upon the firm stone base of an old watch-tower, which, situated between the store-houses belonging to the palace below, gave a free outlook upon the sky in all directions. Hadrian, who loved to watch the firmament alone and undisturbed, chose, even since he had made himself known to the Alexandrians, this structure to the great observatory of the Serapeum, from which one could gain a still broader outlook.

When Antinous had descended from the new tower into the old one beneath it, he sat down upon the lowest stair to collect himself and to quiet the restless beating of his heart.

But here the fruitless search began anew. There remained now but a little time for action, and saying this to himself, his brain worked more vigorously. The thought now occurred to him of feigning sickness and calling the emperor to his bedside. But Hadrian was enough of a physician to frustrate this scheme; but should he succeed in deceiving him, Antinous would be a liar. This thought filled him with disgust of himself and terror for the future, and yet it was the only way which promised any hope of success. As he sprung up, and ran hither and thither among the store-houses, driven by his inward unrest, he could devise no other plan. And how quickly the moments were slipping away! It must now be very near to the third hour, and he had scarcely time to hasten into the palace, throw himself on the bed, and call Mastor.

Bewildered by excitement, and reeling like a drunkard, he hastened back into the old tower, against whose wall he had left his torch, and looked up the stone steps.

Suddenly the thought occurred to him that he might ascend

once more and throw himself down. Of what use was his wretched life?

His fall, his cry would bring the emperor down from his tower, and he well knew that his wounded and bleeding favorite would not be neglected—that he could count upon. And should he come then to his bedside, though he might be giving care to a dying one, he would certainly be no deceiver!

Determined for some desperate attempt, he drew closer the girdle which held his chiton, and stepped into the open air to judge of the hour from the position of the stars. There he saw the waning crescent of the moon—the same moon which had shone upon the sea when he plunged into it for the rescue of Selene. With striking clearness, the image of the pale young girl rose before his soul. He seemed to hold her again in his arms. He saw her lying upon her bed, and once more touched her cold brow with his lips. Then the vision disappeared, but an intense longing for her took its place, and he felt that he could not die without another sight of her. Again he looked about undecided. Before him was the largest store-room, under the watch-tower, and he passed by its open door, with torch in hand. Within its wide space lay chests and boxes, tow, linseed, the straw and mats in which the household stuff and works of art for the refurnishing of the palace had been wrapped.

This he knew, and as he once more looked toward the stars and saw that the second hour after midnight must be almost ended, a sudden, frightful thought flashed through his brain, and without stopping for one instant to think of the consequences, he flung his torch into that space, filled to the roof with combustible stuff, and stood with folded arms to watch the swiftly spreading flame, the rising smoke, the struggle of the whirling black vapor in blending with the glow, the victory of the fire, and the crackling blaze through every opening of the rude space.

The roof of palm branches and reeds was already in flames when Antinous sprung up the stairs leading to the watch-tower of the imperial star-gazer—only a few steps removed from the burning magazine, with the startling cry:

“Fire! Fire! The building is burning!”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE banquet which Verus gave in celebration of his birthday did not seem anywhere near its end at the beginning of the third hour after midnight.

Beside the titled and cultivated Romans in the suite of the emperor, there were also present many of the most prominent and illustrious Alexandrians. The feast itself was long ago at an end, but tankard after tankard of wine was repeatedly filled and emptied. Verus himself had been unanimously chosen as king and leader of the banquet.

Richly garlanded, he reclined upon a divan of his own invention—one composed of four cushions piled together, and covered with rose petals.

A screen of gauze protected him from gnats and flies, and a lightly woven mat of lilies and other flowers covered his feet and furnished fragrance for himself and a charming female singer at his side.

Pretty boys, dressed as cupids, waited the nod of “the false Eros.”

How quietly he who bore that title seemed to rest upon the luxurious cushions. Yet his eyes were everywhere, and certainly had not failed to consider all the arrangements for the banquet, and the conduct of it required his closest supervision.

As at the banquets of Hadrian in Rome, short extracts from new books and poems were brought forward by their authors; then a comedy was introduced, and afterward Glycera, the most distinguished singer of the city, accompanied the harp in a dithyrambus, with a voice of bell-like clearness, and Alexander, a virtuoso, executed a piece upon the trigon. At last a chorus of dancers burst into the apartment, rocking and swinging to the music of tambourine and double flute. Each new form of entertainment elicited applause. With each tankard a fresh stream of merriment rose toward the open roof, through which the odor of the flowers and the burning essences exhaled from ornamental altars found an exit. Already great pools of wine, poured out as libations to the gods, lay upon the polished floor; shouts had drowned the music and the songs—the cheerful feast had become an orgy.

Verus stimulated the silent and lazy guests to the enjoyment of mad pleasures, and gave to all unbridled license. He acknowledged every pledge—knew how to entertain the fair singer at his side—threw a sparkling jest into every silent group; and showed to the learned guests stretched upon divans not far removed, that he was interested in and only waited opportunity to share their conversation.

Alexandria, that meeting point of eastern and western cultivation, had seen other feasts than this riotous drinking-bout!

A good earnest conversation seasoned also the common meal

of the circle belonging to the Museum, but the reckless luxuriance of Rome had found its way into the houses of the rich, and even the noblest acquisitions of the human spirit were changed unawares into mere means of enjoyment.

One became a philosopher in order to be prominent and able to speak on all occasions—and a well-told anecdote was everywhere more welcome than a profounder thought which might awake discussion.

What a tumult, what a confusion of sounds raged within the hall in the second hour after midnight! How were the lungs oppressed with the heavy odors; what repugnant sights met the eye; how shamelessly propriety was trampled under foot! The poisonous breath of the confined air overthrew the admirable moderation of the Greeks, and from the fumes of wine enveloping this chaos of mad banqueters, rose slowly that pale spirit who marked her victims enslaved for the coming day.

The circle of divans occupied by Florus, Favorinus, and their Alexandrian friends, seemed like an island in this surging sea.

Even here the wine-cup had passed freely, and Florus spoke with a stammering tongue, yet sensible conversation maintained its ascendancy. The emperor had been in the Museum two days before, and carried on a scientific discussion with the most prominent sages, in presence of their pupils. At the last, a formal disputation had arisen. The crisp and dialectic sharpness with which Hadrian, using the pure Attic Greek, had driven his antagonist into a corner, was well worthy of admiration, and he had left the institution with the promise to confront his opponents upon another occasion.

The philosophers, Pankrates and Dionysius, with the strictly temperate Apollonius, described the single exploits of this remarkable intellectual contest, and praised the wonderful memory and ready tongue of the emperor.

“And yet you have not seen him in his best hours!” cried Favorinus, the Gallic sophist and rhetorician. “He has received an oracle foretelling a misfortune, which the stars seem to confirm, and that destroys his mood. But among ourselves, let me say, that I know very few who can surpass him in dialectics; and in his cheerful hours he is simply irresistible. Since we became reconciled, he has treated me like a brother. I stand up for him against every man, for I say again he is my brother.”

The Gaul looked about him after these words with glowing eyes, as if uttering a challenge. He was pale from drinking, irritable, boastful, and very loquacious.

“Certainly, you are right,” answered Apollonius. “But it

seemed to us he might be bitter in a contest. His eyes are more gloomy than cheerful.”

“He is my brother,” returned Favorinus, “and as to his eyes—by Hercules! I have seen them like a clear sun, or flashing stars! And his mouth! I know him well! He is my brother, and I will wager that, while he may condescend to dispute with you—it is too comical—at each corner of his mouth there lurked a roguish smile—look at me—like this!”

“I repeat it, he seemed to us more gloomy than mirthful,” returned Apollonius, annoyed, and Pankrates added:

“If he does understand jesting, he did not let us see it.”

“That is nothing,” laughed the Gaul. “You do not yet know him, but I am his friend, and can be wherever he is. Wait a little, I will relate a few anecdotes of him. If I wished, I could describe him to you as distinctly as though he were lying upon the surface of the wine in my goblet. Once, in Rome, as he was inspecting the newly ornamented baths of Agrippa, he saw in the *Apydoterium** an old man, a veteran, who had somewhere been a companion in arms—my memory is pretty good, but his never fails. Naturally, Hadrian recognized the man, and stepped toward him. Scaurus, I think, was the name of the old man; yes, Scaurus. He did not immediately notice the Cæsar, for his scars had been inflamed by the bath, and he was rubbing his back against the rough stone pillar. Then Hadrian asked this gray-beard, ‘Why do you scratch yourself, my friend?’ And Scaurus answered, a little shortly, without looking around, or having recognized the emperor’s voice: ‘Because I have no slave to do it for me.’ You should have heard the emperor laugh! Liberal as he sometimes is—I say sometimes—he sent immediately to Scaurus a handsome sum and two efficient slaves. This story was soon spread abroad, and when the man whom you think can not joke came again to the bath, two soldiers placed themselves in his way, scratching their backs against the wall as Scaurus had done, and cried out to him: ‘Great Cæsar, we have no slaves!’ ‘Then scratch each other,’ he retorted, and left the soldiers to scratch.”

“Excellent!” exclaimed Florus, laughing.

“Now one more true story,” continued the Gaul. “Once a man with white hair asked alms of the emperor. The fellow was a ragamuffin, a parasite, who went from one table to another and got his living out of strangers. The emperor, who understands human nature, sent him away. But this hanger-

* The disrobing room of the bath.

on colored his hair, so that he might not be recognized, and tried his fate with the emperor a second time. But Hadrian's eyes are good. He sent him from the door, saying, in the most serious manner: 'I have quite lately refused to give anything to your father.' A hundred similar stories pass from mouth to mouth in Rome, and if you like I will repeat a dozen of the best."

"Relate them all; out with your stories. They are—old acquaintances of mine," stammered Florus. "We can drink while Favorinus is babbling."

The Gaul looked in scorn upon the Roman, and answered, quickly:

"My words are too good for drunkards."

Florus sought a reply, but before he had found it, the body-slave of the pretor burst into the banqueting-room with the cry:

"The emperor's palace on the Lochias is in flames!"

Verus kicked his lily covering to the floor, tore open the gauze netting, and cried to the breathless servant: "My chariot! quick, my chariot! I will see you again, on some other evening, my friends; thanks for the honor you have shown me. I must go to the Lochias."

Simultaneously with Verus, who, without the protection of the pallium, rushed into the cool night air, the greater part of his guests sprung up and hastened out of the hall to see the fire and hear the news. Only a few went to help the citizens put it out, and many of the tipplers lay still upon their couches. As Favorinus and the Alexandrians rose from their couches, Florus cried:

"No god could drag me out, not even if the whole house be burned down, and, for all I care, Rome and Alexandria, and all other places on the earth into the bargain. Let them burn! The Roman Empire can never be greater or more perfect than under the Cæsars! It may burn up like a house of straw; I shall stay here and drink!"

Inextricable seemed the confusion in the banqueting-room, while Verus hastened to inform Sabina of the fire.

Balbilla had been the first to notice it as she sat down, after working late into the night, to look out at the sea before retiring to her bed. She had instantly rushed out with the cry of fire, and sought a chamberlain to waken Sabina.

The whole peninsula of the Lochias glowed in purple and gold, and formed the nucleus of a broad stream of tender red rays, whose compass and clearness changed with each passing moment.

Verus met the poetess at the door leading from the apartments of the empress into the garden. This time he did not employ his usual style of greeting, but asked, quickly:

“Has Sabina been told?”

“I think not yet.”

“Let her be wakened. Salute her from me. I must go to the Lochias.”

“We shall follow you.”

“Stay here, you would be in the way there.”

“I shall take but a little room, and I go. What a magnificent spectacle!”

“Eternal gods! a flame is bursting out from under the palace in the king’s harbor! Where can be my chariot?”

“Will you take me with you?”

“No, you must waken the empress.”

“And Lucilla?”

“You, woman, must stay where you are.”

“I certainly shall not. Will the emperor be in danger?”

“Hardly; the old stone building can not burn.”

“See how magnificent! the sky is like a purple tent. I beg, Verus, that you allow me to go with you.”

“No, fairest; only men are needed there.”

“How unkind you are!”

“At last! There comes the chariot; you, woman, must stay here. Do you understand me?”

“I will not be commanded, and shall go to the Lochias.”

“To see Antinous in the flames! One can not command such a spectacle every day,” cried Verus in derision, springing into the chariot, and taking the reins in his own hands.

Balbilla stamped impatiently. Then she went into the apartments of the empress, determined to visit the fire.

The empress allowed no one to see her before she was fully dressed, not even Balbilla. Her dressing-maid brought the message that Sabina would certainly rise, but her health would not permit her to go out in the night air.

The poetess betook herself to Lucilla, and begged her company to the Lochias. She consented instantly, but on learning that her husband wished the ladies to remain at the *Cæsareum*, declared herself under obligation to obey, and sought to detain Balbilla. But the defiant girl was resolved, partly because Verus had forbidden it and had opposed and ridiculed her wish.

After exchanging a few words with her friend, she left her, and seeking her companion, Claudia, explained to her what she had determined to do; and overcoming her opposition to the

plan with a few decisive words, ordered in her own person the house-steward to provide her a vehicle, and left for the threatened palace an hour and a half later than Verus.

An immense crowd surrounded the land side of the Lochais and the harbor at its foot, where a few store-houses and wharves were in flames. Boats without number swarmed about the tongue of land.

With loud shouts and immense efforts, an attempt was being made to take the great ships anchored in the roadstead to a place of greater safety. All was illuminated by a light as clear but redder and more unsteady than that of day. The north-east wind swayed the flames, making the labor of putting them out much greater.

Each burning store-house had become a gigantic torch, scattering the darkness of the night. The white marble light-house upon the Isle of Pharos—the highest in the world—was wrapped in brilliant glowing red, making the usually bright light at its tip pale and feeble in comparison.

The dark bodies of the great ships and the crowd of boats in the distance were surrounded by a fiery gleam, and the quiet sea in the neighborhood of the shore seemed to reflect the brilliance enveloping the whole peninsula as in a mirror.

Balbilla was unwearied in her admiration of these brilliant colors that seemed vying with each other, and the contrast of the fullest light with the deepest shadows. And she had time to consider this wonderful picture, for her chariot moved very slowly onward, and where the street led from the king's harbor to the palace, lictors stepped in her way, declaring positively that any further progress was impossible. The horses, disturbed by the glare of the flames and the crowd that pressed upon them, became unmanageable, reared, and threw themselves against the body of the chariot.

The charioteer declared he could no longer be responsible for them.

The common people, rushing by to assist at the fire, began to insult the idle women, who had better have stayed beside their looms than crowd into the way of the citizens.

"There is time enough for pleasure-driving by daylight," cried one, and another said:

"Should a spark light in the curls up there, it would cause the outbreak of another conflagration."

The situation of the poetess became each moment more intolerable, and she commanded her charioteer to turn.

But in the crowded thoroughfare, the command was more easily given than obeyed. One horse, bursting the thongs

which bound the yoke resting upon his withers to the pole, sprung to one side and frightened the crowd, who began to scold as they retreated.

Balbilla wished to leap from the chariot, but Claudia held her fast, and conjured her not to leave her to destruction.

The patrician's spoiled daughter was not timid, but she would have given a good deal by this time to have followed the advice of Verus. At first she thought: "It is a fine adventure, though I shall be glad when it is safely ended." Later the sport had lost every trace of its charm and repentance took its place. Weeping would have been much easier than laughing, when a deep, authoritative voice behind called out:

"Make way for the pumps! Whatever blocks their way must be thrown to the side!"

These frightful words made Claudia fall on her knees, but the depressed spirit of Balbilla found new wings on hearing them, for she had recognized the voice of Pontius, and his horse was directly behind her chariot. He was the rider she had seen spring from the sea toward one of the flaming storehouses, then back again to the sea, hither and thither, in all directions. She turned squarely toward him, calling his name. He recognized her, while trying to check the speed of his mighty horse, but shook his head with a smile, as much as to say:

"She is a giddy-headed thing, and deserves a scolding, but who could be angry with her?" and then commanded the guard of safety accompanying him, exactly as if she were a bale or bundle of goods, and not the titled heiress:

"Unharness the horses; we can use them to drag the water! Help the ladies out of the chariot! Take them between you, Nonnus and Lucanus! Now shove the carriage among the bushes yonder! Room, there forward, room for our tackling!"

Each command was obeyed as promptly as though issued by a general to his disciplined troops.

After the pumps were in motion, Pontius, riding up to the side of Balbilla, said:

"The emperor is well protected. As to yourself, you wanted a nearer look at the fire, and indeed it is a grand sight. I have not time to take you back to the *Cæsareum*. Follow me now. Yonder in the stone house of the harbor-guard you can be hidden, and from the roof may overlook the *Lochias* and the whole peninsula. Your eyes will have a rare treat, but I beg you not to forget how many days of honest toil, what rich treasures won by severe industry are going to de-

struction in this hour. That which entertains you will cost bitter tears to many, and we must both hope that this grand spectacle has already reached its height and approaches its end."

"That I hope most heartily," cried the girl.

"I knew it. As soon as possible I will look after you. Nonnus and Lucanus, conduct these noble ladies to the house of the harbor-watch. Say to him that they are intimate friends of the empress. Where are they taking the pumps? I will see you again, Balbilla!" And the architect gave his horse free rein, and broke a path through the crowd.

Quarter of an hour later the girl stood upon the roof of the little house.

Caludia, utterly exhausted, and unable to speak, sat upon a rough wooden chair in the musty common room below.

The young Roman looked now upon the flames with different eyes. Pontius had taught her another view from that which had so lately filled her only with delight, as she watched them rising high and fierce toward the sky. They were mighty enough when she ascended the roof, but they soon subsided, and it seemed difficult for them to rise above the clouds of black smoke.

Balbilla looked about for the architect, and soon desisted him, for a man on horseback was lifted above the crowd. He stood sometimes by one, then beside another of the warehouses. Once he disappeared for an hour, while he was at the Lochias. Then he reappeared, and wherever he went the fury of the raging element abated. Almost imperceptibly the wind had died away, the air grew stiller and warmer. This circumstance aided the labor of the citizens, but Balbilla attributed all their success to the supervision of her vigorous friend. Once she saw that he ordered a building torn down which separated a burning granary from a few store-houses still untouched by the flames, and understood that he wished to cut off the progress of the flames.

Another time she saw him standing upon a low hill. Directly before him was a magazine containing tow and barrels of resin and tar, all in flames. His face was toward her, and she could see the movement of his hands as he quietly gave his orders. His own figure, and that of the restless horse under him, made a noble picture in the ruddy glow. She trembled for him, she admired this fearless, vigorous, firm man, and as a burning beam fell close beside him, and the frightened horse, at first beginning to wheel with him, was at length subdued by his influence, the pretor's sarcasm came to her thought—that

she insisted on visiting the Lochias in order to see Antinous in the flames.

She saw here a worthier spectacle, and yet there rose before her lively imagination—which often, and sometimes against her will, gave form to her shapeless thoughts—the image of that handsome youth enveloped in the glowing light which colored the horizon.

Hour after hour passed; the labor of the thousand workers seemed crowned with visible success. One flame after another was subdued—smoldering, if not quite extinguished, for only smoke mixed with sparks now rose into the sky. Yet Pontius came not to look after her.

She saw no stars, for the sky was overcast with clouds; but the dawn of another day must now be near. She was chilled through, and the long delay of her friend was vexatious.

As great drops of rain began to fall she descended by a ladder from the roof, and sat beside the fire in the harbor-master's house, near to Claudia, who was fast asleep.

There she had been for half an hour, gazing dreamily into the comfortable glow, when she heard hoof-beats, and Pontius appeared, with blackened face and hoarse from hours of loud command.

Balbilla forgot her vexation as soon as she saw him, greeted him kindly, and told him she had watched his every motion; but this lively and quick-witted girl found herself utterly unable to express the admiration which his conduct of the affair had excited within her. She heard him say that his mouth was parched and his throat choked with thirst, and she—who was used to call a slave if needing only a pin, and to whom fate had given no person toward whom she might gladly have shown herself serviceable—filled with her own hand a cup from the great clay pitcher of water in one corner of the room, and passed it, begging him to drink.

He swallowed eagerly the refreshing draught, and when the little vessel was empty she took it from his hand, and, refilling, brought it to him once more.

Claudia, who had been wakened by the entrance of Pontius, looked with surprise at this unprecedented action, shaking her head. As Pontius emptied, for the third time, the cup that Balbilla brought, he said, drawing a long breath:

“That was a drink! A better in all my life I have not tasted.”

“Impure water from a poor clay cup,” answered the girl.

“But better than wine of Byblos out of a golden goblet.”

“You have honestly earned refreshment, and thirst seasons the humblest beverage.”

“You forget the hand which brought it to me,” returned the architect, heartily.

Balbilla blushed and cast her eyes confusedly to the floor, but only for a moment. She raised them again, and said, in her old bright and careless manner:

“Now, then, having received costly entertainment, you will be taking yourself home, and the magician of the repast will be transformed into the great architect. Before this happens, I beg you to tell us what god brought you back from Pelusium at the critical moment when this fire originated, and how matters now stand in the palace on the Lochias.”

“My time is short,” answered Pontius, but he hastily narrated that after finishing his work in Pelusium he had returned by imperial post to Alexandria. But as he descended from the chariot at the post station, he had noticed the appearance of fire over the sea, and directly after learned from a slave that something was burning on the Lochias. There were plenty of horses at the station, and selecting a strong one, he had succeeded in reaching the palace before the crowd. As to the cause of the conflagration, that was still unknown.

“The emperor,” he said, “was watching the sky at the moment the flames burst out of a store-house near the watch-tower. Antinous noticed it first, and, crying ‘Fire!’ had warned his master. I found Hadrian in great excitement. He commissioned me to superintend the work of putting it out. Verus worked with me so boldly and efficiently that I am under great obligations to him. The emperor himself kept his favorite in the palace, for the poor fellow burned both hands.”

“Ah!” cried Balbilla, with lively regret, “how did that happen?”

“As Hadrian and Antinous first came down from the tower, they brought as many instruments and documents as they were able to carry. But at the bottom Hadrian noticed that tablets with most important calculations had been left at the top, and expressed his regret. Meanwhile the fire had caught the frail structure of the new tower, and it seemed impossible to go into it again. But the Bithynian dreamer can wake out of his slumber; and while the emperor was looking anxiously after the bundles of burning flax which the wind was bringing into the harbor, the fool-hardy fellow burst into the burning building, threw the tablets down from the tower, and hastened to the stairs. This bold deed would have cost the poor fellow his life if the slave Mastor, who in the meantime had hurried after

him, had not carried him into the air from the stone steps that led up to the new tower, where he found him swooning and half suffocated."

"But he lives, that lordly, that godlike youth, and is out of danger?" asked Balbilla, in a tone of great anxiety.

"He is now quite well. Only upon his hands, as I told you, he will carry marks of the conflagration, and his hair was somewhat singed, but that will grow again."

"The soft, graceful locks!" cried Balbilla. "Let us go home, Claudia. The gardener will cut us a fine bunch of roses, and we will send it to please Antinous."

"Flowers, to a man who does not want them?" asked Pontius, seriously.

"How else can we reward his virtues and honor his beauty?" asked Balbilla.

"The consciousness of an honest effort is our sufficient reward, or the laurel from the hands of commissioned men."

"And the beauty?"

"That of women brings to them admiration, perhaps also love and flowers; that of men may rejoice the eyes, but the effort to honor it belongs to no mortal woman."

"To whom else, if I may be allowed the question?"

"To the art, which immortalizes."

"But the roses might carry comfort and pleasure to the suffering youth."

"Then send them to the sick, but not to the handsome boy," returned Pontius.

Balbilla was silent, and with her companion followed the architect to the harbor. There he took his leave, having placed them in a boat which would carry them to the Caesareum under one of the arched bridges of the Heptastadium.

Upon the way, the younger Roman woman remarked to the elder: "Pontius has spoiled my fun with the roses. The *sick* Antinous is of course the *handsome*, and if one must believe—I shall do just as I please, still it is best to leave the flowers uncut."

CHAPTER XV.

THE city was out of danger, the fire was extinguished. The architect Pontius found no rest before noon. Three horses had given out under him, but his nervous vigor and healthy spirit held out, in spite of all demands. So soon as he dared look upon the work as finished, he betook himself to his own

dwelling. He needed a little rest, but already in his vestibule he found many who were waiting to dispute it with him.

A man in the midst of affairs, who superintends many undertakings, can not, without paying a penalty, absent himself from the scene of his labors for a series of days. The demands accumulate and plunge upon him, at his return, like water when the sluice-ways that held it back are opened.

Full twenty people, who were aware of his return, pressed forward as soon as he appeared. Many of them, he well knew, were there on important business; but he felt that he had reached the end of his strength, and was resolved to secure a little rest at any price. His usually considerate manner could no longer be maintained against the extraordinary demands made on his powers of endurance. Angry, vexed and indignant, he pointed to his begrimed face, and cried, as he forced his way through the waiting crowd:

“To-morrow, to-morrow, or if necessary, after sunset, to-day. But now I need rest, rest, rest! You see yourselves the condition I am in.”

All, even the builders and contractors, who had come on pressing errands, gave way. Only one elderly man, the house-steward of his sister Paulina, held him by the smoke-stained and in many places singed chiton, saying quickly and in a low tone:

“My mistress sends her greeting. She has things to discuss with you that admit of no delay. I dare not leave until you promise to see her to-day. Our chariot waits for you at the garden-gate.”

“Send it home,” returned Pontius, not even kindly. “Paulina must have patience for a few hours.”

“I had instructions to bring you immediately.”

“But in this condition—like this—I can not go,” cried the architect, vehemently. “Have you no consideration? And yet—who knows? Tell her I will come in two hours.”

After Pontius escaped this petitioner also, he took a bath, and then seated himself to partake of a meal, but even while eating and drinking he was not unoccupied, but read business documents, and looked over several designs drawn by his assistants during his absence.

“Do give yourself a little time of rest,” begged the old housekeeper, who had been his nurse and loved him as if her own son.

“I must go to my sister,” he replied, shrugging his shoulders.

“We know her well,” answered the old woman. “For

nothing, and less than nothing, she sends for you, and you need refreshment. Is the cushion laid right? And now let me ask if the lowest stone-carriers have a life as hard as yours? Not even at meal-time do you allow yourself a comfortable hour. This poor head is never quiet; even the nights are turned into day-time—always busy, and always must be busy, and if only one knew for whom?”

“Yes, for whom?” sighed Pontius, thrusting his arms between head and cushion. “You see, little mother, rest must follow work, as night the day, as winter the summer. The man who has dear ones in the house, as a wife and merry children, it may be—those who would beautify the hours of rest and make them the best of the day—he would be wise to protract them, but it is different with me.”

“But why different, my Pontius?”

“Let me finish. You know I never enjoy the gossip of the bath, or the prolonged banquet. In the pauses of work I am alone with myself and the very worthy old Lenkippe. The hours of recreation are not my best, but empty pauses between the acts in the theater of my life, and therefore no reasonable person can complain if I make them shorter through some useful occupation.”

“And what is the natural conclusion of this sensible speech? Simply that you must marry.”

Pontius sighed; but Lenkippe added, with zeal: “You need not search! The most respectable fathers and mothers would run after you and lead their fairest child to your door.”

“Some child that I do not know, and who would perhaps destroy that time between the acts I now turn at least to some useful occupation.”

“They say,” answered the old woman, “that marriage is a game of chance. One gets high, another low points. The first gains a wife like the diligent bee; another only a troublesome gnat. There is doubtless some truth in this, but I have grown gray with my eyes open, and have often noticed that a great deal depends on the husband. Such a man as you are might make a bee out of a gnat, who would bring honey into the house. Of course, one must choose carefully.”

“How can that be done?”

“One should first know the parents, and then the child. A girl brought up to good manners, in the house of a sensible father and a virtuous mother—”

“Where in this city could one find such a wonder? No, no, Lenkippe, for the present all must go on in the old way. We owe something to each other, we are contented together—”

“And the time is flying away,” broke in the old house-keeper. “You are thirty-five years old, and the girls—”

“Let them be, they will find other husbands! Now send Cyrus to me with my sandals and pallium, and order my sedan, for Paulina has already waited long enough.”

The road from the architect's house to the dwelling of his sister was long, and he had time enough to think over many things, but not over the advice of Lenkippe to take a wife.

And yet the image of one female filled his heart and thoughts—but he was not disposed to revel in the vision of Balbilla, lovely as it seemed—he sought instead with cruel severity to set before himself whatever in her fell below the highest standard of womanly perfection. It did not trouble him to find some faults and failings in this Roman girl, and still he must confess to himself that all belonged so inseparably to her character, that without them she would not be the same individual. Each weakness came at last to appear to this man, educated with stoic severity, as an excellence.

He had learned that sorrow casts its shadow upon every man, but whoever should be favored to walk through life with this beaming child of fortune would, he thought, have nothing to anticipate but clear, cheerful sunshine.

Upon his ride to Pelusium, and during his sojourn there, he had often thought of her, and each time her image stood before his inward eye his heart seemed full of unclouded happiness.

To meet her was the greatest joy of his life, yet he dared not strive to possess her.

He did not depreciate himself, and was justly proud of the position he had gained through his own industry and skill; but she was a granddaughter of the man who had the right to sell his grandfather for money, and it would not have seemed to him less insolent to ask the emperor for how much he would sell the purple robe he wore than to woo her, so high-born, rich and attractive.

But to protect her, to caution her, to refresh himself in her look and her speech—in these he felt justified, and no one could forbid this happiness. For she permitted it, she esteemed him, she allowed him to protect her—this he recognized with joy and gratitude. He would instantly have gone through again with all the exertion of the last few hours, could he have been sure of receiving once more a glass of water from her hand. To be allowed to think of her and enjoy her favor, seemed higher happiness than the possession of any other woman.

When he descended from the sedan-chair at the door of his sister's city house, he shook his head, laughing to himself in remembering that during the whole long ride he had scarcely thought of anything but Balbilla.

The dwelling of Paulina had few openings on the street, and those in the rooms devoted to purposes of hospitality, and yet his arrival had been noticed.

A window covered with climbing plants on the side wall of the house framed in a charming head that looked inquisitively upon the busy scene below.

Pontius did not see it, but Arsinoe—for she it was to whom this pretty head belonged—recognized him instantly, for she had often seen him on the Lochias, and Pollux had told her that he was his friend and well-wisher.

For a week she had lived in the house of the rich widow. No provision for her comfort was wanting, and yet her whole soul longed to go out into the city and search for Pollux and his parents, of whom she had heard nothing since the death of her father. Her lover was certainly seeking her, with painful anxiety, but how could he find her?

Three days after her arrival in the house she had discovered this little window, from which she could get a view of the street. There was always enough to see, for it was on the way to the Hippodrome, and constantly alive with foot-passengers and chariots either going there or to Nicopolis.

It was certainly pleasant to look at the fine horses and the garlanded men and youths who passed the house of Paulina, but she did not seek the vine-wreathed aperture simply for entertainment. No, she hoped most of all to see some time her Pollux go by, or his father, his mother, his brother Teuker, or some other acquaintance. Then perhaps she would be fortunate enough to call one of them, and ask what had become of her friends, and beg that her bridegroom might be told where to find her.

Her foster-mother had twice surprised her at this window, and, not unkindly, but very decidedly forbade her to look into the street. She had each time followed her back into the interior of the house, but so soon as she knew that Paulina was absent from home, or too busy to notice her, she slipped back to the window to look for those who were in her thoughts every hour of the day. She was not happy in the new and rich surroundings.

At first it had seemed very pleasant to stretch herself upon Paulina's soft couches—put her hand to no work—eat dainty food, and not be obliged to look after the children, or work in

the horrid papyrus mill; but before three days were over she longed for freedom—especially for the children, for Selene, and Pollux.

Once she had gone out for a drive with Paulina in a covered reda. At first she was delighted with the rapid movement of the horses, and leaned over the side to see the people and houses fly past; but Paulina was displeased with this, as with so many other things she had been accustomed to think right and proper, and commanded her to draw in her head, with the remark that well-bred girls should look into their laps while on a drive.

Her foster-mother was kind, never passionate—treated her as though she were her own daughter, in all matter of dress and attendance, kissed her in the morning and before she went to bed; and yet Arsinoe had not even thought of Paulina's wish that she should love her.

The proud, undemonstrative woman, whom she felt was constantly watching, seemed like a stranger in whose power she was. The finest feelings of her nature were and must be always concealed from her. Once, after Paulina, with moistened eyes, had been telling her of her deceased daughter, Arsinoe was softened, and following the natural dictates of her heart, told her of her love for Pollux, and that she hoped to be his wife.

“Are you thinking of a sculptor?” asked Paulina, with as much horror as if she had encountered a toad. Then she had walked up and down the room, and with her usual quiet decision said:

“No, my child, you must forget that as soon as possible. I destined you for a nobler bridegroom. When you know Him you will desire no other. Have you seen a single work of art in this house?”

“No,” answered Arsinoe, “but so far as Pollux is concerned—”

“Listen to me,” said the widow, interrupting her. “Have I not spoken to you of our good Father in heaven. Have I not said that the gods of the heathen are imaginary beings, invented by crack-brained fools, and endowed with all human weaknesses and vices? Can you not see that it is senseless to pray to stones? What power can lie in perishable figures of bronze and marble? We call them idols. He who fashions them serves them, brings sacrifice to them—great sacrifice—for he puts his own spirit and skill into the labor. Have you understood me?”

“No. Art is something high, and Pollux is a good man, and in his work is full of the divinity.”

“Wait a little and you will soon come to understand,” Paulina had answered, had drawn Arsinoe toward herself, and at first kindly, then in severe tone said: “Go now to your rest and implore the gracious Father in heaven to enlighten your heart. You must forget the idol-maker, and I forbid your ever mentioning the name of this sculptor in my presence.”

Arsinoe had grown up as a heathen, and clung lovingly to the gods of her parents, and hoped, when the bitterness of pain in losing her father and separating from her brothers had passed, for days of joy once more. She was little disposed to sacrifice her youthful affections and all earthly pleasures for some spiritual blessings, whose value she could not appreciate.

Her father had always spoken with scorn and hatred of the Christians. She knew now that they could be kind and benevolent, and the doctrine of a friendly God in heaven, who loves His children, appealed to her, but that one should be willing to forgive his enemies, and always be thinking of his sins with regret, and count all the pleasures and enjoyments of the gay city of Alexandria as unworthy of notice, seemed to her foolish and absurd.

What great sins had she committed? Could a kind God wish to destroy all the happiness of her life, because when a child she had stolen a cake, or broken a pot, or even been sometimes defiant and disobedient? Certainly not!

And ought a good, true man, like her tall Pollux, even though a sculptor, incur the wrath of a fatherly God, because he knew how to make such wonderful things as the head of her mother?

If that were really so, then would she a thousand times rather lift her hands to worship the laughing Aphrodite, the gay Eros, the handsome Apollo, and all the nine muses who had protected her Pollux than to Him.

A secret aversion toward the severe woman whom she could not understand, and whose doctrines and exhortations were scarcely comprehensible, rose within her; and many words that might easily have found lodgment in her heart she thrust back, because they came through the mouth of the woman who tried to fasten some new fetter upon her freedom with every passing hour.

Paulina had never taken her to the convocation of Christians in her villa. She wished first to prepare her, and to open her soul for salvation, and would not allow herself the assistance of any teacher of the community. She and she alone was to

conquer the soul of this beautiful creature, so firmly planted in the ways of the heathen. This was part of the pact she thought herself to have made with Him, and the labor went toward the price by which she expected to purchase her daughter's eternal happiness.

Day after day she devoted several hours to the instruction of Arsinoe in her own apartment, adorned only with flowers and Christian symbols. But her pupil seemed each day more unimpressionable and absent-minded. While Paulina was giving instruction she was thinking of her Pollux, of her brothers and sisters, of the festival in honor of the emperor, and the handsome costume she was to have worn as Roxana. She wondered what girl would now occupy her place, and how she should manage to find her lover.

As with the lessons, so was it with the prayers of Paulina, which often continued over an hour, and which Arsinoe was obliged to follow, kneeling on Wednesdays and Fridays, and with uplifted hands on the other days of the week.

When her foster-mother discovered that she often looked into the street, she believed that she had found the reason for the absent-mindedness of her pupil, and only waited the return of her brother to have the window closed up.

As Pontius entered the lofty hall of his sister's house, Arsinoe came toward him. Her cheeks were flushed, for she had hastened down as quickly as possible, in order to meet and speak with him before she was shown into the room of Paulina.

She looked prettier than ever. Pontius regarded her with pleasure. He knew that he had somewhere seen this lovely face, but could not instantly tell where, for those we have met accidentally we do not easily recognize in a place where there is no reason to anticipate finding them.

Arsinoe did not give him time to speak to her, for, stepping directly in his way, she said timidly, after the usual greeting:

“You do not know me?”

“Yes, certainly,” answered the architect; “and yet—”

“I am a daughter of Keraunus, the palace overseer at the Lochias; but you know—”

“Certainly; and your name is Arsinoe! I asked to-day for your father, and heard to my regret—”

“He is dead!”

“Poor child! How everything has changed in the palace since I went away! The gate-keeper's house has disappeared, a new overseer has been installed, and then— But tell me first how you came here?”

“ My father left nothing, and the Christians here provided for us. There were eight of us.”

“ And does my sister provide for you all?”

“ No, no. We are all scattered in different houses, and never meet.”

With these words, the tears ran down the cheeks of Arsinoe; but she collected herself quickly, saying, before Pontius had opportunity to express his sympathy:

“ I want to ask you something; let me speak before any one disturbs us.”

“ Speak on, my child.”

“ You have known Pollux, the sculptor?”

“ Certainly.”

“ And were you not always his friend?”

“ He is a brave fellow, and an excellent sculptor.”

“ That he is indeed. And besides— May I say all to you, and will you help me?”

“ Gladly, if it be in my power.”

Arsinoe blushed, and looked down in charming embarrassment, while she said, lightly:

“ We love each other; I am his bride.”

“ Receive my congratulations.”

“ Ah, if it were not so far off! Since the death of my father we have not met. I know not where he and his parents are, and how could he find me here?”

“ Then write to him.”

“ That I can not do very well; and if I could, my messenger would—”

“ Has my sister made inquiries?”

“ No, no. I dare not speak of him again to her. She wishes to give me to another; she says the art of sculpture is hated by the God of the Christians.”

“ Does she say that? Then you want to have me find your bridegroom?”

“ Yes, yes, good sir; and when you find him, say that I am alone early in the morning and toward evening. Every day it is so. For at those hours your sister attends divine service in her country house.”

“ So you want to make me a lover’s messenger! You could not have chosen one more inexperienced.”

“ Ah, noble Pontius, if you have a heart—”

“ Let me finish, girl. I will seek your bridegroom, and if I find him he shall know where you are; but I can not and will not invite him to meet you behind my sister’s back. He shall come frankly to Paulina, and woo you. If she deny your

wish, I will try to plead your cause with my sister. Are you contented with this?"

"I must be. And will you not tell me where he and his parents are?"

"That I promise. And now one more question. Are you happy in this house?"

Again Arsinoe looked embarrassed toward the floor, then she shook her head with an expression of lively negation, and hastened away. Pontius looked after her compassionately and with sympathy.

"The poor, beautiful creature," he murmured, as he passed on toward the apartment of his sister.

The housekeeper had announced his arrival, and Paulina came to meet him at the threshold.

In her sitting-room Pontius met the Bishop Eumenes, a venerable old man, with clear, mild eyes.

"Your name is in every mouth to-day," said Paulina, after the usual salutation. "They say you have accomplished wonders during the night."

"I returned home very tired," said Pontius, "but your message was so urgent that I shortened my time of rest."

"How sorry I am," cried the widow.

The bishop saw that the brother and sister had some business to discuss, and asked if he would not disturb them.

"Quite the contrary," replied Paulina. "It is a matter connected with my foster-child, who unfortunately has her head full of nonsense. She tells me she has seen you on the Lochias, my Pontius."

"I knew the pretty child."

"Yes, she is of lovely exterior. But her spirit and her heart have been entirely untrained, and the truth falls upon her as into stony ground, for she uses every free hour to watch the riders and chariots on their way to the Hippodrome. Through this idle curiosity she gets a thousand useless and dissipating ideas. I am not always at home, and think it best to have that mischievous window walled up."

"And did you call me for that?" asked Pontius, vexed. "I should think your house-slaves might have done that work without my assistance."

"Perhaps so, but the wall must then be freshly whitewashed. I know how kind you always are."

"I thank you. To-morrow I will send two regular workmen."

"Better to-day, if possible."

“Must there then be such haste to spoil the pleasure of the poor child?”

“As to that, I believe it is not so much the riders and chariots she cares to see as her brave bridegroom.”

“So much the worse. I must tell you, Eumenes, that a sculptor seeks her for a wife.”

“She is a heathen,” answered the bishop.

“But on the way to salvation,” returned Paulina. “But we will speak of that later. There is another thing to discuss with you, Pontius. The hall in my country house must be enlarged.”

“Then send me the plans.”

“They are in the library of my poor husband.”

The architect left his sister to go into the well-known apartment.

As soon as the bishop was alone with Paulina, he said, shaking his head:

“If I can judge correctly, my sister, you are making a mistake in the training of the child intrusted to you. Not every one is called, and refractory hearts must be led to salvation with a gentle hand, and not dragged or pushed into the way. Why cut off from this girl, who stands yet with both feet in the midst of the world, all in which she finds pleasure? Permit her to enjoy every lawful enjoyment which is appropriate to youth. Do not hurt Arsinoe needlessly; let her not feel the hand which leads her. Teach her first of all to love you sincerely, for, if she knows nothing dearer than yourself, a request from your lips will accomplish more than bolts and walled-up windows.”

“I wish nothing more truly than that she love me,” broke in Paulina.

“But have you tried her? Do you see in her the spark which may be fanned to a flame? Have you discovered a germ which can grow into longing after salvation, to devotion of herself to the Redeemer?”

“In every human breast there lies such a germ. Those are your own words.”

“But in many heathen it lies deeply buried under sand and pebbles. Do you feel yourself capable of clearing these away without injury to the germ or to the soil where it lies?”

“I do feel this, and I shall win Arsinoe for Jesus Christ,” said Paulina, with decision.

Pontius interrupted the conversation. For some time he remained talking with his sister and Eumenes over the proposed improvement in her country house, then left at the same

time with Eumenes, betaking himself to the scene of the late fire on the harbor and to the old palace.

CHAPTER XVI.

PONTIUS found the emperor no longer on the Lochias, for he had removed in the afternoon to the Cæsareum. The odor of burning through all the apartments was repugnant to him, and he had begun to look upon this restored palace as an unlucky place. He was impatient for the arrival of the architect, as the apartments originally arranged for him in the Cæsareum had been despoiled for the furnishing of those on the Lochias. Pontius must now take charge of their instant re-arrangement.

He found a chariot in waiting for him, and no lack of slaves, and undertook at once the new work, devoting all his energies to it until a late hour of the night. This evening, also, he was waited for in vain in his own anteroom.

Hadrian occupied now a few rooms belonging to the apartments of his wife. He was in serious mood, and when the Prefect Titianus was announced, he kept him waiting, while with his own hand he laid a fresh compress upon the burns of his favorite.

“Go now, sire,” begged the Bithynian, after the emperor had finished his work with the skill of a trained surgeon. “Titianus has been pacing the floor a quarter of an hour.”

“That may be,” answered the monarch; “and if the whole world cries for me, it must wait till these faithful fingers have received due attention. Yes, my boy, we are walking together through life as closely united companions. That others also do; and each who so goes on with his fellow, enjoying and suffering in common, thinks at last he knows his companion as well as he knows himself. Yet the inmost kernel of the being is hidden. Some day fate sends a blustering storm, stripping off the last covering of this soul, which now stands unveiled before his eyes, as the seed which has fallen from its shell, or as a naked body. In this night, such a storm-wind has laid bare the heart of my Antinous, letting me see it as plainly as this hand which I hold before my eyes. Yes, yes, yes. He who hazards his blooming existence for the valued possession of his friend, would sacrifice a thousand lives had they been his—for his person. This night, my friend, will never be forgotten. It gives you a fair right to do much which is unpleasant to me, and has deeply engraved your name on

my heart as first among those to whom I owe gratitude. There are not many such."

Hadrian held out his hand to Antinous, and the youth, who till now had kept his eyes on the ground in confusion, pressed it to his lips in violent agitation. Then, lifting his large eyes to the emperor, he said:

"You ought not to speak so to me any more. For what is my life? I would let it fly away as the child does a beetle he has caught, if I might spare you a single gloomy day."

"I know that," answered the monarch, and went into the adjoining room to the prefect.

Titianus had come at the request of the emperor, and in order to fix a sum which was to be paid to the city and the private owners of the burned store-houses; for Hadrian had determined to issue a decree, proclaiming that no one was to suffer loss through a misfortune sent by the gods, and having its origin in his house. The prefect had made out the necessary estimates, and Phlegon, Helidorus, and Celer were commissioned to send documents to all concerned, demanding in the name of the Caesar a correct statement as to the amount of loss. Titianus also brought word that the Greeks and Jews had resolved to express their joy over the rescue of the emperor through large thank-offerings.

"And the Christians?" asked Hadrian.

"They reject the offering of animals in sacrifice, but wish to unite in a general thanksgiving prayer."

"They certainly make their acknowledgment cost little," said the emperor.

"Their bishop, Eumenes, has brought me a sum for which one could buy a hundred oxen, for distribution among the poor. He says the God of the Christians is a spirit, and desires only spiritual sacrifices. The best offerings one can bring Him are obedience and the devotion of a sincere heart."

"That does not sound badly for us," returned Hadrian, "but it would go for nothing among the common people. Philosophical teaching does not lead to piety. The mass of people need visible gods and tangible sacrifices. Are the Christians here good citizens and devoted to the state?"

"For them we need no courts of justice."

"Then take their money, and let it be distributed among the needy; but I must forbid their general meeting for prayer. They may continue to raise their hands for me in secret to their great Spirit. Their doctrine must not be made public. It is not without its seductive charm, and the safety of the

state requires that the mass remain faithful to the old gods and sacrifices."

"As you command, Cæsar."

"You know the report of Pliny to Trajan upon the Christians?"

"And the answer of that emperor."

"It is well, then, that they be allowed quietly to follow their own convictions, only they must not make themselves prominent or do anything against the laws of the state. So surely as they deny that respect to the old gods which is their due, or lift a finger against them, severity must be practiced, and each trespass punished with death."

During this conversation Verus had entered. To-day he had followed the emperor everywhere, hoping to hear a word as to his observations of the sky, and yet he dared not ask as to the result.

When he found Hadrian occupied, he asked a chamberlain to conduct him to Antinous.

The youth turned pale at the sight of the pretor, but he had self-control enough to offer congratulations upon his birthday. Verus had not failed to notice the effect of his entrance upon Antinous; so he at first asked indifferent questions, and wove mirthful anecdotes into his conversation, saying—only after he had thus succeeded in restoring his composure—in a careless manner:

"In the name of the state, and all the friends of the emperor, I must thank you. You conducted the affair well, though using rather vigorous measures."

"I pray you, let that drop," broke in Antinous, earnestly, and with an anxious glance toward the door into the next room. "To preserve the free spirit of the emperor, I would have sacrificed all Alexandria. Beyond that, we have both paid dearly for our good intentions and those wretched store-houses."

"Speak of other things, then. You sit there with bandaged hands and singed hair, and I feel quite unwell. Hadrian said you assisted bravely at the rescue.

"I pitied the poor marmots whose provision was being fast devoured by the greedy flames; and heated, as I came from the banquet, I sprung in among the rescuing party. My first reward was a bath of ice-cold sea-water, which some one poured over my head from a leathern bottle. In me all teaching of ethics become disgraced, and I have long been inclined to count the dramatic writers, in whose pieces virtue is rewarded and vice punished, as simpletons; for I owe my best hours to

my poorest deeds, while my best bring only vexation and misery. No hyena laughs more hoarsely than I speak to-day. Some internal organ seems turned into a hedge-hog, whose spines give me pain; and all this because I let myself be carried on to do things which moralists praise as virtuous."

"You cough and do not look well; lay yourself down."

"On my birthday? No, my young friend. But now I want to ask you, before I leave: Can you tell me what Hadrian read in the stars?"

"No."

"Not even if I put my Perseus at your disposition for any service? The man knows Alexandria, and is dumb as a fish."

"Not even then; for what I do not know I can not tell. We are neither of us well; I repeat it, you ought to take care of yourself."

Venus left soon after these words, and Antinous felt relieved.

The visit of the pretor had filled him with uneasiness, and his repugnance toward the man increased.

He knew that Venus had made him a tool, for the emperor had said that he did not ascend the tower to read the stars for himself, but to cast the horoscope of the pretor, and that he had told him (Venus) of this purpose. There was no excuse; there could be no extenuation of his deed!

Simply to gratify this dissolute coxcomb—this smiling hypocrite—he had become a traitor to his lord and an incendiary, and must bear the overwhelming load of praise and gratitude from the greatest and most sharp-sighted of men. He hated, he abhorred himself, and asked why the fire that blazed around him had satisfied itself with injuring his hands and hair so lightly.

When Hadrian returned, he begged permission to go to bed. The emperor granted this request willingly, bade Mastor watch beside him, and went to answer the request of his wife for an interview. Sabina had not visited the scene of conflagration, but had sent a messenger every hour to report to her the condition of things and the welfare of her husband. She had greeted him on his arrival at the Cæsareum, and then retired to her own apartments.

Hadrian found her reclining upon a couch, without her usual ornaments, but otherwise dressed as for a banquet.

"You wished to speak with me?" asked the emperor.

"Yes; and it is the most remarkable event of a day so filled with extraordinary things that my request was not in vain."

"You seldom give me opportunity to grant a wish."

“Are you surprised at this?”

“Perhaps so, since, instead of asking, you usually demand.”

“Let us drop this contest of idle words.”

“Gladly. For what purpose did you send for me?”

“Verus is celebrating his birthday.”

“And you would like to know what the stars foretell for him?”

“Or still more, what the appearances on the sky dispose you to do for him.”

“I had little time to consider the appearance. At any rate, the stars promise him a brilliant future.”

A joyful gleam shone in the eyes of Sabina, but she constrained herself to remain quiet, and asked, tranquilly:

“That you admit, and yet come to no conclusion?”

“Then do you wish to hear the decisive word to-day?”

“You know that without my affirmation.”

“Well, his star outshines mine, and warns me to guard myself from him.”

“How petty! Do you fear the pretor?”

“No, but his fortune is bound up with yours.”

“If he be our son, his greatness would also be ours.”

“Should I make him what you wish, he would attempt to make our greatness his. Destiny—”

“You have said that was favorable to him; unfortunately, I must dispute it.”

“You? Do you attempt to read the stars?”

“No. I leave that to the men. Have you heard of the astrologer Ammonius?”

“Yes. He is a skillful man, who takes his observations from the summit of the Serapeum, and many of the same calling in this city have used his art to amass a fortune.”

“No less a person than the astronomer Claudius Ptolemæus has directed me to him.”

“The best recommendation.”

“Well, then, I gave Ammonius the commission to cast the horoscope of Verus last night. He brought it to me a little while ago with an explanation. Here it is.”

The emperor quickly seized the tablet Sabina offered, and said, while he looked over attentively the prognostics arranged according to the hours of their appearance:

“That is quite right! Could this have escaped me? Well done! They tally exactly with my own observations! But here—wait—here the third hour begins, where I was interrupted. Eternal gods, what is this?”

The emperor removed the wax tablet of Ammonius further

from his eyes, and did not move his lips again till he had reached the last hour of the vanishing night.

Then he let the hand holding the horoscope drop, and cried, shuddering:

“A horrible destiny. Horace was right when he said, ‘High towers fall with the heaviest crash.’”

“The tower of which you are thinking is that pet child of fortune, of whom you were afraid,” said Sabina. “Give Verus a short space of happiness before the sad end which threatens.”

Hadrian looked thoughtfully at the floor during these words, and then answered, standing still before his wife:

“If this man do not fall before some dark misfortune, then the stars and the destiny of human beings are as foreign to one another as the sea from the heart of the desert, as the pulse-beat from the pebbles of the brook. If Ammonius has made ten errors, there still remain more than ten prognostics on this tablet which are hostile and threatening to the pretor. I am sorry for Verus—but the state has to suffer the misfortunes of the emperor. This man can not be my successor.”

“Not?” asked Sabina, and rose from her couch. “Not even after you have seen that your star will outlast his? Not though a glance at this tablet will teach you that the world will obey your nod long after he has turned to dust?”

“Be quiet, and give me time; but now I say, not even then!”

“Not even then?” answered Sabina, gloomily. Then she gathered herself up, and asked, with a passionate cry: “Not even though I raise my hands imploringly and cry in your face: You and destiny together have grudged me the bliss, the joy, the fairest aim of a woman’s life, and I will, and I must attain it! I must, and I will, once—be it only for a brief space—hear myself addressed by beloved lips with that title, which lifts the poorest beggar-wife with a nursling in her arms high above the empress, who never stood beside a cradle. I will, and I must, before my end, be a mother, and be called mother, and be able to say, my child, my son, our child.”

Sabina sobbed aloud with these words, and flung her hands before her face.

The emperor stepped backward. A wonder had been enacted before his eyes. Sabina, in whose eyes he had never before seen a tear—Sabina was weeping. Sabina had a heart like other women!

Astonished and deeply moved, he saw her—shaken by mighty agitation—turn away from him, and sink upon her

knees before the couch she had left, in order to hide her face in the pillows.

He stood motionless at her side, but soon stepped nearer and said:

“Rise, Sabina; your wish is granted. You shall have the son for whom your heart longs.”

The empress rose, and a look of gratitude shone from her tearful eyes into his. Sabina *could* smile. She could also be beautiful. Such an hour of life was needed to prove this to Hadrian.

Silently he drew a chair forward and sat down beside her, and for a long time was silent, holding her hand in his own. Then giving it freedom, he said kindly:

“Will Verus fulfill what you expect from a son?”

She nodded affirmatively.

“And what gives you this assurance?” asked the emperor.

“He is a Roman, and not lacking in brilliant gifts. A man of his position in council and in field, and knowing so well how to play Eros, will not be dull in understanding the assumption of the people. But he has the light disposition of his mother, and his heart flutters hither and thither.”

“Let him be as he is. We understand each other, and he is the only person upon whose disposition I count as surely as if he were my own son.”

“And on what is this firm confidence grounded?”

“You will understand me, for you are quick to perceive the hints of destiny. Have you time to hear a short story?”

“The night is still long.”

“Then I will speak. Forgive me if I begin with things which seem to have passed away. Yet they have not, for they work in me to this hour! I know you did not yourself choose me for your wife. Plotina brought me into your house. She loved you; whether your devotion to her belonged to the beautiful woman, or to the wife of the emperor, from whom you had everything to expect, who could say?”

“I loved and honored Plotina herself!”

“She chose in me a wife for you, of tall stature, and suited to wear the purple, but not beautiful. She was acquainted with me, and was well aware that I understood less than others to win hearts to myself. No child could have grown up in the house of its parents with less of love than I had found; and that my husband did not accustom me to tenderness, no one knows better than you.”

“I could in this moment repent it.”

“It would be too late. But I will not be bitter, certainly

not. And yet, if you will understand me, I must confess that when I was young I longed painfully for the love no one offered me."

"And have you yourself never loved?"

"No; but it hurt me that I could not. While with Plotina I often met the children of her kindred, and sometimes tried to attract them toward myself; but while they played familiarly with the other ladies, I seemed to excite their aversion. Soon I came to return their ill-will; only the little son of Ceionius Commodus—our Verus—gave me bright answers when I spoke to him, and brought his broken toys for me to mend. So I won the love of the boy."

"He was a remarkably sweet boy."

"That he was. One day all the ladies were sitting together in the emperor's garden. Verus came running toward us, and brought a remarkably fine apple, which Trajan had given him. The red-cheeked fruit was admired by all. Plotina took it from his hand, and asked, jestingly, if he would give it to her. He turned his large eyes upon her in surprise, shook his curly head, and ran toward me, and gave me—me and no other—his apple, flung his little arms around my neck, and said: 'Sabina, you shall have it.'"

"A judgment of Paris."

"Do not jest now. This deed of an unselfish child strengthened my courage to bear the sorrow of life. I knew there was one who loved me; and this one rewarded me for all I felt for him—and I was never weary of doing for him—by his loving disposition. He is the only person that I feel sure will shed a tear when I die. Give him the right to call me mother, and make him our son."

"He is our son," said Hadrian, with earnest dignity, and held out his hand to Sabina. She attempted to press it to her lips, but he drew it back to add:

"You shall tell him that we adopt him as our son. His wife is the daughter of Nigrinus, who had to fall that I might stand firmly. You do not love Lucilla, but we can both admire her, for I, at least, know no other woman in Rome for whose virtue one can vouch; besides, I owe her a father, and rejoice in this daughter. So, then, we are blessed with children. Whether and when I can name Verus as my successor, and proclaim to the world its future monarch, I can not now decide; for that, I need a more tranquil hour—till to-morrow, Sabina. This day began in misfortune; may that with which we together close it increase our prosperity."

CHAPTER XVII.

THERE come lovely warm days in February, but whoever fancies they have brought the spring will find himself mistaken. The harsh, bitter Sabina had tender hours when womanly emotion gained mastery; but as soon as the longing of her softer disposition after maternal happiness was satisfied, her heart closed tightly again, and the fire which had warmed it went out. All who approached her—even her husband—felt as before chilled and repelled in her presence.

Verus was sick. The first symptoms of a liver disease, which the physicians had predicted, if he, the European, should continue his dissolute Roman habits in the climate of Alexandria, began to give him trouble.

He bore the first physical sufferings fate had laid upon him with impatience. Even the great tidings Sabina brought, and which were the fulfillment of his boldest hopes, had not power to reconcile him to this experience of sickness. He also learned that Hadrian's fear before the excessive luster of his star had almost cost him the adoption; and since he firmly believed that his malady had its origin in the fire Antinous had kindled, he bitterly repented his cunning interruption of the emperor's calculations.

Men like to throw the blame of their misfortunes, especially those that grow out of their faults, upon others, and thus the suffering pretor cursed Antinous and the science of Simeon Ben Jochai, because the wicked deed through which the pleasures of his life had been disturbed, without their assistance would not have been committed.

Hadrian had requested the Alexandrians to postpone their spectacles and demonstrations until his astrological observations of the course of destiny for the coming year were completed. Every evening he betook himself to the lofty watch-tower of the Serapeum, and from there studied the stars. On the tenth of January he finished his work. The festivities commenced on the eleventh, and occupied several days. The beautiful daughter of Apollodorus the Jew represented Roxana, according to the choice of the pretor. All that the Alexandrians offered the emperor was brilliant and magnificent. Never before were so many ships destroyed in a mock sea-fight, or so many wild animals seen together on any occasion—even in the Roman circus; and how bloody the gladiatorial contests, in which black and white combatants offered to heart and sense a

gay spectacle. In consequence of the various elements united at this central point of Egyptian, Greek, and Oriental culture, the procession offered such a feast to the eye that, in spite of its excessive length, it was far less wearisome than the Romans anticipated.

The tragedies and comedies introduced were rich in surprising effects. Conflagrations and floods were represented, and gave the Alexandrians opportunity to show such skill in the art of representation that Hadrian and his companions were forced to confess them superior to any in either Rome or Athens.

One piece by Ezekiel, a Jew who had written dramas in Greek under the Ptolemies, the materials for which were drawn from the history of his own people, especially roused the admiration of the emperor.

During these festivities the Prefect Titianus suffered much from an old difficulty of breathing, and had his hands full of work; at the same time he assisted Pontius in the search for Pollux. Both men did their best, but when at last they succeeded in finding Doris and Euphorion there was still no trace of their lost son. Papias, his former master, was no longer in the city. Hadrian had sent him to Italy to set up Centaurs and other figures at his own villa in Tibur. His wife, who remained behind, declared that she knew nothing of Pollux beyond the fact that he had quitted the service of her husband in a rude manner.

The fellow-apprentices of the unfortunate youth could give absolutely no information; for not one of them had been present at the time of his arrest. Papias had taken care to put the man he feared into safe confinement without witnesses. Neither prefect nor architect looked for the honest fellow in the prisons, and would scarcely have found him had they done so, for he was not in Alexandria. The prisons of the city overflowed after the festival began, and they removed him to Canopus, where he was tried and incarcerated.

Pollux confessed frankly that he had taken the silver quiver, and had been greatly incensed by the accusations of his master. Thus he made in the outset an unfavorable impression upon the magistrate; who knew, moreover, that Papias was a wealthy and esteemed citizen. He was scarcely allowed a word in his own defense, and the accusations of his master, together with his own confessions, hastened the sentence.

To listen to the fictions this insolent fellow who—forgetting all the respect he owed to his employer and benefactor—wished

to serve up for the benefit of the judge, seemed to that dignity only waste of time.

Two years of solitary confinement, thought this guardian of the law, would teach this reckless fellow to respect the possessions of other people and correct his contemptuous treatment of those to whom he owed only gratitude and reverence. Pollux cursed his fate in the prison of Canopus, and hoped in vain for the assistance of his friends, who, at last wearied by fruitless effort, gave up the search, and asked only occasionally for him. He at first so chafed and fretted under the imprisonment that he was put into closer confinement, out of which he was not released until he—instead of raving—had sunk into a stupor, and spent the days in sullen brooding.

His jailer, who had learned much by experience, ventured to predict that this young thief, when his two years had expired, would leave the prison in a state of harmless mental debility. Titianus, Pontius, Balbilla, and even Antinous had attempted to speak of him with the emperor, but each one met a sharp rebuff, and learned that Hadrian would not forgive an injury to his pride as an artist.

But the monarch showed also that he kept a true memory of the benefits he received, for once, as a dish was brought him containing cabbage and little sausages, he smiled to himself, and taking a well-filled purse from his pocket, ordered a chamberlain to carry it in his name to Doris.

The old pair lived now in a little house near the residence of Diotima, their widowed daughter. They had escaped hunger and eternal wretchedness, yet a great change had passed over them. The eyes of poor Doris were always red, for tears had taken up their abode in them, and these ran over with every word, object or thought which reminded her of Pollux, her darling, her pride, her hope. And how few half hours there were in a day when she did not think of him! Soon after the death of Keraunus, she had tried to see Selene. Hannah could not and would not take her to the sick-room, for she knew, through Maria, that she was the mother of the faithless lover of her nursing.

On a second visit, Selene showed herself so reserved, anxious, and peculiar in her manner toward Doris that the old woman could but believe her visit unwelcome.

Her attempt to see Arsinoe had been still more unfortunate. Having learned her residence through the deaconesses, she announced herself as mother of the sculptor Pollux, and was sent away with the message that she could not speak with Arsinoe, and her visits were once for all forbidden. After

Pontius had found her, and encouraged her to make another attempt—with the assurance that Arsinoe was faithful to her lover—she was met by Paulina herself, and so sharply repulsed that she went away feeling insulted, and returned to her husband in tears. She made no objection when Euphoriion forbade her ever again to enter the house of the Christian.

The gift of the emperor was most acceptable to these poor people; for, after all the excitement and the trouble of the last month, Euphoriion had lost the smoothness of his voice, and his memory was shattered; he had been dismissed from the theater choir, and his only means of earning a few drachmas was in assisting at the celebration of the rites of some small sects, or singing marriage and funeral hymns. The old people had also their daughter to support, whom Pollux could no longer assist—and the birds, the Graces, and the cats must also be fed. The possibility of sending them away never once entered the thoughts of either Doris or Euphoriion. The old woman was no longer mirthful by day—but at night she had many good hours; for then Hope painted fair pictures of the future, and beguiled her with all possible and impossible visions that kept her courage alive. How often she fancied Pollux returning from the distant city into which he perhaps had fled—Rome, or it might be Athens—as a great man, crowned with laurels, and rich in treasures!

The emperor, who still remembered her kindly, could not always be angry. Perhaps some day he would send out messengers to seek Pollux, and, through large commissions, make good all he had done to injure him. She was sure her darling was alive—on that point she could not be mistaken, though Euphoriion tried to prove to her that he was dead. The old musician would relate many stories of men who had been murdered and never heard of again, but she would not be persuaded; she continued to hope, and lived in the purpose of sending her younger son, Teuker, so soon as his apprenticeship was concluded—which would be in a few months—out upon journeys to seek his departed brother.

Antinous, whose burned hands had healed very soon under the emperor's nursing, mourned also the disappearance of Pollux—for whom he had felt a sincerer friendship than for any other youth he had known—and he determined to visit Doris. But he was more unwilling than ever to leave his master, and followed him so zealously that Hadrian said sometimes, playfully, he made the service of his slave superfluous.

When he really had an hour at his own disposal, he purposed visiting the parents of his friend, but between the pur-

pose and the performance lay a wide space that never would be passed over without some powerfully constraining influence.

It was such an influence that led him—while the emperor was disputing in the Museum, or occupied in studying the dogmas of some religious sect, under the instruction of its leader—to the country house where the month of February still found Selene a resident.

He had several times succeeded in stealing into the garden of Paulina, but his hope to meet and speak with Selene seemed at first unattainable. Whenever he approached the house of Hannah, the deformed girl always met and told him of her welfare, and then requested or commanded him to leave. She was always now near Selene, for her mother was always nursed by her sister, and Hannah had gained permission for her to paste the papyrus leaves at home. The widow herself was compelled to go to the factory, for her office as overseer made her presence in the work-room necessary.

So it happened that Antinous was always received and dismissed by Maria, and never by Hannah. Between the handsome youth and the deformed girl, therefore, had grown up a certain mutual understanding. When Antinous appeared, and she cried out to him: "Again, already?" he would seize her hand and beg her earnestly only this time to gratify his wish.

She was steadfast, and sent him away without severity, but with smiling and friendly warning. When he brought out choice flowers from beneath his pallium and implored her to give them to Selene in the name of her friend from the Lochas, she would accept, and promise to place them in her room, but she said it could do neither him nor her any good to know from whom they came.

After these rebuffs, he understood well how to use coaxing words, but he never ventured to defy her and reach his end through might.

If the flowers stood in the room, Maria looked at them much oftener than Selene.

When Antinous did not appear at the usual time, Maria so longed to see him that she walked uneasily back and forth from the garden gate to the house of her friend. As he dreamed of an angel, so he became the angel of her thoughts. She remembered the beautiful heathen in all her prayers, and a mild compassion, with a mixture of pain over his lost soul, was inseparable from all her thoughts of him.

Hannah was informed of each visit, and whenever she spoke of him the deaconess was troubled, and advised her to threaten

him with calling the porter, for she knew who this unwearied admirer of her nursling was. Once she had heard him speak with Mastor, who used every free hour in attending the religious services of the Christians, and she had asked Mastor about him.

All Alexandria, yes, the whole empire, knew the name of this handsomest youth of the time, the celebrated favorite of the emperor. Hannah also had heard of him, and had learned that poets sung his praises, and heathen women were eager for a look from his eyes.

She knew how lawless were the deeds of the great ones from Rome, and Antinous appeared to her like the glittering falcon that circles about a dove, and waits only a favorable moment to pounce upon and drag it with beak and talons to the ground.

She knew also that he was not a stranger to Selene—that he had rescued her from the savage dog, and also dragged her out of the water; but that Selene did not know who had saved her, she was convinced from many of her words.

In the latter part of February Antinous came three days in succession, and Hannah had sent strict orders to the porter, through Bishop Eumenes, to look out for the young man, and prevent his coming into the garden by force, should that be necessary.

But Love finds its way through locked doors, and so Antinous succeeded in slipping into the garden again. And this time he saw Selene herself, accompanied by Hannah and a beautiful, fair-haired boy, as, leaning upon a crutch, she hobbled up and down the garden.

Antinous had been educated to look upon all deformity with aversion, as a discord in the harmony of creation, and not a condition to be kindly commiserated. Here it seemed quite different.

At first the deformed Maria had been an object of abhorrence. Now he was glad to see her, although she always crossed his wish, and the lame Selene, behind whom the street boys had cried: "click-clap!" seemed to him more worthy of adoration than ever.

How beautiful her face and her figure; and her peculiar gait was not limping—no, it was swaying through the garden. So—he thought afterward—might the Nereids have been borne upon the lightly swelling waves.

Love is satisfied with all it sees—and that is not strange, since it exalts its object, with all belonging to it, into some higher order of existence. In its light, weakness becomes virtue, and imperfections as matters of preference.

The visits of the Bithynian were not the only cares of Hannah, though the others were borne with joy instead of anxiety. There had been an addition of two to her household, and her income was slight. That her nurslings might not starve, she worked with her own hands in the factory, besides overseeing the girls, and carried home papyrus leaves, upon which she and Maria worked late into the night.

When Selene was well enough she gladly assisted them, and labored diligently; yet for weeks together she had been able to do nothing.

Maria looked with growing anxiety upon the pale face of Hannah, and once, after she had fallen in a fainting fit, found courage to suggest that while she might lend the pound the Lord had bestowed upon her to the usurers, she had no right to squander it. She allowed herself no rest, worked both day and night, and used her hours of recreation, as she had always done, in visiting the poor and the sick, and would soon, if she so continued, instead of nursing others, require that attendance upon herself.

"Give yourself," said Maria, "at least the nightly sleep you can not do without."

"We must live," answered Hannah; "and how dare I borrow what I may never be able to return?"

"Ask Paulina to remit your house rent; she would do it gladly?"

"No," returned Hannah, decidedly. "What this house yields is bestowed on my poor, and you know how much they need it. What we give is lent to our Lord, and He taxes no one beyond his ability."

Selene was now quite well, but the physician had said no human skill could ever cure the lameness. She was Hannah's daughter, and the blind Helios had become the sun of their house.

Arsinoe was seldom allowed to visit her sister, and only when accompanied by her foster-mother; so they never had any unrestrained conversation. The elder daughter of Keraunus was now contented and happy—the younger, not only sorrowful in the disappearance of her lover, but being unhappy in the new home, had become irritable, and easily thrown into fits of weeping.

The younger orphans of Keraunus were well cared for. They were often brought to visit Selene, and spoke affectionately of their new parents.

Through the help of Selene, the burden of labor in the house of Hannah was diminished, and about the first of March

a proposition was suggested which would make quite a change in her simple life should she accept it.

In Upper Egypt Christian fraternities had been established, and from one of these came a request to the great mother community in Alexandria for a presbyter, a deacon, and a deaconess capable of teaching and of guiding the neophytes in the province of Hermopolis, who already numbered thousands. The life of the community, the care of the poor and the sick, needed organization through skillful hands, and Hannah had been asked to leave Alexandria, and devote her energies to more extended benevolences in Besa.

She was promised there a pleasant house with a garden of palm-trees, and gifts from the community, which would insure not only her own support, but that of her adopted children. Hannah was strongly attached to Alexandria, especially to the poor and the sick, many of whom were very dear to her heart. How many sewing-girls she had been the means of saving in the factory!

She asked time for consideration, which had been willingly granted. The decision was to be made by the fifteenth of March, but it came for her on the fifth, for while she was at the factory Antinous had succeeded in again entering the garden of Paulina, and a little while before sunset slipped close to the house of Hannah. Maria met him as usual and tried to drive him back in her friendly manner; but to-day the Bithynian was more excited than ever, he seized her hand, and clasped it with passionate eagerness while he begged for grace. She sought to free herself, but he would not yield, and cried, in coaxing tones:

“I must see her and speak with her to-day—only this once, dear, good Maria.”

Before she could prevent it, he had pressed a kiss upon her forehead, and hastened into the house to Selene.

Maria scarcely knew what had transpired. Bewildered and enfeebled by conflict of feelings, she stood looking with shame on the ground, knowing that something unheard of had happened, but so dazzled by the light this something had spread around her, something to herself, to the poor Maria, that a strange, new feeling of pride was mingled with the shame and indignation. She needed a few moments to recover herself and to regain a consciousness of her duty, and these moments Antinous used to his own advantage. With long strides he hastened toward the room into which he had borne Selene, and laid her upon the bed on that night which he could never forget, and called her name while yet on the threshold.

She was frightened and laid aside the book from which she was reading to her blind brother. He called again in a beseeching tone. Selene recognized him, and asked, quietly:

“Are you looking for me or for Hannah?”

“You, you,” he cried, passionately. “Oh, Selene, since the night I drew you out of the water, I can not cease thinking of you, and must die with love for you. Have your thoughts never, never met mine on the way to you? Are you always so cold and motionless as then, when you belonged half to life and half to death? As the shades of the departed encompass the place which contains all they love on earth, so, for months, I have wandered about this house, and never once succeeded in telling you what I feel.” With these words the youth threw himself down before her and tried to clasp her knees; but she said, reproachfully:

“What does all this mean? Stand up, and control yourself.”

“Oh, let me stay,” he begged. “Be not so hard, so cold; have compassion, and do not drive me away from you!”

“Stand up!” repeated the girl. “I am not angry, for I owe you gratitude.”

He rose slowly and said, in a low tone:

“It is not gratitude, but a little love that I crave.”

“I try to love all,” answered the young Christian, “and so I love you also. You have shown me much kindness.”

“Selene! Selene!” he cried out joyfully, threw himself again down before her, and seized her hand passionately. But scarcely had he taken it into his own, when Maria burst into the room, flushed with excitement, and in a husky voice expressed displeasure and wrath, commanded him instantly to leave the house, and, as he sought again to besiege her with importunities, she cried:

“If you do not obey me I shall ask the help of the men yonder who are attending to the flowers. I ask again: will you obey or not?”

“Why are you so cross, Maria?” asked the blind Helios. “This is a good man, and he just told Selene he loved her.”

Antinous pointed toward the boy with an imploring gesture, but Maria was at the window, ready to call.

“Let be,” cried Antinous. “I am going,” and walked slowly and silently toward the door, looking once more toward Selene with passionate devotion.

Then he left the room, groaning with shame and disappointment, yet joyful and proud, as though he had accomplished a great deed.

Hannah met him in the garden and hastened her steps toward the house, where she found Maria in tears and choking with sobs, and soon heard of all that had happened during her absence.

An hour later she informed the bishop that she would accept the call of the community at Besa, and was ready to go at once to Upper Egypt.

“With your wards?” asked Eumenes.

“Yes. It has been indeed the earnest wish of Selene to be baptized by you, but since a year of instruction is necessary—”

“I will perform the sacred rite to-morrow.”

“To-morrow, my father?”

“Yes, sister. I do it with confidence. She left her old nature in the sea, and before we became her teachers she had gone through the school of life. Even while a heathen, she had taken up her cross and borne it as faithfully as if a believer in the Lord. The faith, love, hope which were wanting she has found in your house. In the name of our Saviour, I thank you for this soul, my sister.”

“Not me, not me,” begged the widow. “Her heart was benumbed, and not I, but the ardent faith of the blind boy softened it.”

“She owes her salvation to you both,” answered the bishop. “And we will baptize both at the same time. The lovely child shall take the name of the fairest among the disciples. We will call him ‘John.’ Selene shall in future bear the name ‘Martha,’ if it be agreeable to her.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

SELENE and Helios received baptism, and two days later, Hannah, her adopted children and Maria, accompanied by Hilarion, a presbyter and a deacon, embarked on a Nile ship in the harbor of Lake Mareotis, which would carry them to the city of Besa, in Upper Egypt, their future home. Maria had hesitated about joining the party. Her old mother lived in Alexandria—and then—but it was this “then” which enabled her to cut off sharply all consideration, and utter a decisive “yes,” for it referred to Antinous. For a few moments the thought was intolerable of never seeing him again—for she had thought so often of this handsome youth—and yet her whole heart ought to belong to Him who had purchased, with His own blood, her peace here and her blessedness hereafter.

Selene had gone on the day after her baptism to the city house of Paulina, and with many tears taken leave of Arsinoe.

All the love which really united these sisters came to expression in the hour of their separation. Selene had heard, through Paulina, that Pollux was dead, and no longer bore ill-will toward the rival who bewailed his loss more passionately than she. Earlier the peace of her soul had been disturbed by the memory of this playfellow.

The separation from Alexandria, where most of her brothers and sisters remained, was painful, and still she rejoiced in the anticipation of her distant home, which was to be the theater where her newly consecrated energies would find exercise. She was no longer the same person she had been only a few months before.

Eumenes and Hannah were right. It was the blind boy, and not the widow, who had won her to Christianity. This influence of the child had a singular source. The promise of Mastor that Helios would one day meet his father again in a shining heaven, among lovely angels, had worked powerfully upon the lively imagination and tender heart of the blind boy. In the house of Hannah this hope found fresh nourishment, for both she and Maria often told him of the dear, kind God and His Son, who loved children, and invited them to Himself. When Selene was better, and he was permitted to talk with her, he told her with great delight of all the women had told him; but at first his sister found no pleasure in these wonderful fabrications, and tried to shake his faith in them and lead him back to the old gods. But while trying to lead the child, she felt herself more and more constrained to follow in the same path. For awhile she went forward with uncertain steps, but the example and the many wise words of Hannah proved a support. She attempted no doctrinal instruction except when Selene asked for it and for its explanation. All about her was an atmosphere of love and peace, which the boy felt and spoke of, and constrained her to recognize, and in his own person offered her the first inducement to exercise the newly awakened longing to prove herself loving. The firm faith of the child, which she could not shake by any reasoning or by any of the myths she knew, touched her deeply and led her to ask Hannah the meaning of this or that assertion of the boy. It had been a pleasant thought to her that death would end this miserable existence; but Helios left her without reply, when he said, sadly:

“Have you, then, no longing to see father and mother again?”

To see her mother again! That thought made her curious about the other world, and Hannah fanned this spark of inter-

est to a flame. Selene had seen and felt much misery, and was accustomed to call the gods cruel. Helios told her God and Jesus were good, and loved men as their own children.

“Was it not kind,” he asked, “that the Heavenly Father led us to Hannah?”

“Yes; but they have torn us from one another,” answered Selene.

“Never mind,” returned the child, confidently; “in heaven we shall all meet again.”

As Selene recovered, she wished to know about each one of the children, and Hannah described all the families in which they had found homes. Hannah seemed honest, and the children themselves confirmed all she said, in their visits, and yet Selene found it hard to believe the description of their life in the homes of the Christians.

The mothers, said one of the prominent teachers in the Church, are the pride of the children, the wife the pride of her husband, both husband and children the pride of the wife, and God the pride and glory of all the family. Love and faith were really the band, peace and virtuous life the law, of the Christian family; and under such pure and salutary influences as Selene and Helios found in the house of Hannah, were all the little brothers and sisters growing up! Her good sense answered the question, what would have become of them all had her father lived and been turned out of his office. They would have been plunged into misery and disgrace. And now? Perhaps Providence had acted kindly toward the children.

Love, only love, was the atmosphere she breathed, and yet it was love which had prepared for her the most cruel sufferings. Why had so much sorrow come to her through an emotion which beautified the lives of others? Had any other person suffered as she had? Most certainly! A gay youth had deceived her, and made her sister happy instead of herself. That had been hard to bear; but the Saviour, of whom Helios told her, had been much more severely tried. Those whom He, the Son of God, had come down to the earth to deliver from sin and misery, had rewarded His kindness by crucifying Him. She recognized in Him a fellow-sufferer, and asked Hannah to tell her of Him.

Selene had made many sacrifices for her family, and her last walk to the papyrus mill could not be forgotten—but He had let Himself be scorned, and had poured out His blood for His own. And who was she?—who the Son of God?

His image became dear to her; she was never tired of hearing the story of His life, His words, and deeds, and so gradu-

ally came the day when her soul was prepared to receive the doctrines of Christ with earnest longing.

With faith in Him came also the consciousness of guilt which heretofore had been unknown to her.

She had labored through pride and fear—never from love—the sacred gift of life she tried to cast away, from selfish motives—without asking what would become of those for whom it was her duty to care. She had cursed the lovely sister who needed her protection and her blessing, as well as Pol-lux, the playmate of her childhood, and countless times blasphemed the director of human affairs.

All this she now recognized with pain, but she was deeply touched to know that there was One who had come to redeem the world, and had taken upon Himself the guilt of every penitent sinner.

When Selene expressed to Hannah her wish to become a Christian, she led her to the bishop Eumenes. He undertook the task of instruction—and found in her an eager pupil. Like those gray and dried-up flowers which are quickened to fresh bloom when laid in the water, so this long-withered heart was revived.

She longed for full recovery to health that, like Hannah, she might nurse the sick, and render those offices of love which Christ desires in His followers.

Thus it was in the new faith which gave her special joy—that His promise of blessing was not to the rich who were able to bring large offerings—but to the penitent, longing for forgiveness—to the poor and the needy, of whom she thought as belonging to her own family.

Her active nature was not satisfied with thinking, and longed to express itself in action. In Besa, she would be allowed to work with Hannah, and this anticipation made the parting with Alexandria much easier. A favorable wind bore the travelers southward and in prosperity to their destination.

Two days after their departure Antinous again found admittance into the garden of Paulina, but, as he approached the little house, looked in vain for Maria. Her absence ought to have pleased him, and yet he was disturbed by it.

The way was free, and perhaps this time—so said his agitated heart—he might find Selene alone.

He opened the door without knocking, but did not venture to cross the threshold, for in the front room stood a strange man, placing shelves against the wall. The joiner, a Christian to whom Paulina had rented the house for the use of his family, asked the wish of Antinous.

“Is Hannah at home?” he stammered.

“She lives here no longer.”

“And her foster-daughter, Selene?”

“Has gone with her to Upper Egypt. Have you any messages for her?”

“No,” answered the youth in surprise. “When did they leave?”

“Day before yesterday.”

“And do they not return?”

“Certainly not for the next few years; later, perhaps, if the Lord will.”

Antinous left the garden by way of the broad middle path undisturbed. He looked pale, and seemed like a traveler in the desert who has found the spring choked up where he had hoped to quench his thirst.

In the first free hour of the following day the youth knocked again on the door of the cabinet-maker, to inquire at what spot in Upper Egypt the travelers expected to locate.

“In Besa,” answered the mechanic, frankly.

Antinous had always been a dreamer, but Hadrian had never seen him so absent-minded, so devoid of life, as at this time. When he tried to rouse and stimulate him to something fresher, Antinous would raise his eyes imploringly and try with all his might to do what he wished and to wear a brighter face, but quickly relapsed into the former mood.

Even upon a hunt in the Libyan forest, where the emperor sometimes took him, Antinous was indolent and unsympathetic in the pleasure of the free sport he usually shared with so much of joy and skill.

The emperor had remained in Alexandria longer than in most places, and was becoming weary of the festivities and hospitalities, the disputations in the Museum, of intercourse with eccentric mystics, soothsayers, astrologers, and charlatans, with which the city swarmed. Also the brief audiences granted to the leaders of various religious associations, the visits to factories and workshops of this driving place, began to exhaust him.

One day he expressed a wish to visit the southern provinces of the Nile valley. The priests of the native Egyptian gods had asked this favor of him, and not only his own curiosity and love of travel but various state reasons prompted him to grant the request of this influential hierarchy. The thought of seeing with his own eyes the wonders of the times of the Pharaohs, which attracted so many travelers, was an induce-

ment, and when he perceived the lively interest of Antinous in the plan, his determination was made.

This was the only thing in which his favorite had shown any interest for weeks. Those attentions lavished upon him by the Alexandrian ladies of gentle birth, no less than those of Rome, disgusted him. At their banquets he was a silent guest, whose presence could give pleasure to no one.

Even the brilliant and exciting spectacles in the circus, and the finest races and contests in the Hippodrome scarcely caused him to lift his eyes.

Formerly, he had followed with attention and pleasure the plays of Menander and his imitators, Alexis, Apollodorus and Posidippus; but now, when they were introduced, he stared into vacancy and thought of Selene.

The prospect of visiting the place where she now was revived him and quickened anew his expiring courage. He *hoped* again, and whoever sees light in the future, finds the present no longer totally dark.

Hadrian rejoiced to see this change in his favorite, and hastened his preparations for departure. Yet months passed before he was able to begin the journey.

At first he was occupied with the care of colonizing Libya anew, which had been depopulated by Jewish seditions. Then there were new destinations of post-routes to be arranged, which would bring different parts of the empire nearer together; and, finally, the formal consent of the senate to resolutions respecting the inherited rights of citizenship must be waited for.

Their consent was certain, but the emperor published no edict without that, and much depended on a vigorous execution of this order. In his visits at the Museum, Hadrian had learned much respecting the condition of the individual members of the same, and worked toward the institution of ordinances which would deliver them from the cares of life.

He turned his attention also to the destiny of the aged teachers and educators, and tried to improve it.

When Sabina represented to him how large an outlay would be necessary to accomplish all this, he replied:

“ We do not let the veterans starve who have devoted their bodies to the service of the state. Why should we not also take care of those who have served it with their intellects? Which should we rank higher, might and possession, or spiritual capacity? The more difficult this question to me, as emperor, so much the more do I feel under obligation to provide alike for old officers, soldiers and teachers.”

The Alexandrians detained Hadrian also by many new offerings of respect. They raised him to the rank of divinity, consecrated a temple to him, and ordained new festivals in his honor, not alone to win his favor toward their city, and to express their joy and pride in his long visit, but gladly used this favorable opportunity to gratify themselves and to revel in special pleasures.

So this imperial visit swallowed up many millions, and Hadrian, who took pains to learn the amount expended, blamed the indiscretion of his extravagant hosts.

Yet full of appreciation, he afterward wrote to his brother-in-law, Servianus, respecting the wealth and energetic activity of the Alexandrians. He praised them in this: that none among them all was idle. This one made glass, that one paper, another linen; and each one of these restless men boasted of putting his own hand to his work. Even the gouty, the blind, and the disabled, found employment. Nevertheless, he called them an unmanageable people, frivolous, and possessing sharp, mischief-making tongues, which had spared neither Verus nor Antinous. Jews, Christians, and devotees of Serapis, he says, in the same document, worshiped one God alone, instead of the Olympian divinities; and if he also asserted that the Christians paid homage to Serapis, he meant that they held the doctrine of the continued existence of the soul after death.

The dispute as to the place where the newly found Apis should reside, also gave Hadrian much to do.

From time immemorial, the Temple of Ptah, in Memphis, had been devoted to the care of the sacred bull; but this venerable city of the Pyramids had been outstripped by Alexandria, and the Temple of Serapis, in the latter place, surpassed tenfold in size and brilliancy that in the province of Sokari.

The Alexandrian Egyptians, who dwelt in the quarter known as Rhacotis, near the Serapeum, desired this god, who walked the earth in the form of a bull, in their midst; but the people of Memphis would not relinquish their old claim, and it was not easy for the emperor to bring this deeply exciting contest to a satisfactory issue.

But Memphis kept her Apis, and the Serapeum in Alexandria received gifts that had formerly been bestowed only on Memphis.

In June the emperor was at last ready to start. He wished to go through the provinces afoot or on horseback, and Sabina was to follow in a ship, after the annual flooding of the Nile.

The empress would gladly have returned to Rome or Tibur,

for Verus had been ordered by his physician to leave Egypt when the summer heats came on.

He departed with his wife as the acknowledged son of the imperial pair; but no word of Hadrian justified him in the confident hope of being named his successor to the imperial dignity. The inordinate longing for enjoyment of this dissolute man was disturbed, but not broken off, by his physical suffering, and in Rome he continued to taste all the pleasures of life.

Hadrian's delay in this matter was an annoyance, for the imperial sphinx had only too often given a very unexpected solution of its own riddles. The sad end prophesied for him caused little anxiety; indeed, the prognostic of Ben Jochai only stimulated him to enjoy to the full each hour of good health that destiny granted.

CHAPTER XIX.

BALBILLA and her companion Claudia, Publius Balbillus, and other Romans of rank, the sophist Favorinus, and a crowd of chamberlains and servants, were to accompany the empress upon a ship, while only a small company made the land journey with Hadrian, who took also a stately hunting horse.

Before they reached Memphis, he had killed a few lions and other beasts of prey, and found Antinous once more the best of companions, cold-blooded in danger, robust for travel, easily contented, and ready in every emergency, he seemed to his master as a companion created by the gods especially for his own delight. If Hadrian, for hours or days together, was silent and reflective, Antinous never disturbed him by a word; but his presence at such times was a blessing, for the consciousness that he was near was a satisfaction to the emperor.

The expedition was also good for Antinous, for he perceived that he was of use to his honored lord, and in this way the burden was diminished which had oppressed him since his deed of mischief on the Lochias. He had always preferred dreaming to talking, and their fresh movements preserved him from lassitude.

In Memphis, Hadrian was detained a month, where it was necessary to visit the temple of the gods accompanied by Sabina, whose ship had arrived before him, and go through many ceremonies in the attire of the Pharaohs.

Sabina often felt that she should perish, when, as mistress of the Nile valley, and adorned with the great vulture's head finery, in a long garment overlaid with ornaments of gold, she

was conducted at the side of her husband in a procession through all the vast spaces, over the roof, and at last into the holiest places of the sanctuary. These circuitous promenades, and the many sacrifices they were obliged to witness, seemed to her absurd formalities. And when she returned from these ceremonials she seemed exhausted to the last degree, and indeed it was no light matter to go through with all the fumigations and sprinklings, to listen to such long hymns and litanies, to walk through all the wide spaces; and when exalted upon the throne as divinities, to be adorned with so many various crowns, and arrayed with every sort of fillet and symbol.

Her husband set her a good example, for the whole serious majesty of his nature came into view at these ceremonies. He found pleasure in the mystical wisdom of the priests, with whom he had long and familiar interviews.

As at Memphis, and so the imperial pair received the homage of the hierarchy in all the chief temples of the cities lying further south. Wherever Hadrian furnished means for the enlargement of a sanctuary, he must conduct the ceremony of laying the corner-stone with his own hand.

With all this, he found time to hunt in the wilderness, to discharge state business, and inspect the worthiest memorials of an earlier age. In Memphis, he visited the ancient city of the dead, the Pyramids, the great sphinx, and the Apis tombs.

Before leaving, he asked for himself and his companions an oracle from the sacred bull.

The poetess Balbilla had promise of the pleasantest future. The bull, to whom she offered a cake, with her face turned away, had been satisfied with her gift, and had licked her hand.

Hadrian was uncertain about the oracle of the priest, for it was given to him as a sealed roll, with its explanation—but he was solemnly commanded not to open it before the end of half a year.

The emperor was with his wife only at the largest cities—for he journeyed by land—she by water. The ship almost invariably arrived before the land travelers, and when they at last appeared, there was each time a ceremonial welcome, in which Sabina seldom took part. Balbilla, therefore, took more pains to make their arrival pleasant by some agreeable surprise.

She honored the emperor, and the beauty of his favorite exercised an irresistible charm upon her artistic soul. It gave her pleasure to look upon him—his departure was a trial; and when he appeared, she was always the first to greet him—and

yet he troubled himself no more about this bright girl than about the other ladies of Sabina's suite; but Balbilla wished nothing of him except the pleasure of looking at him and rejoicing in his beauty.

Had he presumed to accept her homage as a proof of love, and offered her his own, the poetess would have driven him with indignation back to his proper place, and still she made no attempt to conceal her admiration for his beauty, and expressed it in conspicuous manner. When the land travelers appeared after an absence longer than usual, Antinous found in that part of the ship appropriated to his use flowers and choice fruits sent by her, and verses she had written for him. He laid them all together, and paid little attention to their donor.

The poetess remained in ignorance of this indifference, and indeed troubled herself very little about his sentiments. Up to this time she had easily kept within the bounds of propriety. Now there were hours in which she was conscious that she might overstep those limits. But what cared she for the verdict of those around her, and what for the inner life of the Bithynian, whose outward form alone gave her pleasure?

The possibility of waking hopes in him which she never could fulfill did not frighten her, because they never once occurred to her thought. And still she was satisfied with herself, for there was one who might not understand her actions, one who had condemned in distinct language her purpose to send flowers as a mark of honor to the beautiful youth; and the verdict of this one was more to her than that of all other men and women together. This one was the architect Pontius; and strangely enough it was the memory of him that drove her on from one piece of folly to another.

She had often met Pontius in Alexandria, and at her departure had allowed him to promise that he would follow the empress and herself, and give them his company during a part of the Nile trip.

But he came not—he sent no word; although she knew he was well and every messenger brought the emperor a written roll from his hand. He, on whose true devotion she had counted as on a rock, was no less self-interested and inconstant than the other men.

She thought daily and hourly of him, and whenever a ship from the north dropped anchor near theirs she watched the passengers going ashore, in the hope of discovering him among them.

She longed for the presence of Pontius, as a bewildered trav-

eler longs for the return of the guide who has deserted him; and still she felt angry, for he had shown by a thousand signs that he valued her, that she had a power over his strong will, and yet he had broken his word and came not.

And she? She had not been insensible to his devotion, and was more gracious toward this grandson of her grandfather's freedman than toward the noblest man of her own rank.

And in spite of all this Pontius had spoiled the pleasure of her journey by remaining in Alexandria instead of following her steps. How easily might he have committed his work to other architects, of whom the great cosmopolitan city was full.

Still, if he did not care for her, surely she would not trouble herself about him! Perhaps toward the end of the journey he would appear, and then he should learn how she had heeded his admonitions! She longed impatiently for a time when she might read to him all the verses she had written to Antinous, and ask how they pleased him.

It gave her a childish pleasure to add to the number of these little poems, to finish them neatly, and put all her skill and intelligence into their creation. She herself preferred the more elaborate and heavy measures. A few of them were composed in Latin, some in Attic, and others in the Æolian Greek—of which she now understood the use—and all, just to punish Pontius, to make him angry, and besides, to exhibit to him her own brilliancy of execution. She sung to Antinous for the sake of Pontius, and the favorite received no flowers not accompanied by thoughts of the architect and a defiant curl of the lip of Balbilla!

But no girl can sing the charms of a youth in ever-varying verse without the inevitable penalty, and so there came hours when Balbilla was inclined to believe that she loved Antinous. Then she called herself his Sappho, and he seemed destined to become her Phaon. During his long absences with the emperor she really succeeded in longing for him, even with tears; but as soon as he returned, and she looked again upon his emotionless features and languid eyes, and heard the sleepy "yes" and "no" with which he answered her questions, the charm was quite broken, and she honestly confessed to herself that she would be quite as happy to see his image hewn from flesh and marble as in living flesh and blood. At such times the memory of Pontius became especially vivid, and once as their ship passed through a mass of lotus leaves, among which one handsome full-blown flower lifted its head, she wove—as it was her natural impulse to do at the sight of any remarkable object—a series of verses, in which Antinous was repre-

sented as a lotus flower, who fulfilled his destiny by being beautiful, and Pontius was likened to the ship that, firmly built and well managed, was invited to fresh voyages in the spaces beyond.

The Nile voyage ended at hundred-gated Thebes, where nothing which could interest the Romans remained unvisited. The tombs of the Pharaohs hewn in the rocky cliffs, and the great temple to the west of the dead city, now despoiled of its brilliance, awoke the admiration of Hadrian.

The imperial party heard three times the musical sounds at early morning from the famous colossal statue of Memnon—whose upper portion had been shattered by an earthquake.

Balbilla described this event in several long poems, which Sabina had engraved in the stone of the Colossus.

The poetess believed she had heard the voice of Memnon singing to his mother, Aurora, while her tears—the fresh morning dew—moistened the statue of her son, who had fallen before the walls of Troy.

She composed these verses in the Æolian dialect, and informed her readers—among whom she included Pontius—that she was descended from no lower house than that of King Antiochus.

The huge temples on both banks of the Nile realized fully the expectations of the emperor, although through earthquake and sieges they had suffered much injury, and the impoverished priesthood of Thebes were no longer in condition to bear the expense of their preservation, not to mention restoration.

Balbilla went with Hadrian to the Temple of Ammon, eastward of Thebes. In the loftiest and most vast of all pillared halls, her sensitive soul was exalted to rapture, and as the emperor noticed her glowing cheeks, as she sometimes gazed upward, sometimes leaned against the mighty towering columns, he asked what she felt in this true temple of the gods.

“One thing above all others,” cried the poetess, “that architecture is the most exalting of all the arts! This temple seems a mighty epode, written, not in poor words, but in solid masses. A thousand parts are here bound in one vast whole, and each adds beautiful harmony to the others, and helps to express the mighty thought which filled the soul of its creator. What other art is permitted to express such imperishable ideas, surpassing every ordinary standard of measure?”

“The poetess bestows laurels upon the architect!” exclaimed the emperor. “But is not infinitude the realm of the poet, while the architect must be limited by the finite?”

“Is, then, the nature of divinity to be measured?” asked

Balbilla, in reply. "It is not; and yet this hall is so made that even the gods would find space within it."

"Because its creation is due to a master whose soul touched the border of eternity. Still, do you believe this building will outlast the songs of Homer?"

"No; but its memory will be as imperishable as is the wrath of Achilles or the wanderings of Odyssey."

"It is a shame that our Pontius can not hear you," said the emperor. "He has just completed the plan for a work destined to outlive me, him, and all of us. I speak of my own mausoleum. Besides that, I shall have him build gates, courts, and halls, of Egyptian style, at Tibur, in memory of our travels through this wonderful land. I expect him to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" exclaimed Balbilla, while a scarlet flush dyed her cheeks and spread over her forehead.

CHAPTER XX.

SOON after leaving Thebes, which event occurred on the second of the following November, Hadrian resolved to recognize Verus not only as his son but his successor.

Sabina's appeals were not the only influences which had prevailed to end this delay; it was partly the result of a wish peculiarly his own.

His wife's heart had longed for a child; his own had desired a son, and in Antinous he possessed one. This favorite was a boy of humble, though free birth, whom he had picked up during his travels; but it was in his power to make him great, to give him the highest posts of honor in Rome, and at last make him his own heir. If any one deserved this, it was Antinous, and to him alone could Hadrian give all he possessed without grudging. This had been his thought and wish for a long time, but the mood and character of the Bithynian continually removed him from its realization.

Hadrian had taken more pains than his predecessors to raise the lowered dignity of the senate, and still he felt quite certain of their consent to any measure he might propose.

The leading magistrates of the republic had been recognized under the most lawless of his predecessors, and still maintained their authority. Truly, all must, as they say, follow the emperor, but these were always at hand, and the empire might continue to exist within the limits set by Hadrian, with wise moderation, even with a weakling on the throne.

A few months before he would not have ventured to think

of adopting his favorite. Now he seemed to stand nearer the realization of this wish.

Antinous was indeed always a dreamer, but during these foot wanderings and hunting expeditions he had shown himself fresh, and vigorous, and sensible, and—after leaving Thebes—bold and almost cheerful. *This* Antinous was teachable, and if he should rise from one position to another, he could finally make him his successor. But at first he would keep his plan concealed.

Should he publicly adopt Verus, every thought of another choice would be closed to him. Yet he dared confidently venture to nominate this darling of Sabina, since the most celebrated among the Roman physicians had written to Hadrian, at his own request, that the undermined health of the pretor could not be restored; at the very best, he had but a few years longer to live. So then Verus might quietly decline in the midst of brilliant hopes! After his eyes were closed he would be able to place the dreamer—by that time matured into vigorous manhood—in his place.

Upon the return journey to Alexandria from Thebes Hadrian met his wife in Abydos, and there made known to her his determination to proclaim the son of her choice his successor.

Sabina thanked him with an “at last” that partly expressed her satisfaction and partly her vexation over the long delay of her husband.

Hadrian gave her permission to return to Rome directly from Alexandria—and on the same day he sent letters to the senate and to the prefect of Egypt. The letter for Titianus contained the commission to make known at once the adoption of the pretor, and on this occasion to proclaim a festival, and grant to the people, in the name of the emperor, all the favors which Egyptian custom prescribed for celebrating the birth of a successor to the throne.

The princely party honored the event by magnificent banquets, in which the emperor took no share. He was taken across the Nile to Antæopolis, in the desert, in order from there to penetrate the defiles of the Arabian mountain ranges, to hunt wild animals. None but Antinous, Mastor, and a few hunters and dogs bore him company.

At Besa he expected again to meet the ships. He had postponed a visit to this place until the return, because he had gone up on the western bank of the Nile, and a passage across the stream would have taken too much time.

On a sultry November evening the tents of the travelers

were set up between the Nile and the chalk mountains, which contained a long row of Pharaonic tombs.

Hadrian wished to visit these, for he was always entertained by the remarkable inscriptions upon the walls; but Antinous remained behind, for he had visited many more throughout Upper Egypt than was agreeable. They seemed to him all alike and unpleasant, for he had not the perseverance of his master in studying their significance. A hundred times he had gone, simply to bear Hadrian company—certainly not for his own sake—into those old caverns; but to-day he could scarcely contain himself with impatience and excitement, for he knew that a ride or a walk of only a few hours would take him to Besa—to Selene.

The emperor would perhaps be absent three or four hours, and if he had the courage, he might, before his return, seek out the girl for whom he longed and still be back before his master. But before doing this he must consider.

The emperor had climbed the mountain and might see him—messengers were expected, and he had been commissioned to receive them. Should bad news arrive, his master must under no condition be alone.

Ten times he went out to his good steed, thinking to swing himself upon his back. Once he even put out his hand to arrange the head-gear and the bridle; but while in the very act of putting the pliant, many-jointed bit between the teeth of his horse, his courage gave way again.

Meanwhile the hours sped on, and at last it was so late that the emperor might return at any moment, and it would be folly to think any longer of carrying out his desire.

Then the expected messenger arrived with many documents, but not Hadrian. It grew dark, and great drops of rain fell from the heavy clouds, and Antinous was still alone.

Joined to his longing there came regret over the lost opportunity to see Selene again, and he was troubled by the long absence of his master.

In spite of the rain, which fell still more heavily, he went into the open air, whose oppressive sultriness had destroyed the power of his will, and called the dogs, thinking he would go to seek the emperor; but at that moment he heard the bark of the Molossian, and soon after Hadrian and Mastor came out of the darkness into the illuminated space before the tent. The emperor bestowed but a brief greeting upon his favorite, and silently enjoyed his attentions as he dried his hair and brought refreshments, while Mastor bathed his feet and arrayed him in fresh garments.

As they stretched themselves upon their couches to partake of the evening meal, Hadrian said:

“A strange evening! How hot and oppressive is the atmosphere! We must be on our guard, for strange dangers are near.”

“What has happened to you, sire?”

“Various things. Directly before the door of the first tomb I wished to enter, I met an old black woman, who stretched out her hands to prevent our approach, uttering strange cries.”

“Did you understand her?”

“No; who can learn this Egyptian?”

“Then you do not know what she said?”

“It was my duty to find out. She had cried ‘Death!’ and again ‘Death.’ In the tomb she was watching were I know not how many victims of the plague.”

“Did you see them?”

“Yes. I have before only heard of this disease. It is horrible, and corresponds to the description I have read of it.”

“But, sire!” cried Antinous, reproachfully, and with anxiety.

“As we turned away from the tomb,” continued Hadrian, without giving any heed to the exclamation of the youth, “we met an elderly man clothed in white, and a singular-looking girl. She was lame, and of remarkable beauty.”

“Was she also going to the diseased?”

“Yes; she was carrying them bread and medicine.”

“But she did not go in to them!” exclaimed Antinous, earnestly.

“She did go, in spite of my warning. In her companion I recognized an old acquaintance.”

“An old one?”

“Probably he is older than I. We were together in Athens when both young. He was then a Platonist, and more zealous, perhaps also more highly gifted than the rest of us.”

“How comes such a man among victims of the plague in Besa? Is he a physician?”

“No. At Athens he was zealously seeking the truth, which he now claims to have found.”

“Here, among the Egyptians?”

“In Alexandria, among the Christians.”

“And the lame girl who accompanied the philosopher; does she also believe in the crucified God?”

“Yes, she is a nurse, or something of that sort. There is really something wonderful in the fanaticism of these people.”

“Is it true that they worship an ass and a dove?”

“Nonsense!”

“I do not wish to believe it. At any rate they are good, and care for all who suffer, even for strangers who have no claim upon them.”

“Where did you learn this?”

“In Alexandria one hears much of the sect.”

“Unfortunately, I persecute no intangible foe, and among such I reckon the thoughts and beliefs of men; but I sometimes question whether it be for the real profit of a state to have the citizens give up struggling against the troubles of life and comfort themselves with the hope of fancied happiness in another world, which perhaps exists only in their own imaginations.”

“I could wish to have life end at death,” said Antinous, thoughtfully. “And yet—”

“Well?”

“If I could know certainly that in that other world I should find those gathered whom I wish to see again, then could I wish a second life.”

“Would you like to be crowded and pushed to all eternity by the many old acquaintances which death has increased rather than diminished?”

“Not that, but I would that it might be permitted me to live forever with a few chosen souls.”

“Should I belong among them?”

“Yes,” cried Antinous, heartily, pressing his lips upon the hand of Hadrian.

“I knew that; but even at the price of never being without you, my darling, would I not relinquish the only right mortals can claim from the immortal gods.”

“What right can you mean?”

“The right to step out from among the living so soon as the not-being seems more endurable than the being, and it pleases me to call for death.”

“The gods certainly can not die.”

“And the Christians only wish to knit a new life upon the old.”

“Yet a fairer one than that on the earth.”

“They call it a blessed state. The mother of this everlasting life is that inextinguishable love of existence we find even among the most wretched of our race—its father is hope. They believe in freedom from suffering in that other world, for He whom they call their Redeemer has through His own death delivered them from all pain.”

“Can one, then, take upon himself the sufferings of others, as a garment, or a burden?”

“So they say, and my friend from Athens is persuaded of it. In the books of magic are many directions for laying over misfortune, not only from men upon animals, but also from one man upon another. There have been among slaves many remarkable attempts of that sort, and in some of the provinces I have had to contend with human sacrifices by which the gods are thought to be reconciled or appeased. Think of the innocent Iphigenia, who was led to the altar of sacrifice—and did not the yawning chasm beneath the forum close again after Curtius had leaped into it? Should destiny aim a deadly shaft at you, and I receive it into my own breast, perhaps she would be satisfied with the fling, and ask not who had received it.”

“The gods must have little discrimination if they would not accept your blood in place of mine.”

“Life is life, and that of the younger is worth more than that of the old. For you many joys are yet to bloom.”

“And you are indispensable to the whole terrestrial globe.”

“After me will come another. Are you ambitious, boy?”

“No, sire.”

“What does that signify? All others except you congratulate me on my son, Verus. Does not my choice please you?”

Antinous blushed, and looked at the ground in confusion; but Hadrian said:

“Say frankly what you are thinking.”

“The pretor is suffering.”

“He has but a few years to live, and after he is dead—”

“He may, perhaps, recover.”

“After he is dead, I must look about for another successor. What do you think? By whom does a man, be he slave or consul, best like to hear himself called ‘father’?”

“By one he loves most.”

“You are right; especially when that one has clung to you with truest devotion. I am a man like the others, and you, my dear fellow, stand always nearest my heart, and I shall bless the day when, before all the world, I may permit you to call me ‘father.’ Do not interrupt me. If you make vigorous use of your powers, and show the same wakeful sense in leading men as you do in the chase—if you seek to sharpen your mental powers and grasp what I teach you—it may happen that some day, Antinous, instead of Verus—”

“Only not that!” cried the youth, turning pale, and raising imploring hands.

“The greatness with which fate surprises us appears fright-

ful only while it is new. The captain is soon accustomed to storms at sea, and one comes at last to wear the purple as you do your chiton."

"Oh, sire! I beg you," exclaimed Antinous, "drop these thoughts. I am not fit for greatness."

"The tiniest shoots become palms."

"But I am only a poor weed that lives in your shadow. The proud Rome—"

"Rome is my serving-maid. She has often been ruled by men of very ordinary grade, and I wish to show her how the most beautiful among her sons can wear the purple. The world might expect such a choice from the emperor it has long known as an artist—that means, a priest of the beautiful. If not, I shall constrain it to yield its taste to mine."

"You are only mocking me, Cæsar," cried the Bithynian. "Certainly you can not be in earnest, and if you really love me—"

"Well, boy?"

"Then let me live quietly with you and care for you; desire nothing from me but reverence, love, and devotion."

"Those I possessed long ago, and for those treasures would like to reward my Antinous."

"Let me only live near you; let me, if that be necessary, die for you."

"I believe you would make the sacrifice for me of which we were speaking."

"At any hour, without the quiver of an eyelash."

"I thank you for this word. It has become a pleasant evening, and what a different one I expected!"

"Because the old woman before the tent terrified you?"

"'Death' is an abhorrent word. And yet to be dead can not terrify the wise, though that step out of the light into the darkness is frightful. The image of that old woman and her shrill cry will not go out of my thoughts. Then came the Christian, and made that heart-appealing speech. Before it grew dark he went home with the limping girl. I looked after them until dazzled by the sunlight that shone over the Lybian hills. The horizon was clear, but under the evening star clouds were gathering. In the west, say the Egyptians, is the kingdom of the dead. I could but think of that, and of the oracle, and the calamity with which the stars have threatened me this year, and the cry of the woman—all rushed into my thoughts together. As I saw how the sun struggled with the clouds, as it sunk nearer and nearer to the hills on the other side of the stream, I said to myself: If the sun go down clear,

I may look confidently toward the future; but, if it be obscured by the clouds before its setting, then will the prophecy of evil be fulfilled, and it will become me to take in sail and wait for the storm."

"And what happened?"

"The fiery ball glowed red, and countless rays streamed from it—each separated from the others, and all brilliant. It was as if the sinking ball were a center for innumerable arrows, which were to be shot into the clouds in all directions. The spectacle was wonderful and stirred my heart to joyful emotions, when a dark cloud dropped suddenly, as though exasperated by the wounds received from these golden arrows; then another, and another followed quickly, and black demons flung a shadowy gray veil over the luminous head of Helios, as the hangman draws a coarse black cloth over the face of the condemned victim, on whom he plants a knee, in order to strangle him."

Antinous covered his face with both hands, and murmured, in a tone of anguish:

"Horrible, horrible! What may be before us? Only hear the thunder, and the rain beating on the tent!"

"The clouds send down streams. The water is already running in, and the slaves must cut a trench to draw it off. Tighten the pins, you fellows outside, or the storm will overthrow this frail structure. And how sultry the atmosphere! The hot wind seems to warm the rain-gusts. Here it is dry. Mix me a cup of wine, Antinous. Were there any letters?"

"Yes, sire."

"Give them to me, Mastor."

The slave, who was busy trying to bank up soil and stones against the trickling stream of rain, sprung up, dried his hands quickly, took one of the sacks from the chest devoted to the papers of the emperor, and gave it to his master.

Hadrian opened the leather bag, took out a roll, which he tore open with a rapid motion, and cried out, after running his eye over the contents:

"What is this? I have opened the oracle of Apis. How did they come among my fresh dispatches?"

Antinous came nearer, and looking at the sack, said:

"Mastor has made a mistake. These are the documents from Memphis. I will bring you the right bag."

"Wait," said the emperor, seizing the hand of his favorite. "Is this a mere accident or the arrangement of Destiny? Why did the wrong sack come into my hand on this particular day? And why, among the twenty documents it contained, should I

have seized exactly this one? Look, I will explain these figures to you: There are three pairs of arms, provided with sword and shield, close beside the Egyptian name of the month which corresponds to our November. Those are three signs of calamity. The lutes at the top are significant of good; the masts yonder mean an ordinary state of things. Three of these characters always stand together. Three lutes signify special prosperity; two lutes and one mast, a mixed condition. One pair of arms and two lutes mean misfortune, to be followed by better conditions, and so on. Here, in November, begin the arms furnished with weapons, and they stand in threes and threes, and signify only threatening calamity without the mitigation of one lute. Do you see this, boy? Do you understand the meaning of these signs?"

"Well; but are you sure that you interpret them right? The arms furnished with weapons might lead to victory."

"No. The Egyptian uses them to indicate conflict, and conflict and unrest signify what we call disaster and evil."

"How peculiar!"

"No, it is well planned, for they say all was originally created perfect by the gods, but a portion of the universal All has changed its nature through the introduction of disturbing and inharmonious elements. This explanation was given me by a priest of Apis; and here, near the name November, stand the three arms, the horrible symbol. If the lightning which so incessantly illuminates this tent were to strike you and me and all of us, it would not surprise me. Something terrible is before us. Courage is essential to keep the eye clear under such prognostics of evil, and not to grow faint-hearted."

"Only use your own arms against the conflicting arms of the Egyptian gods, for they are strong," begged Antinous; but the emperor dropped his head, and said, despairingly:

"Even the divinities must yield to Destiny."

The thunder tempest continued to rage, and more than once tore the tent fastenings out of the ground, so that the slaves were compelled to hold the frail dwelling of their master down with their hands. The clouds sent great streams of water over the hills of the desert that for years had not felt a drop, and filled every dried channel in their declivities with a rushing flood.

Neither Hadrian nor Antinous closed their eyes during the whole of that terrible night.

The emperor had opened but one of the rolls from the letter-bag containing the latest dispatches. This brought tidings

that Titianus was greatly troubled by his old asthmatic difficulties, and begged permission to retire from public service. It was no light thing for the emperor to lose this faithful assistant, to relinquish the service of one whom he had in his eye for the work of reducing Judea—where revolt had again raised its head—to obedience, without the shedding of blood. Others might succeed in annihilating the seditious race, but only the mild and shrewd Titianus could conquer them with kindness.

The emperor had not courage to open another letter that night. He lay in silence upon his pillow until the morning dawned, and thought over the evil deeds of his life—the murder of Nigrinus, of Titianus, and the other senators, through which he had confirmed his own sovereignty, and vowed to make new and large sacrifices to the gods if they would protect him from the next impending calamity.

When he rose in the morning, Antinous was frightened by his appearance, for face and lips were bloodless.

After reading his dispatches, he left, with Antinous and Mastor, not on foot, but on horseback, for Besa, there to wait the coming of his party.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE unchained elements raged also in all their fury at Besa, on the Nile. The citizens of this old city had done all they were able to receive the traveling monarch in a worthy manner. The chief streets were trimmed with flowers, which hung in festoons from house to house, and also from mast to mast in the harbor, and directly on the bank, statues of Hadrian and Sabina had been erected. But the garlands were torn to the ground with the masts, and the disturbed waters of the stream dashed with ungovernable fury upon the bank, tearing away one strip after another of the fruitful soil, plunging like a liquid wedge into the chasms opened by the parching of the soil, and excavating the high bank at the place of landing.

Toward midnight the storm raged with unprecedented severity—it tore the covering of palm branches from the roofs of the houses and tossed the waters of the Nile into waves that looked like the surf of the sea.

The whole force of these waves was expended on a little promontory where the statues of the imperial pair stood. Shortly before the dawn, this little tongue of land, which had no artificial protection, gave way, and loose pieces of soil slid with a loud splash into the stream, followed by a portion of the overhanging bank, with a noise like thunder.

Then the surface of the earth behind which supported the statues sunk, and that of the emperor tottered and slowly bent toward the ground. When dawn revealed the condition of things, the pediment was still in its place, but the head was buried in the soil.

At break of day, as the citizens left their houses, they learned from the sailors and fisherman what had happened on the bank during the night; and as the storm subsided, hundreds, yes, thousands, of men, women and children crowded to the landing-place, and about the sunken statue. They saw the torn soil and knew that the stream had swept the land away from the bank, and so caused the misfortune. Was the Nile god Hapi perhaps angry with the emperor? Surely some portent of evil was in this accident to his statue.

The Toparch, the chief man of the city, undertook immediately the work of replacing it, as it was uninjured, and Hadrian might appear within a few hours. Many men of the place, both slaves and freedmen, assisted in this work, and soon the statue—of an Egyptian style of architecture—was set upright and stared into the harbor as before. Sabina's image was moved near to it, and the Toparch went home satisfied. Most of the workingmen and the idlers left the landing-place with him, but other curious visitors followed, who, not having seen the prostrate statue, expressed their opinions as to the manner of its fall.

"The storm could never have overturned this heavy mass of limestone," said a rope-maker, "and see how far it is from the wash-out land."

"It fell in consequence of the loosened soil," answered a baker.

"That is so," said a ship captain.

"Nonsense," cried the rope-maker; "had it stood on the loosened soil, it must have fallen into the water and been buried by the flood; any child can see that. Some other power has been called into play here."

"Perhaps," suggested the temple servant, who meddled with interpretation of signs, "the gods have thrown down the image of the proud Hadrian to give him a warning."

"The divinities do not trouble themselves much about human affairs in our day," answered a cobbler; "but in such a terrible night, when all quiet citizens stayed in their own houses, the enemies of the emperor had free play."

"We are all true subjects," said a baker, indignantly.

"Refractory rabble are you all," retorted a Roman soldier, who, like the whole cohort now serving in Hiermopolis, had

been in Judea under the cruel Tinnius Rufus. "Brawls never cease among you animal worshipers, and as for the Christians nesting on the other side that ravine, one could say the very worst things, and still be flattering them."

"The brave Fuscus is right," screeched a beggar. "That rabble brought the plague into our houses. Whenever the pestilence appeared you could be sure of finding them, both men and women. They came to my brother's. Whole nights long they sat beside the sick children, and of course both died."

"Were only my old legate, Tinnius Rufus, here," said the soldier, grimly, "they would all be no better off than their crucified God."

"I certainly have no sympathy with their religion," said the baker, "but the truth must stand. They are quiet, friendly people, who pay their debts promptly, do no harm, and show much kindness to the poor."

"Kindness!" exclaimed the beggar, who had often received an alms from the deacon of the community at Besa, and been advised to go to work. "The five priests, who served the grotto of Artemis, were enticed away from the Sekos by them, and shamelessly deserted the sanctuary of the goddess. And is it anything good that they should have poisoned my brother's children?"

"Why should they not kill children?" asked the soldier. "I heard something of that sort in Syria; and as to this statue, I will never wear my sword again—"

"Hear the brave Fuscus: he has seen much," was heard through the crowd.

"I will never wear my sword again, if they have not thrown over that statue in the darkness."

"No, no," replied the ship-master, positively; "it fell in consequence of the washing away of the land, I saw it lying there."

"Are you one of the Christians?" asked the soldier, "or do you believe I was jesting about my sword? I have served in Bithynia, in Syria, and Judea, and I know this rabble, you people. Hundreds of Christians there threw away their lives like an old shoe, rather than worship the statue of the emperor and offer sacrifice to our gods."

"You hear that!" screeched the beggar; "and have you seen a single one of them among the citizens who helped set it up again?"

"There were none," said the ship-master, who began to incline toward the opinion of the soldier.

“The Christians threw down the emperor’s statue,” shouted the beggar, among the crowd. “It is proved, and they shall pay well for it! Whoever is a friend of the divine Hadrian will help me drag them out of their houses.”

“No uproar,” broke in the soldier, addressing the frantic man. “There is the tribune; he will hear you.”

The Roman officer, who was approaching with a division of soldiers to receive Hadrian outside the city, was greeted with loud cries by the crowd, but he ordered them to be quiet, and learned from the soldier what had caused the excitement.

“It is very possible,” said the nervous and severe-looking man, who, as well as Fuscus, had served under Tinnius Rufus, and had obstinately fought his own way up from serving-boy to officer. “Very possible. But where are your proofs?”

“Most of the citizens assisted in replacing the statue, but the Christians held themselves aloof from the work,” cried the beggar. “Not one was seen here. Ask the ship-master, my lord; he was present, and can testify.”

“That certainly is more than suspicious. This affair must be thoroughly investigated. Attention, you people!”

“There comes a Christian wench!” cried the rope-maker.

“The lame Martha; I know her well,” broke in the beggar. “She runs into all the pest-houses, and poisons the people. She was three days and nights at my brother’s, turning the pillows for the children, till they drove her out. Wherever she goes there is death.”

Selene—now called Martha—paid no attention to the crowd, but, with her blind brother Helios—bearing the name of John—walked quietly along the path leading from the high bank to the landing-place.

She wished there to hire a boat, which would take her to a little village upon an island opposite the city, where there were sick Christians, who needed medicine and nursing.

For months her whole life had been devoted to the suffering. She had often carried help into heathen families, and shunned neither fever nor plague. And though, for that reason, her cheeks had not become rosy, yet from her eyes there shone a pure, mild light that glorified the serene beauty of her features.

As the girl came nearer to the captain, he fastened his eye upon her, and cried:

“Hey! pale wench, are you a Christian?”

“Yes, sir,” answered Selene, going quietly forward with her brother.

The Roman looked after her, and as she passed the statue

of Hadrian, with her head a little more bowed than before, he commanded her, in a tone of authority, to stop and tell him why she turned her face from the image of the emperor.

“Hadrian is our master as well as yours. I am in haste, for there are sick people on the island.”

“She will carry them no good,” cried the beggar. “Who knows what is hidden in her basket?”

“Silence!” broke in the tribune.

“They say, wench, that your fellow-believers threw down the emperor’s statue last night.”

“How can that be? We honor the emperor not less than you do.”

“I wish to believe you, and you shall prove it. There stands the statue of the divine Cæsar; follow me and pray to it.”

Selene looked with terror into the face of the stern man, but could not speak. “Well,” asked he, “will you follow me or not?”

Selene tried to be self-possessed, and when the soldier stretched out his hand toward her, she said, with trembling voice:

“We honor the emperor, but pray to no image; only to our Father in heaven.”

“There you have it!” exulted the beggar.

“I ask once more,” cried the tribune, “will you worship this image, or do you refuse to do it?”

In Selene’s soul there rose a mighty conflict. To resist the Roman was to endanger her own life and rouse the wrath of the populace against her brethren in the faith. Yielding to his demand would be blasphemy, breaking of faith toward the Saviour she loved, and sinning against the truth and her own conscience. A frightful anxiety so overcame her that she was unable to lift her heart in prayer. She could not, she dared not, do what was required of her, and still that irrepressible love of life in every mortal drove her foot forward until she stood before the stone idol.

“Raise your hands and worship the divine Cæsar,” cried the tribune, who followed her motions intently, as did all present.

She set her basket down on the ground and tried to draw her hand out of her brother’s, but the blind boy would not loosen his hold. He certainly knew what was required of his sister; he certainly was aware from the history of many martyrs that had been read to him, what awaited them both if she

spread his arms around one of the pillars, pressed his lips upon the rough wooden door, and let his head beat against it, as the tearless agony of his soul agitated his body. For a few moments he stood there, and did not hear the approach of light footsteps.

It was Maria who came, that she might pray once more beside the tomb of her dearest friend.

She recognized the youth at once, and lightly called his name.

"Maria!" he exclaimed, in return, and seizing her hand, pressed it vehemently, and asked:

"How did she die?"

"Slain," she answered, with hollow voice. "She would not worship the image of the emperor."

"Why did she not?"

"Because she was steadfast in her faith, and hoped in the grace of the Redeemer. Now she is a blessed angel."

"Do you feel sure of that?"

"As sure as is my hope to meet the martyr who lies here again in heaven."

"Maria!"

"Leave my hand free!"

"Will you do me a favor, Maria?"

"Gladly, Antinous; but please do not touch me."

"Take this money and buy the fairest wreath you can find. Hang it on this tomb, and cry as you do it, 'From Antinous to Selene!'"

Maria took the money the youth offered, and said:

"She often prayed for you."

"To her God?"

"To our Redeemer, that He would also give you blessedness. She died for Jesus Christ; now she is with Him, and He will grant her prayer."

Antinous was silent a long time, and then begged:

"Give me your hand once more, Maria, and now, farewell. Will you think kindly of me, and also pray for me to your Redeemer?"

"Yes, surely; and you will not forget the poor cripple?"

"Certainly not, my good girl. Perhaps we may some time meet again."

With these words Antinous hastened down the hill and through the city toward the Nile.

The moon had risen and was mirrored in the quieted water as its image had rested upon the sea when Antinous rescued Selene.

Here the streets seemed like abodes of the dead. Not a door was open, not a person to be seen.

Antinous paid the boy, sent him away, and went with beating heart from one house to another. All looked neat, and were surrounded with trees and shrubbery; and although smoke rose above many roofs, they seemed all to be deserted. At last he heard voices, and guided by the sound, he went through a narrow street to an open space, where hundreds of people—men, women, and children—were gathered before a little house that stood in a garden of palms. He asked an old man for the dwelling of Hannah, who pointed silently toward the building which seemed the center of all attention.

The heart of the youth beat tumultuously, and still he felt anxious and embarrassed, and asked himself if it would not be better to turn back and seek the spot again in the morning, when Selene might be alone. But no! Perhaps he might now be permitted to see her. Modestly making his way through the crowd, who were singing a hymn, from which he could not understand whether they wished to express sorrow or joy, he reached the gate of the garden and saw the deformed Maria. She was kneeling beside a covered bier, and was weeping.

Could Hannah be dead? No, for there she came through the door of her dwelling, leaning upon the arm of an old man—pale, collected, and without tears.

Both advanced a little, when the old man offered a short prayer, and bending forward, drew the covering from the bier.

Antinous took one step forward, but tottered back instantly, struck his hands over his eyes, and stood without motion, as if rooted to the spot. There was no vehement lamentation. The old man said a few words to the assembled people.

Around him there was subdued weeping, singing, praying, but Antinous saw and heard nothing of it all. His hands had dropped, and his eyes were fastened on the cold, white face, until Hannah again covered it with a cloth. Even then he stood motionless. Only after six young women had lifted the coffin of Selene, and four mothers that of the little Helios, upon their shoulders, and the whole company had gone with them, he also turned and followed the funeral train.

From a distance, he saw both larger and smaller coffins carried into a rocky sepulcher, the door closely fastened, and the funeral train scattered hither and thither.

At last he was alone before the door of the tomb. The sun went down and darkness was rapidly descending over the valley and the hills. As there was now no one to notice him, he

continued to resist the demand of the Roman, but he had no fear, and whispered to her:

“We will not do their will, Martha; we will not pray to idols, but be faithful to the Saviour. Turn me away from the statue, and now let us pray ‘Our Father.

In a loud voice, and turning his sightless eyeballs toward heaven, the boy offered the Lord’s Prayer.”

Selene had first turned him, and then herself, away from the idol toward the stream, and followed, with lifted hands, the example of her brother. Helios clung fast to her, her loud prayer mingled with his, and both saw and heard and felt nothing more that was done to them. To the blind boy was granted a vision of light in the far distance, and to Selene was given an earnest of that blessed state where she would be satisfied with the fullness of love, while the frantic crowd dragged her to the earth before the statue of Hadrian and plunged upon the body of the faithful boy.

The military tribune had in vain attempted to keep back the crowd, and when at last the soldiers succeeded in separating them from their victims, the two young hearts, in the midst of their triumphant faith, and the hope of a more blessed and unending life, had already ceased to beat.

This occurrence vexed the tribune and filled him with anxiety. This young woman, this fair child, whose corpses lay there before him, had deserved a better fate, and he might be called to answer for their death, for the law ordained that no Christian should be punished on account of his faith without a judicial sentence. So he commanded that the bodies should be carried to the house where they belonged, and threatened a heavy punishment to any one who should that day enter the Christian quarter. The beggar went shouting before the bier into the house of his brother, to announce to the wife of the same the fact that the lame Martha, who had nursed her daughters to death, had been slain. But he reaped a poor reward, for the poor woman mourned Selene as she had her own children, and cursed both him and her murderers.

Hadrian arrived at Besa before sunset, and found there magnificent tents prepared for his reception and that of his retinue. The accident which had befallen his statue was concealed from him, but he felt anxious and ill. Wishing to be entirely alone, he sent Antinous out to get a look at the city before it should be dark.

The Bithynian accepted the permission with joy, as a gift from the gods, hastened through the decorated part of the city, and was conducted by the boy to the Christian quarter.

The youth knew the emperor would be expecting him, but he did not return to the tent. Violent agitation had overmastered him. Restlessly he paced the bank of the stream and reviewed the prominent events of his own life. Every word of the conversation with Hadrian on the previous evening returned so vividly that he seemed to hear it a second time. He saw, in imagination, the modest home of Bithynia; his darling mother, and the brothers and sisters he would never look upon more. Again he recalled the terrible hour in which he had deceived the best of masters and become an incendiary. Then a fearful dread seized him, as the thought of Hadrian's wish to set him in the place of the man whom the wise monarch had perhaps nominated to be his own successor, in consequence of that interference, overpowered his mind. He, Antinous, who could not plan from one day to another, and went away from profound discussions between serious men because he was unable to follow them—he, who knew only to obey; he, who was never satisfied, except when alone with his master and his dreams, and far away from the tumult of the world; he, to be burdened with the purple, the cares, and mountain-weight of its responsibility! No, this thought was intolerable, was frightful; and yet Hadrian never gave up any wish he had expressed in words. The future appeared to him like a threatening fiend. Pain, unrest, misfortune, stared into his face, turn which way he would. What was the terrible calamity that threatened his master?

It was approaching—it must come—unless some one could be found to step between him and destiny, and receive in his own breast, in his own waiting heart, the spear hurled by a wrathful God.

He was the one—the only one to do this! As a sudden blaze of light, this thought flashed into his soul. And should he have the courage to offer himself, to devote his own life for his dear master, then would every wrong toward him be royally expiated—then, then—oh, how wonderful, oh, how glorious!—then he might perhaps find entrance within the gates of that blessed world which the prayers of Selene had opened for him, then he might indeed see the dear mother again and the father, and some time the brothers and sisters also—but now—within an hour—perhaps, in a moment, her whom he loved and who had gone on before him to death!

Such an irradiation of hope his soul had never before known.

There lay the Nile, there was a boat! He plunged into the water, and with the same vigorous leap with which he was wont to spring from rock to rock in the chase, jumped into

the boat. Already he had seized the oars when Mastor, whom the emperor had sent out to seek him, recognized him in the moonlight, and desired him to return to the tent.

Antinous did not follow, but cried, as he rowed further out into the stream:

“Greet the master, salute him thousands and thousands of times from me, and say to him that Antinous loved him more than his own life. Destiny demands a victim. The world can not do without Hadrian, but Antinous is a poor nothing whom no one will miss but his emperor, and for him Antinous throws himself upon the altar of sacrifice.”

“Hold, unhappy one; turn back!” cried the slave, and threw himself into a boat, but that of the Bithynian flew, impelled by powerful strokes, swifter and swifter, with the current. Mastor used all the strength of his arms to overtake the boat, but could not get near.

In this wild race both reached the middle of the stream, when the slave saw the oars of the Bithynian suddenly fly into the air, and a moment later heard the voice of Antinous call aloud the name of “Selene,” and was forced, in helpless inactivity, to see the youth plunge into the waves, and the Nile swallow in its flood that fairest of all sacrifices.

CHAPTER XXII.

A NIGHT and the half of another day had passed since the death of the Bithynian. Boats and water craft from all the province were collected before Besa, to seek the body of the drowned youth; the shore swarmed with human beings; pans of burning pitch and torches eclipsed the light of the moon with their glare, but they found not the fair corpse.

Hadrian knew how Antinous had died. Mastor had more than once repeated to him the last words of his faithful friend, adding nothing, and holding back nothing. The emperor's memory retained them all and he sat until morning, and again from morning till the sun reached its meridian, repeating them over to himself. He brooded thus without food or drink.

The threatened calamity had fallen; and what a calamity! If destiny accepted this suffering, which now filled his soul, in place of any other misfortune, he might reckon on years of freedom, but it truly seemed to him that he would rather live the rest of his days in wretchedness and want with his Antinous than without him to enjoy all that men count prosperity, joy and well-being.

Sabina, with her own and his retinue, had arrived—a crowd of beings—but he strictly declined seeing one of them; not even his wife was admitted to his presence.

The relief of tears was denied him, but the pain which agonized his heart and filled his spirit with gloom made him so irritable that even a familiar voice, heard at a distance, disturbed and made him angry.

Those who had arrived on the ships dared not approach the tents prepared for their reception, because he wished to be alone in his anguish.

Mastor, whom he had heretofore looked on as a useful chattel more than a human being, now seemed nearer, because he had been the only witness of his darling's departure.

Toward the close of this most miserable of nights the slave asked if he should not call the physician from the ship, because Hadrian looked so pale; but he forbade it, saying:

“Could I only weep as women do, or as other fathers from whom death has torn away their sons, that would be my best medicine. It will be hard for you poor people now, for the sun of my life has lost its brightness and the trees along my path their verdure.”

When again alone he stared into vacancy and murmured to himself:

“All humanity will mourn with me, for yesterday, when one asked what beauty was possible to the race, they could point proudly to thee, my faithful comrade, and say: ‘Behold godlike beauty.’ Now the crown has been severed from the trunk of the palm, and the mutilated thing is ashamed of its own ugliness. Were all mortality but one person it would today seem like a man whose right eye had been torn from his head. I will not look upon the haggard and shapeless thing, lest it destroy in me the taste for real beauty. Oh, thou faithful, thou true, thou beautiful companion, what a mistaken frenzy possessed thee! And still I can not blame thy folly. Thou hast smitten my soul with the deepest of all wounds, and still I can not be angry with thee; verily, thy loyalty was superhuman, it was godlike!”

With these words he rose and said, in a firm, resolute voice:

“Hear me, ye immortals, as I stretch out my hand; every city in the empire shall erect an altar to Antinous. The friend of whom you robbed me I will make your companion. Receive him kindly, ye immortal rulers of the world! Who among you can boast of beauty that exceeds his? And who among you all has shown me such goodness and faithfulness as this your new associate?”

This vow seemed to do Hadrian good. With a firm tread he paced his tent for half an hour, and then called Heliodorus, his private secretary, who brought parchment and wrote what his lord dictated.

This was nothing less than a proclamation that in Antinous the world possessed a new divinity.

In the afternoon a breathless messenger brought tidings that the body of the Bithynian had been found. Thousands hastened to look at it, and among them came Balbilla, who had behaved like a person distracted since learning the fate of her idol. She had hastened up and down the bank in garments of mourning and with loosened hair.

The Egyptians likened her to Isis searching for the body of her beloved husband Osiris.

She abandoned herself to grief, and her companion vainly implored her to remember her rank and her womanly dignity. Balbilla pushed her violently away, and when the tidings came that the Nile had relinquished its prey she hastened on foot, and in the midst of the crowd, toward the corpse.

Her name was known to all, and being recognized as a friend of the empress, willing obedience was rendered when she commanded those bearing the bier on which the rescued body lay to set it down upon the ground and remove the covering.

Pale and trembling, she came forward and turned her eyes upon it; but for only one short moment was able to bear the sight. She turned away shuddering, and commanded the bearers to go forward.

As the mourning train disappeared, and she could no longer hear the shrill cries of the Egyptian women, or see them, as they walked with hair and brow and breast daubed with the dampened soil, and their arms flung wildly into the air, she turned to her companion, and said quietly: "Let us go home, Claudia." At the evening meal she appeared dressed in black, as were Sabina and all her company, but calm and ready to answer every question addressed to her.

The architect Pontius traveled in her company from Thebes to Besa.

She had omitted nothing that could punish him for the long delay, and had, without mercy, insisted upon his hearing all her verses to Antinous.

He had listened to them quietly, and expressed his opinions of them exactly as if they had been addressed to an image or a god instead of a living man. This epigram was praised, that criticised, another condemned. To her confession, that she

had been in the habit of sending him fruit and flowers, he had shrugged his shoulders, and said, kindly:

“Go on giving him the same attentions. I know that from this god you expect no favors in return for your offerings.”

This word surprised and pleased her. Pontius always understood her. She allowed him to look into her soul, and told him how much she loved Antinous when he was absent, and laughingly added that she became utterly indifferent so soon as he appeared.

As she utterly lost her self-control after his death, Pontius left her alone and begged Claudia to do likewise.

On the day after its discovery the body was burned upon costly wood. Hadrian refused to see it after learning that the water had changed the appearance of his darling.

A few hours after the ashes of the Bithynian had been collected in a golden vase and brought to Hadrian, the Nile fleet, which this time bore also the emperor, set sail for Alexandria.

The monarch remained with only his slave and his secretary upon the boat that carried him. Sometimes he sent for Pontius to visit him, and heard gladly his deep voice as they discussed either the plans for his mausoleum at Rome, or the memorial monument he proposed to erect, after a design of his own, in the larger city to be founded on the site of Besa, and which he already called Antinoë.

But these interviews occupied only a few hours, and Pontius was then at liberty to return to the company of Balbilla on the ship of Sabina.

A few days after they left Besa he sat one evening alone with her on the deck of the vessel, that, carried forward by the current and propelled by a hundred oars, was rapidly nearing its destination. Since the unfortunate death of the favorite, Pontius had carefully avoided speaking of him to Balbilla.

But now she had become attentive and social as before, and sometimes a sparkle of the old cheerfulness appeared in her eyes. Pontius thought he understood her varying moods, and did not touch upon the cause of the violent but quickly extinguished fever from which she had suffered.

“What have you been discussing with the emperor to-day?” asked Balbilla.

Pontius looked at the deck for a moment, considering whether he should utter the name of Antinous. She noticed his hesitation, and said:

“You can speak; I am able to hear all. That foolishness is past.”

“The emperor is at work upon plans for building a new city to be called Antinoë, and also a memorial monument to his poor favorite,” answered Pontius. “He will not let any one help him; but I must show him the difference between the possible and the impossible.”

“He looks up at the stars, and you at the road on which you are walking.”

“An architect can not use that which totters or does not stand upon firm ground.”

“That is a hard word, Pontius. I have certainly behaved very foolishly within these last weeks.”

“Would that all the wavering might recover their equilibrium as quickly and so solidly as you do! Antinous was a demi-god in beauty, and a brave, honest fellow besides.”

“Do not say any more to me of him,” said Balbilla, shuddering. “His look was horrible. Can you forgive my conduct?”

“I have never been angry with you.”

“But you have withdrawn your respect.”

“No, Balbilla. The beauty so dear to all, as a kiss of the muse, enticed the light-winged poetic soul to fly out of the right path. Let her fly! The noble womanhood of my friend was never carried after it. That stands on firm ground, I am sure.”

“What a good, kind word! But it is too good and too kind! I am a poor creature, moved by every breeze, a vain fool who knows not in this hour what it may need in the next—a spoiled child who loves to do what it ought not, a weak girl who finds pleasure in opposing the opinions of men. For all in all—”

“For all in all a gentle favorite of the gods, who to-day climbs the rocks with a vigorous step, and to-morrow tends the flowers in the sunshine—for all in all a being unlike every other, wanting for the perfection of womanhood only—”

“I know what I need,” cried Balbilla; “a strong man on whom I can rely, whose warnings I should heed. You—you are that man. You, and no other, for when with you it is hard to do anything else than what is right. Here I am, Pontius. Will you have me, with all my caprices, my faults and my weaknesses?”

“Balbilla,” exclaimed the architect, beside himself with profound astonishment, and pressed her hand long and fervently to his lips.

“You will? You will have me? You will never desert me; will warn, support and protect me?”

“Till the end of my life, even unto death, as my child, as my own eyes—as—dare I then say and believe—as my beloved, my other self, my wife!”

“Oh, Pontius, Pontius!” she returned, and pressed his strong hand in both her own. “This hour gives to the orphaned Balbilla father and mother again, and besides that, the husband she loves!”

“Mine, mine!” cried the architect. “Oh, eternal gods! all my life long I have not found time to enjoy the blessings of love, and now you grant me the treasure so long withheld with interest and compound interest.”

“And can you, a reasonable man, so overestimate the value of your jewel? You will find something good in it, and life is no longer worth living without its possessor.”

“And to me it has long seemed cold and desolate without you, strange, unique, incomparable creature!”

“But why did you not come sooner, and save me from being such a fool?”

“Because, because,” answered Pontius, earnestly, “a flight toward the sun seemed to me too bold; because I remembered that my father’s father—”

“He was the noblest man whom the ancestor of my family attracted toward its greatness.”

“He was—consider it well in this hour—your grandfather’s slave.”

“I know that; but I know also that no man on earth is worthier of freedom than you are, and whom I could so humbly ask, as I ask you: Take me, the poor foolish Balbilla, to be your wife; lead me and make of me what I am capable of being to your honor and my own.”

The rapid voyage brought to Pontius and his beloved hours and days of highest happiness. Before the fleet entered the harbor of Mareotis, Pontius revealed his happy secret to the emperor. Hadrian smiled, for the first time since the death of Antinous, and asked Pontius to bring Balbilla to him.

“I have poorly interpreted the Pythian oracle,” said he, after laying the hand of the poetess into that of the architect.

“Do you wish to know, Pontius, how it runs?”

“You need not help me, dear child. Whatever I read once or twice I never forget. Pythia said:

“ ‘What to thee was dearest and highest, that thou shalt lose,
And from Olympian heights descend to earth beneath;
But under the flying dust, a careful look will discover
Solid building of stone, with marble and rocky foundation.’ ”

“You have chosen wisely, girl; the oracle assures your treading a firm road through life. As to the dust of which it speaks, that is in a certain sense inevitable; but this hand wields a broom which can sweep it away. Celebrate your wedding in Alexandria, so soon as you please, but afterward you must go to Rome. I shall make that condition. I have long wished to introduce new and worthy members to the rank of knighthood, for only thus can its fallen dignity be restored. This ring makes you a knight, my Pontius; and for such a man as you are, and the husband of Balbilla, we shall find later a place in the Senate. As to what there may be of ‘marble and rocky foundation’ in our time, you can show in the building of my mausoleum. Have you changed the plan of the bridge?”

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE news of the recognition of the “false Eros” as successor of Hadrian was received with rejoicing, and again the citizens used their opportunity to hold a succession of feasts. Titianus took pains to see that the usual acts of grace were performed, and among these was the opening of the prison of Canopus, which made Pollux free.

The unfortunate sculptor had become very pale during his imprisonment, but neither emaciated or physically debilitated, while the freshness of his disposition, his joyous courage and originality, seemed utterly broken. His features—while on the way from Canopus to Alexandria in his torn and soiled chiton—expressed neither gratitude for the unexpected gift of liberty, nor pleasure in the anticipated meeting with his own relatives and with Arsinoe. He went from one street of the city to another with unsympathetic indifference; but he knew the way, and his feet took the path leading to the house of his sister.

How Diotima rejoiced, how the children shouted, how impatient they all were to lead him to the old people! How high the Graces leaped to welcome the wanderer to the new home of Euphion!

And Doris!—poor Doris almost lost her senses in the joyous surprise, and her husband was obliged to catch her in his arms, as her long-missing and yet never given-up son, stood suddenly before her, and said, indifferently:

“Here I am.”

How tenderly they kissed and caressed the beloved fugitive returned at last! Euphion expressed his joy in both prose

and verse, and brought his handsomest theatrical robes out of the trunk to replace the torn chiton of his son.

A vigorous stream of imprecations and maledictions poured from his lips as Pollux related his story.

It was difficult to get through with it, so often did his father interrupt and his mother constrain him to eat and drink far beyond his power. Even after he assured her that he was satiated, she put two new pots on the fire, for she was sure he must have been starved in the prison and would be ready to eat again within two hours. Euphorion himself took him to the bath in the evening, and would not leave his side for a moment on the return home. The consciousness of his presence was like an agreeable physical sensation. Usually, Euphorion was not inquisitive, but now he could not cease asking questions, until Doris led her son to the freshly prepared bed.

After he had retired, Doris came again into his chamber, kissed him on the forehead, and said:

“To-day you are thinking too much of that terrible prison; but to-morrow, my boy, will you not be yourself once more?”

“Let me rest now, mother, I shall be better,” he replied. “Such a bed is a sleeping potion; the rough plank in the prison was different.”

“You have asked nothing of your Arsinoe,” said Doris.

“What have I to do with her? Now let me sleep.”

On the next morning Pollux was just as he had been on the previous evening, and for many days his condition remained unchanged.

He hung his head, spoke only when questioned, and if Doris or Euphorion attempted to speak with him of the future, he would ask:

“Am I a burden to you?” or say, “You ought not to trouble me.”

Yet he was kind, took the children of his sister into his arms, played with the Graces, walked up and down, and did justice to the food set before him. Now and then he asked about Arsinoe. Once he allowed himself to be led to her dwelling, but did not knock on the door of Paulina, and seemed to be frightened by the grand house.

After being inactive a week, and so sluggish and indolent and indisposed to exertion that the heart of his mother was filled with anxiety as she looked at him, Teuker suggested a happy thought.

The young gem-cutter had not of late been a frequent guest in the house of his parents, but since his brother's return he came almost daily. His term of apprenticeship was over, and

he seemed on the way to become a master of his art. Nevertheless, he considered his brother's natural gifts to be much superior to his own, and tried by every means to awaken his dormant energies.

"At this table," he said to his mother, "Pollux used to work. This evening I will bring a lump of clay and a good piece of wax. You shall place them here, and lay his tools and implements beside them. Perhaps the sight of these things may waken his old love for sculpture. Let him make only a doll for the children, he would get into the spirit of the thing, and soon go from the smaller to the larger."

Teuker brought the articles, and Doris placed them on the table with the implements for work, and watched the conduct of her son next morning with a beating heart.

He rose late, as he had done every morning since his return, and sat long before the bowl of soup his mother had provided for his breakfast. Then he strolled over to the table, and stopping before it, took a bit of the clay into his hand, rolling it between his fingers into little balls and cylinders, brought it close to his eye for scrutiny, then threw it upon the floor, and said, while he rested both hands on the table, and leaned over to his mother:

"You want to have me work again, but I can not. I should accomplish nothing."

Tears came into the eyes of the old woman, but she made no reply.

Toward evening Pollux begged her to put away the tools. After he had gone to rest she did so, and while moving about in the dark lumber-room where she kept them with all sorts of unused things, the light she carried fell upon the partly finished wax model, which had been the last work of her unfortunate son.

This suggested a new idea. She called Euphorion, and bade him throw the clay into the court, and place the model on the table, near the wax. Then she placed the very implements he had used on the fateful day of their expulsion from the Lochias near to the well-begun image, and requested her husband to leave the house with her early in the morning, and remain away until afternoon.

"It may be," she said, "when he sees his last work, if no one is near to distract, or to notice what he does, that he may find and gather up the scattered threads again and go on with the work where he left it."

The mother heart had hit upon the true idea.

After Pollux had taken his soup, he went, as on the day be-

fore, to the table, but the sight of his last work had quiet a different effect upon him from the crude mass of clay and wax. His eye brightened. With careful scrutiny he walked around the table and examined the work as carefully as though for the first time inspecting some new and beautiful object. Memories awoke within him. He laughed aloud; he struck his hands together and said to himself:

“Magnificent! Something can be made out of that thing!”

His lassitude disappeared, a confident smile played about his lips, and he plunged his hand firmly into the wax. But he did not at once begin the work. He tested the power of his fingers to mold the pliant stuff according to his will. The wax was no less obedient to his bending and twisting than in former days. Perhaps, then, the anxiety which had consumed his life—the fear that he had utterly lost his skill and his claim to be a sculptor while in the prison was only a baseless delusion!

He would at least try how it would go.

No one was there to notice him, and he might venture.

Great drops of anxiety stood in beads upon his forehead as he at last concentrated the power of his will, threw back his hair in the old way, and seized with both hands a large piece of wax.

There stood the model for the statue of Antinous, partly finished. Could he succeed in copying that beautiful head off-hand?

His breath came quicker and his fingers trembled at the outset. But soon his hand gained its old firmness, his eye became keen and steady, and the work made good progress.

The handsome face of the Bithynian stood clearly before his inner eye; and when, four hours later, his mother looked in at the window to see how her device had succeeded, she gave a loud exclamation of surprise—for there, alike in every feature, stood the head of Antinous, upon a support, near to the partly finished model.

Before she had crossed the threshold her son rushed toward her, lifted her up in his arms, kissed her on lips and forehead, and cried, beaming with joy:

“Mother, I can work! Mother, mother, I am not lost!”

Later in the afternoon Teuker came in and saw what he had done, and, for the first time, really rejoiced in his brother's reappearance.

While the two artists sat together, and Teuker suggested, in reply to the complaints of Pollux about the poor light in the house of his parents, that he finish his statue in the workshop

of his, Teuker's, master, Euphorion, climbing silently to the highest shelf of his provision shed, brought to light an amphora, filled with noble Chian wine, which had been given to him by a rich merchant, for whose wedding feast he had committed the part of Hymenæus in a choir of youths. For twenty years this jar had been preserved for some especially happy occasion. This, and his best lute, were the only articles which Euphorion carried with his own hand to the house of Diotima from the Lochias, and thence to his new home.

With dignified pride the musician placed the ancient amphora before his sons, but Doris quickly covered it with her hands, and said:

"I do not grudge the good gift, and would gladly drink a cup with you now; but a shrewd general does not celebrate his victory before the battle is over. So soon as the statue of the beautiful youth is finished, I will myself deck the old jar with ivy, and beg you to favor us, my good old man; but not before."

"Mother is right," said Pollux. "The amphora is now set apart for me, and if you allow it, father shall not strike the wig of black pitch from its head until Arsinoe is again mine."

"Very well, my boy," cried Doris, "and then I will crown not only the jar, but all of us as well, with nothing but sweet roses."

On the next day Pollux carried his unfinished model to the workshop of his brother's master. The worthy man cleared the place for the sculptor, for he valued him highly, and wished to make up to him, so far as possible, for the injury he had suffered from the unworthy Papias.

From sunrise until the evening approached Pollux was now at his work. With true devotion, he gave himself up to the reawakened delight of creation. Instead of wax, he used clay, and made a full-length figure of Antinous, representing him as the young Bacchus might have appeared to the pirates. The folds of a mantle fell lightly over his shoulder to the ankles, exposing the right arm and the perfectly proportioned chest. Vine leaves and grapes adorned his richly curling locks, and a pine-apple, rising upward like a flame, rested upon his crown. The left arm was raised, and the gracefully curved fingers grasped lightly a Thyrsus staff, which rested on the ground and extended above the head of the god. Partly hidden by the folds of the mantle was a lordly wine-jar.

For a week Pollux had zealously devoted all the hours of daylight to his work. Just before night fell he had slipped away from the shop to walk up and down before the house of

Paulina, but he refrained from knocking on the door and calling for his dear Arsinoe. He had learned from his mother how carefully she was guarded from him and his, but this strictness of the Christian was not what hindered an attempt to recover his dearest possession—but a vow given to himself not to entice her away from her new and safe home before he was fully convinced of his own power to be a sculptor, who might hope to accomplish great things, and dared venture to link the destiny of a beloved object with his own.

As he, on the morning of his eighth day of work, was resting a little, the master of his brother passed by, and stopping to note his progress, exclaimed, after looking at it long and carefully: "It is the work of a master; our time has produced nothing to compare with it."

One hour later Pollux stood at the door of Paulina, and let the heavy knocker fall upon it. When the steward opened to him he asked for Paulina, but she was not at home. Then he inquired for Arsinoe, the daughter of Keraunus, who had been received by the widow.

The old servant shook his head, saying: "My mistress is in pursuit of her. She disappeared last evening. A most ungrateful creature! She has tried several times before to run away."

The sculptor laughed, slapped the steward on the back, and said:

"I will find her very soon!" Then he sprang down the steps and hastened to the house of his parents.

Arsinoe had received much kindness in the house of Paulina, but had also gained some painful experiences. For months she had believed her lover to be dead. Pontius had told her of his disappearance, and her benefactress always spoke of him as one dead. The poor child had shed many tears for him, and when the longing to talk of him with some one who had loved him overcame her, she begged Paulina to permit her to visit his mother, or allow Doris to come to her house.

But the widow had commanded her to give up every thought of the idol-maker and all belonging to him, and spoke with contempt of the good wife of the gate-keeper.

It was just at this time also that Selene left the city; and now the longing to see her old friends became a passionate craving in the heart of Arsinoe.

One day she slipped into the street, determined to search for Doris; but the door-keeper, whom Paulina had commanded not to allow her exit without her own special permission,

noticed her departure, and led her, not only this time, but on several other occasions, back to her foster-mother.

It was not alone the desire to speak of Pollux which made the resistance of Arsinoe, in this house, so intolerable; it rested on several other grounds.

She felt herself a prisoner, and was really such; for after each attempt at running away her freedom became more restricted. It is true that she had failed to acquiesce in what was required of her, and had indeed met her foster-mother with violent words, tears, and bitter complaint; but these unhappy scenes—that always ended with Paulina's assurance that she forgave her—were followed by long intervals in her drives, and by various petty mortifications.

Arsinoe began to hate her benefactress and everything connected with her. The hours of prayer and instruction were seasons of martyrdom; and soon the doctrines to which she might have been won, became so confounded with the being who sought to drive her into them, that she defiantly closed her heart against their influence.

The Bishop Eumenes, who had been elected patriarch of the Alexandrian Christians, visited her oftener than before while Paulina lived at her country house.

Her foster-mother really believed she could do without his help, and that she must accomplish alone the work of her conversion; but the sympathy of this worthy old man was extended toward this poor, ill-guided child, and he tried to comfort and point out to her the goal toward which Paulina was leading her in its real beauty.

After such discourses, Arsinoe was softened and inclined to believe in God, and to love Christ; but so soon as her foster-mother called her again to the school-room, and repeated the very same things—only in her own manner—the heart of the young girl closed again; and when she was expected to pray—though she raised her hands as usual—yet out of defiance, offered her devotion only to the Grecian divinities.

Sometimes the heathen acquaintances of Paulina came in their costly finery to pay visits, and their appearance reminded Arsinoe of former days. How poor she had been then; and yet she always had a blue or a red ribbon to braid with her hair and to bind her peplum. Now she was allowed to wear only white garments; even the smallest colored ornament in her hair or upon her dress was strictly forbidden. Such vain trifles, Paulina would tell her, might do very well for the heathen, but the Lord did not notice the body. He looked only into the heart. Ah, the heart of this poor unfortunate

child could certainly be no pleasant spectacle to the Father in heaven, for it was boiling with hatred, disgust, distress, impatience and blasphemy from morning until evening. This young nature had been formed for love and cheerfulness, yet both these had left her sorrowing. But Arsinoe had not ceased to long for them. In the early part of November, on their change of residence to the city house, she had failed in another attempt to run away, and Paulina determined to punish her by not speaking to her for a fortnight, and forbidding any of her slaves to do so.

The social Greek child was reduced almost to despair during these days, so that she meditated climbing to the roof and throwing herself down from thence. But Arsinoe was still too fond of life to carry out so cruel a plan.

On the first of December Paulina spoke with her once more, forgave her, as usual, after a long, kind speech, and told her how many hours she had spent in prayer for her improvement and enlightenment. Paulina spoke the truth, in one sense, yet she had never felt true love for Arsinoe, and had for a long time seen her go and come with aversion; yet she needed her conversion to obtain fulfillment of her heart's dearest wish. It was for the sake of her daughter's eternal blessedness, and not for the cure of the refractory girl in her own household that she asked for her enlightenment, and dared not relax any efforts to soften the obdurate heart of her foster-child.

On the afternoon preceding the morning when Pollux at last knocked on the door of her house the sun was especially bright, and Paulina allowed Arsinoe to ride with her.

They visited the house of a Christian family living on the Lake of Mareotis, and so it happened that their return was delayed until almost evening.

Arsinoe had long ago learned to see all that went on around her, while pretending to look at the ground, and as the vehicle turned into their own street, she noticed in the distance a man who resembled her long-wept Pollux. She fastened her eyes upon him, and put a violent constraint upon herself to avoid screaming; for it was certainly he who walked slowly along the street. She could not be mistaken, for the torches of a couple of slaves who walked before a sedan fell full upon his face and figure. Then he was not lost; he was alive, he was seeking her!

She wanted to shout for joy, but controlled herself until the carriage stopped before the house of Paulina. According to custom, the porter hastened forward to assist his mistress in descending from the high-built veda; and in the moment

when Paulina's back was turned, Arsinoë sprung out on the opposite side of the covered vehicle, and ran down the street where she had seen her lover. Before Paulina had noticed her absence she was lost among the thousands who, at that time of the evening, streamed from the factories and workshops, going toward their homes.

The slaves of Paulina, who were instantly sent out to overtake the fugitive, returned this time without success, and Arsinoë also failed to find him she sought.

For an hour she wandered in vain, and then began to query how she could find the house of his parents. Rather than return to her benefactress, she would have spent the night with the homeless wanderers in the vestibule of the temple, with only the hard marble pavement for a bed. At first she rejoiced in the possession of her liberty, but as no one could tell her where the singer Euphorion lived, and young fellows pressed after her with insolent language, anxiety drove her into a street leading to the Bruchiom.

She had not become free from her persecutors when a sedan, accompanied by lictors and many torch-bearers, passed by, in which sat Julia, the good wife of the prefect. Arsinoë knew her at once, and following, reached the door of her house at the same time with Julia, who saw her beside the path as she descended, standing in modest attitude, but with hands raised imploringly.

Julia greeted the poor creature, for whom she had felt so maternal an interest, beckoned her to herself, and listening with a kindly smile to her request for shelter during the night, led her with satisfaction to her husband.

Titianus was suffering, but glad to see again the pretty daughter of the unfortunate palace overseer, listened to the story of her flight with many tokens of disapproval, but with kindness, and expressed the liveliest satisfaction of hearing that Pollux was still alive.

The lofty patrician bed in one of the guest-chambers of the prefect had held many of the higher rank, but never one who was refreshed by happier dreams than this poor young orphaned fugitive who only yesterday had cried herself to sleep.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ARSINOË rose betimes on the next morning, and—embarrassed by the elegance of her surroundings—walked up and down the room thinking of Pollux. Then she took pleasure in the reflection of her own image in the great mirror above

her dressing-table—comparing meanwhile the couch, upon which she again extended herself, with those in the house of Paulina.

She felt herself once more a prisoner, but this time her place of confinement was agreeable, and when she heard slaves passing the room, she ran to the door to listen, thinking it possible Titianus might have sent for Pollux, and would permit him to come to her. At last a slave woman brought in breakfast, and the request from Julia that she would amuse herself in the garden with the flowers and the aviaries until she should come to her.

Early on this morning Titianus received tidings of the death of Antinous, and was much overcome by the news—less for the sake of the hapless youth himself than for the emperor.

After giving orders to the officers to make known the sad intelligence among the people, and to announce some suitable manner in which the citizens could express their sympathy in the monarch's bereavement, he received a visit from the patriarch Eumenes.

This worthy old man had been regarded as among the choicest friends of Titianus and Julia since their interviews to discuss the thanksgiving service of the Christians after the emperor's rescue from the burning palace. They spoke together of the unhappy effect the death of this rarely gifted youth was likely to have upon the emperor and his government of the empire.

“Whenever Hadrian,” said Titianus, “allowed his restless brain an hour of recreation to recover from the vexations, disappointments and annoyances, of which his life is always overfull he would go out hunting with this vigorous lad, or found always a pleasant, good-humored companion in his own apartment. The sight of the Bithynian refreshed his artistic eye—and how well Antinous understood listening—thoughtfully, modestly, silently. Hadrian loved him as a son, and he clung to the emperor with more than child-like devotion. The emperor once said to me: ‘In the turmoil of busy life Antinous stands before my eyes as the incorporation of a beautiful dream.’”

“The emperor's grief at losing him will be indeed great,” said the patriarch.

“And the loss will make still more gloomy his brooding and grave disposition, add to his capricious and restless wanderings, and increase his distrust and irritability.”

“And the circumstances attending his death,” added the

patriarch, "will furnish new food for his attachment to superstitions."

"That is to be feared. We have not happy days in prospect. The late revolt in Judea will cost thousands of lives."

"Oh, that you might have had the guidance of affairs in that province!"

"You know how it is with me, my worthy friend. In my bad days, I am incapable of speaking or thinking. As the asthma increases, I am as one suffocated. I have willingly devoted several decades of energy to the State, and now feel justified in using the remnant of my vigor for other things. My wife and I intend to retire to our property on the Lake of Como, and there try whether we may become worthy of the salvation and capable of grasping rightly the truths you have taught us. You are there, Julia? In deciding to leave this busy life, we have both thought more than once of the words of that wise man of Judea, which you lately repeated to us. When the angel of God drove the first pair out of Paradise, he said: 'Henceforth you must find Paradise in your own hearts.' We turn our backs upon the pleasures of a great city—"

"And we do this without regret," broke in Julia, "because we carry within ourselves the germ of indestructible, pure, and enduring happiness."

"Amen," said the patriarch. "When two such as you are dwell together, the Lord is the third in the bond."

"Permit your pupil Marcianus to make the journey with us," begged Titianus.

"Gladly," answered Eumenes. "Shall I send him to you directly?"

"Not immediately," returned Julia. "I have this morning an important and also an agreeable business to occupy my time. You know Paulina, the widow of Pudens. She took a pretty young girl into her house."

"And Arsinoe has run away from her."

"We are sheltering her," said Titianus. "Her foster-mother seems to have failed in attaching her to herself, or in exerting a good influence upon her character."

"Yes," answered the patriarch. "There was only one key that could open the shrine of that full, joyous heart. That was love; but Paulina has tried to break it open by force and resolute coercion. It remained to the very last closed, and the lock has been ruined. But may I ask how the girl came into this house?"

“That I will tell you later. We did not see her yesterday for the first time,” said Titianus.

“And I am going to take her to her bridegroom,” cried Julia.

“Paulina will claim her of you,” returned the patriarch. “She is seeking her everywhere; but the girl will never thrive under her guidance.”

“Has the widow formally adopted Arsinoe?” asked Titianus.

“No; she intended to do so, when her foster-child—”

“Intention is nothing in law, and I shall be able to protect our pretty guest.”

“I will fetch her,” cried Julia. “The time must have seemed very long to the poor child. Will you go with me, Eumenes?”

“Gladly,” answered the old man. “Arsinoe and I are good friends—a conciliatory word from me will do her good, and my blessing can not harm even a heathen. Farewell, Titianus, the deacons are waiting for me.”

When Julia returned to the apartment, accompanied by her young charge, there were tears in the girl’s eyes, for the kind words of the old man went to her heart, and she realized that she had received good as well as evil from Paulina.

The matron found her husband no longer alone. The wealthy Plutarch with his living supports was with him, and offered to-day, dressed in black instead of gay-colored garments, and adorned only with white flowers, a very singular appearance.

The old gentleman was speaking to the prefect in a very animated manner, but on perceiving Arsinoe he broke off his speech, clapped his hands, and gave every demonstration of pleasure in meeting again the fair Roxana, in whose behalf he had visited in vain all the gold-workers shops of the city.

“But,” said he, with youthful eagerness, “I am quite tired of keeping the ornaments for you. There are enough other useless things in my house. They belong to you and not to me, and this very day I shall send them to Julia for your use. Give me your hand, dear girl. You are paler, but seem more mature. Do you not think, Titianus, she would still do for Roxana? But your wife will have to trouble herself again about the dress. All white, not a ribbon in the hair—just like a Christian!”

“I know one who will understand how to adorn these soft tresses,” answered Julia. “She is the bride of the sculptor Pollux.”

“Pollux!” cried Plutarch, in great excitement. “Move

me forward Antæus and Atlas! The sculptor Pollux is your lover! A great, a royal sculptor! The same, noble Titianus, of whom I was just speaking to you."

"Do you know him?" asked Julia.

"No, but I have just come from the workshop of Perian-der, the gem-cutter, and have seen there the model for a statue of Antinous that is unique, marvelous, incomparable. The Bithynian as Dionysius! No Phidias or Lysippus need be ashamed of such work. Pollux was absent, but I put my hand on the work. The young master must execute it at once in marble. Hadrian will be enraptured with this image of his beautiful and devoted favorite. You—any judge of such work—indeed every person must admire it! I shall buy it, and the only question is whether I myself or the city had better offer it to the emperor. Your husband will decide that question."

Arsinoe glowed with joy on hearing these words, but she stepped modestly back as an officer brought Titianus a document just received. The prefect looked it over and said, turning to his wife: "Hadrian exalts Antinous to a place among the gods."

"Fortunate Pollux!" cried Plutarch. "He has made the first statue of the new Olympian divinity. I will present it to the city, and it shall be set up in the Antinous temple, whose foundation stone must be laid before the emperor returns. Farewell, noble people! Greet your bridegroom, my child; his work belongs to me. Pollux will be the first among his fellow-artists, and I had the good luck to discover this new star. This is now the eighth artist whose true worth I have discerned while he was still unknown! Your future brother-in-law Teuker will also be a famous man. I have given him the order to carve a likeness of Antinous upon a gem. Once more farewell, I must go to the council. We shall discuss there a temple for the new divinity. Forward, both of you!"

An hour after Plutarch had left the prefect the chariot of Julia stood at the entrance of a street, much too narrow to admit a vehicle with a span of horses, that ended in a little green plot, on which stood the small house of Euphorion. Julia's outrunners found very readily the dwelling of the parents of Pollux, led Julia and Arsinoe to the open space, and pointed out the door on which they should knock.

"How flushed you are, my girl!" exclaimed Julia. "I do not want to intrude upon your first meeting, but would like to deliver you with my own hand to your future mother. Go into the house yonder, Aretus, and ask Doris to come out to

us. Say only that some one wants to speak with her, and do not mention my name.”

Arsinoe's heart beat so violently that she could not utter a word of her gratitude.

“Step behind this palm-tree,” begged Julia; Arsinoe obeyed, but it seemed that some other will and not her own led her into the hiding-place. She heard also nothing of the first words exchanged between the Roman lady and Doris. She only saw the dear old face of the mother of her Pollux—and in spite of the reddened eyes and the wrinkles sorrow had furrowed she could not be satisfied with gazing upon it. It reminded her of childhood's happy days, and she longed to rush forward and throw herself upon the neck of the good, kind woman. Now she heard Julia say:

“And I will bring her to you—she is just as lovely, and maidenly, and sweet as when we saw her for the first time in the theater.”

“Where is she?” asked Doris, in a trembling voice. Julia pointed toward the palm-tree, and would have called, but this time her young charge could not control the longing to fall upon the neck of some beloved object, for Pollux had come out of the door to see who had called his mother; and to see him, and with one loud cry of joy to fall upon his breast, was for Arsinoe one and the same thing.

Julia looked at them with moistened eyes, and when with friendly words to both old and young she took leave of the joyfully reunited group, she said: “I want to provide your outfit, my dear girl, and this time I think you will use it, not merely for one fleeting hour, but for a long and happy life.”

In the evening of this day hearty song echoed from the little house of Euphorion. Doris and her husband, Pollux and Arsinoe, Diotima and Teuker, decked with garlands, reclined around the rose-wreathed amphora, and drank to pleasure, to joy, to art, and to love, and to all the good gifts of the present. The abundant hair of the happy bride was once more plaited with pretty blue ribbons.

Three weeks later Hadrian arrived in Alexandria. He did not show himself at any of the festivals celebrated in honor of the new god Antinous, and smiled incredulously when told that a new star had appeared in the heavens, which an oracle had declared to be the soul of his darling.

When Plutarch conducted him and his retinue to the Bacchus Antinous, which Pollux had finished in the clay, Hadrian was deeply moved, and wished to know the artist who had wrought such a marvelous work. Not one of the company

had the courage to mention the name of Pollux in his presence; but Pontius ventured to come forward in behalf of his young friend. He related to Hadrian the unfortunate sculptor's history, and asked the emperor to forgive him.

Hadrian nodded an assent, and said: "For the sake of the dead he shall be forgiven."

When Pollux was brought to him, the monarch extended his hand, and pressing that of Pollux within his own, he said:

"The Heavenly Powers have deprived me of his love and loyalty, but your art has preserved for me, and for the world, his beauty."

Every city in the empire was eager to build temples and to erect statues to the new god; and Pollux, Arsinoe's happy husband, received orders for statues and busts in a hundred different places. But he declined the greater part of them, and gave out no work as his own which he had not made with his own hand and formed after some original conception. The copying of his works he left to the other artists.

His master, Papias, returned to Alexandria, but was received so coldly and contemptuously by his fellow-artists that in an unhappy moment he put an end to his own life.

Teuker became the most famous engraver of gems of his time.

Hannah left the city of Besa soon after the martyrdom of Selene. The office of chief deaconess in Alexandria was given to her, and through this she blessed others down to a good old age.

The deformed Maria remained in the little Nile city, which Hadrian had enlarged into the brilliant Antinoë. There were there two graves from which she could not tear herself away.

Four years after the marriage of Arsinoe, Hadrian summoned the sculptor, Pollux, to Rome, where he was to erect a statue of the emperor upon a chariot drawn by four horses. This work was intended to crown the mausoleum constructed by Pontius; and Pollux accomplished his task in such a marvellous manner that upon its completion the emperor said, laughingly, to him:

"Now you have earned the right to break a lath over the work of other masters."

The son of Euphorion, with his much-admired and faithful wife Arsinoe, saw their children growing up to be virtuous citizens on the banks of the Tiber. They remained heathen, but the Christian love which Eumenes had shown the foster-child of Paulina could never be forgotten, and she kept always a friendly sanctuary for it in her heart and her home.

Doris fell asleep a few months before the departure of the youthful pair from Alexandria, and her husband soon followed her. The longing for his cheerful companion was the disease of which he died.

Pontius was also upon the Tiber, a faithful friend of the sculptor.

Balbilla and her husband gave to their demoralized countrymen the example of a worthy marriage in the old Roman sense.

The bust of the poetess was finished in Alexandria, and found, with all its curls and ringlets, favor in the eyes of Balbilla.

Verus was permitted to bear the title of Cæsar during the life-time of Hadrian, but he died, after a lingering disease, long before him. Lucilla nursed her husband with tender unselfishness, and realized with deep pain the longed-for possession of his entire devotion. It was their son who in later years wore the purple.

The predictions of the prefect were fulfilled. The faults of the emperor grew with his years, the petty side of his nature becoming more rudely prominent.

Titianus and Julia led a quiet life on the Larius Sea, far from the busy world; and before their death, both received Christian baptism. They never regretted the pleasure-seeking and restless city, with its glittering shows—for the real beauty of living had taken root in their hearts.

It was Mastor who brought to Titianus the news of the emperor's death. While yet alive, Hadrian had given him his own freedom, and he bequeathed to him a handsome legacy. The prefect received him as a tenant, and continued to exchange friendly relations with this Christian neighbor and his pretty daughter, who grew up among the fellow-believers of her father.

When Titianus carried to his wife the sad tidings, he said, earnestly:

“A great prince has passed away. The petty traits which disfigured the man Hadrian will be forgotten by those who come after him, for Hadrian, the monarch, was one of those whom Destiny has placed where they belong, and who, true to their duty, struggle restlessly to the very end. With wise moderation he had learned to bridle his own ambition and defy the fault-finding and criticism of all the Romans. To renounce possession of the provinces, whose maintenance would have exhausted the resources of the State, was certainly the hardest, though perhaps the wisest, resolution of his life. He

had wandered through the new empire, the limits of which he had himself fixed, from one end to the other, shrinking from neither cold nor heat, and sought to be as well acquainted with every part as though the empire were only a small personal inheritance. His duty as a monarch compelled him to make many journeys, and his love for roaming lightened this task. He was actuated by a passion for learning and understanding all. Even the unattainable could not bound his desire for knowledge; and always striving to see further and to dig deeper than is allowed to human intellect, he sacrificed a large share of his mighty vigor in seeking to tear down the curtains which hide the future. No one ever attempted so many accessory occupations as he, and yet no emperor has kept the chief object of such a life—the strengthening of the State, and preserving and increasing the prosperity of its citizens—more unswervingly in the eye than he has done.”

THE END.

SERAPIS.



SERAPIS.

CHAPTER I.

THE busy tumult of city life had for some hours been hushed in Alexandria; on high, moon and stars sped noiselessly on their way, and already dreams had visited many a couch.

It was a fine, fresh, truly balmy night, but although quiet reigned on the streets and lanes, there was lacking, at this unquiet time, the genuine tranquillity that is really soothing to the spirit.

For a full week past, a certain oppressive, feverish character had attached itself to the repose of the night.

The houses and shutters were closed, as if not only to guard against disturbance to slumber, but attacks upon life and property.

From those slumbering houses came, instead of cheerful, merry voices, the sound of the soldier's heavy foot-fall, and the rattling of his armor.

If occasionally some Roman challenge, or the agitated voices of sleepless monks, made themselves heard, a shutter opened here, or a door there, and the scared face of a man peered timidly into the street.

Many a late-comer pressed into the deep embrasure of some gate, upon the approach of the watchman, or availed himself of the shadow cast by some overhanging wall.

Like the breast of him who scales the Alps, a mysterious something checked oppressively the pulsations of the stirring city.

On this night of the year 391 after the birth of our Saviour, an elderly man was seen gliding along close by the houses in a narrow street that took its course from the harbor Kibotas.

He was plainly but respectably dressed, and, with head bent over, looked sometimes straight ahead, and sometimes sideways. If a sentry approached, he drew back into the shadow.

Without being a thief, he had his own reasons for getting out of the soldier's way, for this very day both natives and foreigners had been strictly forbidden to appear upon the streets after the closing of the port.

He stopped before a large house, the long, windowless wall of which stretched along inhospitably between two cross streets. Pausing before its great middle gate, he read by the dim light of a lantern this inscription:

“ To the Martyr. Opened by his widow, Maria, to all those who need a shelter. ‘ He who gives to the poor, lends to the Lord.’ ”

"At what per cent?" muttered the old man; and a derisive smile crossed his beardless lips.

The stroke of the knocker echoed sharply through the quiet street, and after a few brief questions from within, and just as sententious answers from without, a little door inside the great gate opened.

The old man made a movement as though he would proceed straightway across the outer court, but a human being crept up to him on all fours just like an animal, seized firm hold of his aukte, and called out in a gruff voice:

"Not till the gate is shut. Pay your money! It is for the poor, you know!"

The old man threw the doorkeeper a copper coin. He quickly pocketed it, and then, catching in his hand the end of the rope with which he was tied, like a chained dog, to the post, he addressed this question to the other: "No wet thing for a Christian?"

"It has not rained for a long time," ran the answer, and unhindered now, the night-arrival opened a second door, and entered an immensely large court, above which arched the blue canopy of the skies.

A few torches on the pillars and some little fires on the ground, here blended their pale and flickering light with the pure splendor of the stars. The atmosphere of the whole place was heavy with vapor, made up of smoke, mingled with the odors of freshly cooked viands.

Even out upon the street the old man had heard a confused buzzing, roaring, and surging of sound; now there burst upon him a loud clashing of discordant tones. This emanated from some hundreds of men, with which the straw-covered court was crowded; here in groups, there singly, were they sleeping, even snoring, while others walked about, chatted or sung.

The inn was indeed full, and more than half of its modest guests consisted of monks, who had yesterday and the day before streamed into the city by troops, from their various hermitages in the desert, and in yet greater numbers from the monasteries in the city. Some of them had stuck their heads together and were earnestly whispering to one another. Others disputed loudly, and with the psalm-singing of a large group in the northerly corner of the court mingled queerly the "three," "four," "seven" of the gambler, and the voice of the vender, who offered to sell cheap bread, meat, and onions. To that wall of the court which lay opposite the entrance, was joined an open passage lined with doors on either hand. These led into the chambers destined for houseless families with women and children.

Into such a chamber the old man stepped, and was gladly welcomed by a young man, who was carving a bit of reed for the mouth-piece of a double flute, and by a stately matron.

The name of the newly-arrived was Karnis, and he was the head of a family of traveling minstrels, who had just reached Alexandria yesterday from Rome. Things went badly with him, for, although it is true that the lives of himself and family had been rescued from pirates, escaping as they had done, in a boat, to the African coast, the bag had been lost in which he carried the whole remains of his fortune. The young ship-owner, to whom he had been indebted

for his deliverance, had procured him admission to the inn of his mother, the widow Maria; but he had not found this at all to his mind, and so, had set out as early as noonday to seek other quarters.

"All in vain," cried he, as he wiped the sweat from his brow. "I've chased after Medius through half the town. At last I came up with him at the house of Posidonius, the wizard, for whom he plays waitman. Behind the curtain there was to be singing. Cross-grained Galimatias, but at the same time old sages with flute accompaniment in the style of Olympus—not so bad either. Then spirits were made to appear. A rare show, I can tell you! And there was Medius in the thick of everything. I led the chorus and sung something with them. And all I got by it, was a little stingy bit of silver—pah! But quarters, free quarters here, are allowed to nothing but owls. So much for law, that cursed law!"

While the older man was talking, the younger had exchanged a cheerful and knowing look with the matron. Now he interrupted him and said in a tone of gladness:

"Make yourself easy, father, we know of something good in store for us."

"You?" asked the old man, shrugging his shoulders incredulously, while his wife placed before him a broiled chicken on a stool that was meant to serve as a table.

"Yes, we, father, we," continued the son, laying down his knife. "You know we made a vow to offer a sacrifice to Dionysius, when we were delivered out of the hands of those robbers; for he, too, was once captured by pirates—and so we set out to find his temple. Mother knew the way, but when we,—Dada, I mean, and I—"

"Wh—what?" interposed Karnis, who had just now caught sight of the appetizing dish before him. "A whole chicken, a chicken broiled in butter too, in a time of such trouble as this?"

These last words were uttered in angry and reproachful tones, but the matron laid her hand upon his shoulder and said, soothingly: "We'll soon bring matters straight again. Not a sesterce is to be earned by tormenting one's self. Let us enjoy the present, and leave the gods to care for the morrow!"

"Well," said Karnis, in altered tones, "if it must be that cocks or hens fly at a body's throat instead of a dried-up little bird there—But you are right, Herse, now as always. Only—only—here am I feasted like a senator and you—you. I bet you have drunk nothing but milk and eaten with it plain bread and radishes. Is that right? By this means the chicken turns pheasant, I do believe, and you, old woman, take this leg. Are the girls asleep already? Why, here is wine, too. Hold out your glass, my son! Pour me out to the gods! A libation to Dionysius!"

Both poured a small libation upon the floor and drank. Then the old man thrust his knife into the breast of the fowl and ate with full enjoyment, while Orpheus—interrupted as he was by many a question—continued his narration.

"The temple of Dionysius was not to be found, for Bishop Theophilus had had it pulled down. To what divinity now should they offer the wealth and the cakes? Being in Egypt of course to the motherly Isis. Her sanctuary lay on Lake Mæris, and mother

had soon found it again. There she happened to get into conversation with a priestess, and no sooner had she let fall that they—for Herse had been cautious enough in making this communication—that they belonged to a family of singers who had come to make their living in Alexandria, than the priestess brought up to them a young lady, closely veiled."

"This lady," continued Orpheus, the son of Karnis, whose part it was sometimes to sing tenor, sometimes to play the flute, and occasionally to harp on the lyre, "then invited us to come to her house later, and confer with her about various things. She drove off in an elegant carriage, and of course we were faithful to our appointment. Agnes was with us too. A magnificent house it was! Nothing handsomer have we seen either at Rome or Antioch. We were welcomed in friendly fashion too, and introduced besides to a right old lady, and then a tall, grave gentleman, a priest, I think, a philosopher, or something of the sort."

"No Christian trap, you are sure?" asked Karnis suspiciously. "You do not know this town, and since that law—"

"Rest easy, father! There were statues of the gods in the halls and corridors, and in the apartment, where the fair Gorgo, daughter of the rich merchant Porphyrius, received us—we know now who the father of the young girl is, and many another thing besides—the sacrificial stone beneath the statue of Isis was quite freshly anointed. The philosopher asked us too, whether we knew that Theodosius had published a new law, which forbids a maiden to appear in public, either for singing or playing on the flute."

"And did Agnes hear that?" asked the old man with subdued voice, pointing to the curtain.

"She was with Dada in the garden, upon which the apartment opened, but mother confessed that the girl was a Christian, although of good stock, and because she is in our service, pledged to sing with us. Then the philosopher exclaimed to the fair Gorgo: 'Fortunate!' Then the pair whispered together, the girls were summoned, and had to show off what they could do."

"And how did it turn out?" queried the old man, and his eye began to grow animated.

"Dada trolled like a lark, and Agnes!—well, how shall I begin to tell you? You can easily imagine, though Her voice sounded lovely, but just the same as it always does. One divines its quality and compass if ever allowed to come out fully. What has she to complain of in our service? Yet every sound that passes her lips acquires that tinge of melancholy, against which you even have been able to do nothing at all. As for the rest she pleased better than Dada, for I noted well that Gorgo and the philosopher had eyes for her only, and that when they exchanged glances and low words of approval, they evidently referred to Agnes. After the second song the young lady came forward, praised the girls, and asked if we would trust ourselves to learn a new song. I said my father is a great master, who understands the most difficult thing at first hearing."

"The most difficult thing, did you say? Eh? Hum! Depend upon that!" smirked the old man. "Did she show you the notes?"

"No, it was something akin to Linus, and she sung it for us."

“So the daughter of the rich Porphyrius treated you to a song? You?” laughed Karnis. “Zounds! How the world turns round. Since female singers are no longer to appear before refined audiences, Art will reveal herself in a reversed position. She will not be put down. In future the hearer will be paid for keeping still, and the singer purchase the right of putting him to the torture. Our ears, our poor ears will be the victims!”

Orpheus shook his head, smiling at this outburst of sentiment, again threw down his knife, and eagerly interposed: “Only hear her, and just so certainly as that I am your son, you will give away your last copper to hear her again!”

“That might be!” growled the old man. “Yes, there are masters here too. Did you say that she sung Linus?”

“Something very like. It was a dirge of striking power,

“‘Come back, beloved, oh come!
To thy deserted home!’

was a refrain continually recurring. And there was one place where these words came in:

“‘Oh, that a month had every tear,
To join with me and call thee near!’

Ah! how she wailed forth that lament, father. I think that in all my life I never heard anything like it. Just ask mother! Even Dada's eyes did not keep dry.”

“Yes, it was glorious,” assented the matron. “I kept wishing that you could only have been there!”

Karnis rose to his feet, and as he restlessly paced up and down the room, moving his arms vehemently, he kept talking to himself: “So then, so. A friend of the muses she is. The large lute was saved. Good, good. My *chlamys*, hum, this dirty hole here! If the girls were not asleep—but to-morrow bright and early Agnes is to— Is she tall? Is she beautiful?”

Dame Herse had contentedly followed with her eyes her easily excited husband, and now joined in his talk. “No Venus, no muse, assuredly not! She is hardly of medium height, prettily formed and yet not diminutive. Black eyes, long eyelashes, brows that meet in the middle. I could hardly call her beautiful, as Orpheus does.”

“Well, well, mother,” cried he, “I know that beautiful is a strong word which father has taught me to use charily; but she— what could be called beautiful, if not she, when she opened those large, black eyes of hers and threw back her head as she poured forth that lament? Each tone came from the very depths of her heart, to scale as it were the heights of heaven. Yes, if Agnes could learn that from her! ‘Throw your whole soul into what you sing.’ A thousand times have I heard you repeat that direction, that and only that. She, Gorgo, does that very thing. And how she stood there! Bent like a bow! Each note was a telling arrow; each one struck right at the very heart, and each was pure, spotlessly pure.”

“Hush, hush!” exclaimed the old man, stopping his ears. “I can not close my eyes, until it is light—and then! Take that silver there, Orpheus; all, all, I have no more. Go early to market, buy laurel, ivy, violets and roses; but no lotus flowers of which the mar-

ket here is full. Pretentious things without perfume: I can not bear them. We go crowned into the temple of the muses."

"Nothing but buy, buy!" laughed Herse, showing her husband some pieces of shining gold. "This we got to-day, and if all goes as it should do—" here she paused, pointing to the curtain, and continued with lowered voice: "Everything depends upon Agnes not failing us."

"How so? Wherefore? She is a good girl and I'll—" said Karnis, walking toward the back part of the room.

"No, no," warned Herse, holding him back. "She does not know yet the point in question. She is to sing with that noble young lady—"

"Well?"

"She is to sing with her in the sanctuary of Isis."

Karnis turned pale, and utterly disconcerted, as though awakened from a brilliant dream, to be thrust back into a wretched reality; he inquired anxiously: "In the temple of Isis? Agnes? Before everybody? And she knows nothing about it?"

"No, father."

"No? Then indeed, then— The Christian Agnes in the temple of Isis, and that here—here where Theophilus, the bishop, tears down sanctuaries, and the monks go further than their master. Children, children, how round and many-tinted are soap-bubbles, but how soon they burst! Do you know what you have before you? If the black flies get scent of it and it comes to light, then, by the great Apollo, then had it been better for us to have fallen into the clutches of those pirates. And yet, and yet! If I only knew how the girl—"

"She wept at the lady's singing," interposed Herse, eagerly, "and as little prone to speak as she is, this time she said, on our way home, 'Oh! to be able to sing like that happy maiden!'"

Again Karnis straightened himself up, and exclaimed, with renewed confidence: "There spoke my Agnes. Yes, yes, she too loves the divine art! she sings, she will sing; we'll risk it! Even though it imperils my life, yours, nay, that of us all. Herse and Orpheus, what is there for us to lose? Our gods, too, would have their martyrs! Poor life, it is without a charm. Our art from first to last has had all that I possessed. I boast not of having dedicated it to her; and now should I once more inherit fullness of land and wealth, I would become a beggar again to do her a pleasure. We have always held her sacred; but who could help despairing, when he sees how they persecute heaven's majestic daughter? She is no longer endured but in darkness, and the princess of gods and men must now hide herself and shun the light, like a salamander, a mole, or an owl. If we must die, let it be with and for her! Once more let pure, genuine music refresh this old heart, and then if— children, children! We belong not to this pale, dull world. So long as the arts lived it was spring upon earth! Now they are sentenced to death, and winter is here. The leaves fall from the trees, and yet we twittering birds need their foliage, in which to sing. How often already has death laid his hand upon our shoulders? Every breath that we draw is only a gift of grace, the over and above that the weaver throws in for good measure, the last brief

hour that the executioner allows the condemned criminal. Life belongs to us no more; it has become a borrowed purse, full of rusty coppers. The hard creditor already crooks his finger at our door, and knocks, our reprieve is ended. One more true, genuine enjoyment, and we have back capital, and interest, if it must be thus."

"So it must not and will not be!" interposed Herse, drawing her hand across her eyes. "If Agnes sings, if she does it without compulsion and of her own accord, then no bishop can punish us."

"He can not, and dare not!" cried the old man. "There are laws and judges yet."

"And Gorgo's house," added Orpheus, "is as respectable as it is rich. Porphyrius has the power to protect us; and you do not know how well we pleased them. Ask mother about it!"

"It is like a fairy-tale," chimed in Herse, with her son's words. "Before we left, the old lady drew me aside (she must be eighty years old, or thereabout), and asked me where we were staying. Then I told her at the inn of Maria, the widow, and no sooner had she heard this than she struck her staff against the floor, and asked, 'Do you like it there?' to this I said, 'No,' emphatically, adding that we must seek an abode elsewhere."

"Right, right!" cried Karnis. "Those monks in the court yonder would kill us as though we were rats if they heard us practicing pagan songs."

"I touched upon that; but the old lady would not let me finish what I was saying, but drew me closer to herself, and whispered warmly, 'Just do as my grandchild wishes, and your livelihood is secured; and this is for to-day!' So saying, she dived into the purse at her girdle, pressed these gold pieces into my hand, and said, so loud that the others must have heard, 'Fifty of my own if Gorgo pronounces herself satisfied with you!'"

"Fifty gold pieces!" exclaimed Karnis, clapping his hands. "That freshens up the pale colors of life considerably. Fifty, then, are certain. If we sing six times, there is a talent, and with that I can buy back our old vineyard at Leontium. I shall restore the little Odeum—they have converted it into a stable—and if we sing there, just let the monks come if they will! You laugh! Fools that you are! I should like to see anybody hinder my singing under my own vine and fig-tree. A talent of gold! That will fully pay its price; and I shall not strike the bargain, unless they throw in the necessary number of slaves and cattle. Castles in the air, you think? But only hear: a hundred gold pieces are at least assured to us—"

While this loud talk was going on, the curtain had been gently moved aside, and the feeble light of the small lamp that stood before Orpheus fell full upon a little head, that was sufficiently charming, even in its present disordered condition. A profusion of fair hair, done up in curling papers, stood up saucily all around her head, and fell over her forehead; her eyes were still half closed from sheer weariness, but her little mouth was already quite wide awake, and laughed in all the wantonness of happy, presumptuous youth.

Karnis continued, without observing his new auditor, to enlarge

upon his hope of earning the means for buying back his lost estate; and now the young girl drew the curtain closer up to her neck, stretched her round left arm far out, and called out beseechingly:

"Good father Karnis, please give me a little bit of your wealth—just five poor drachms!"

The singer started back in the tone of a good-natured fault-finder, "Back to bed, you good-for-nothing thing! What you have to do is to sleep, not listen."

"Sleep?" asked the girl. "And you shouting here like an orator who is talking against the wind. Five drachms, father. I must insist on that! A pretty ribbon for me will cost one, and there's another for Agnes just as well. For two drachms, enough wine can be bought for us all; and that would make five."

"Four they make, you fine reckoner," laughed the old man.

"Four?" queried Dada, looking as much amazed as if the moon had fallen out of the sky. "Yes, if I only had a counting-board! Five, then, papa, five!"

"No, four, and have them you shall," replied the singer. "Plutus knocks at our door, and to-morrow morning early you shall both be crowned."

"Yes, indeed, with violets, ivy, and roses," added her mother. "Is Agnes asleep?"

"Like somebody dead. That is always the way with her, unless when she lies there like a distracted person, with eyes wide open the livelong night. We were both so tired, and I am so yet. That yawn did me good. Only see how I am sitting!"

"On the chest?" exclaimed Herse.

"Yes; and the curtain gives way so against my back. Fortunately, when people nod they always bend forward."

"How is that, though; you had a bed apiece," said the matron, pushing her daughter before her into the sleeping room, and following the girl behind the curtain.

In a few minutes she returned to the men and said: "That is just Dada. Little Papias had slid off the chest on which he was lying, and now the good thing has put him in her bed, and taken her place on the chest, tired as she was."

"She would give the last thing she had to that boy," said Karnis. "But it is past midnight. Come, Orpheus, let us fix up the beds!"

Three long hen-baskets, which had been piled one upon the other by the wall, were soon placed on the floor and covered with mats. They received these weary people; but not one of them could sleep.

The little lamp was put out, and for about an hour all was quiet in the gloomy room. But then there was a terrible stir. An elastic object flew whirring at the wall, and thereupon Karnis called out, "Away with thee, fiend!"

"What's the matter?" asked Herse, who had gotten up in her fright; and the old man returned energetically, "A demon, a dog of a demon is besetting me, and leaves me no rest. Hold, you scoundrel, maybe this will hit you."

So saying, he threw another sandal through the air, and then went on panting, without paying any heed to the rustling sound of some object that he had accidentally struck: "The trickish gob-

lin will not let me alone. It knows that we need Agnes' voice, and now whispers, sometimes in one ear, and then into the other, that I must threaten her with selling her little brother if she refuses; but I—I—strike a light, Orpheus! The girl is a good one; and before I would commit such an evil deed—”

“The demon has been with me, too,” said the younger singer, as he blew upon the glowing coals.

“And with me, too,” added Herse with shame. “Of course, there is not an image of a single god in this Christian sty. Away with thee, horrid reptile! We are honorable people, and give in to no rascally proceedings. There, you have my amulet, husband, and if the demon comes back, you must turn it, you know how.”

CHAPTER II.

EARLY on the following morning the minstrels were on their way to the house of the rich Porphyrius. The family was not complete, for Dada had been obliged to stay at home. The old man's shoe which had been hurled against the demon, had pulled the girl's freshly-washed dress down from a pole, near the hearth, and in the morning it had been found lying in the ashes with several great holes burned in it.

Dada did not own another good gown, and so, in spite of her impatient refusal, and many tears, she had to remain behind with little Papias.

Agnes' earnest desire to take her place in attending to the boy, and to lend her a dress of hers had been peremptorily declined; and then Dada, at first quietly and good-naturedly, but very soon in all cheerfulness, had set to work helping the others. She wove wreaths for the rest, and a garland of violets, and ivy sprigs to twine in Agnes' smooth, dark hair.

The men had already anointed themselves, and put on crowns of poplar and laurel, when Porphyrius' steward appeared, for the purpose of conducting them to his master's house. Already they had to exercise self-denial, for the messenger induced them to lay aside their garlands, because they would excite the ill-will of the monks in the court, and might provoke to violence the Christian populace outside.

One illusion thus dispelled, Karnis had set forth with a heart as downcast as before it had been joyous and confident of victory.

The monks, who had crowded together in front of the inn, looked at him and his family with unfriendly, suspicious glances, and the joyful anticipation with which he had looked forward to the day would not come back to him, so long as he must needs force his way through the crowds that thronged the narrow lanes lining the harbor, which were dismal and dark, and smelled of tar and salted fish. The steward took the lead, with Dame Herse, and with volubility gave her any information she asked.

His master, he said, was one of the chief merchants in the city, and had lost his wife about twenty years ago, at Gorgo's birth. His two sons were, at present, away on their travels. The very old lady, who had yesterday displayed such generosity toward the

singers was Damia, Porphyrius' mother. She had control of a large property of her own, and in spite of her great age still maintained her reputation as the presiding genius of her household, and a woman deeply learned in occult science.

Maria, the pious Christian, whose inn was dedicated "to the martyr," had been married to Apelles, the brother of Porphyrius, but had become wholly estranged from brother and mother-in-law. This was natural enough, as she stood at the head of the believing women of Alexandria, and the house of Porphyrius, in spite of its master's baptism, was as well inclined to paganism as any in the city.

Karnis heard nothing of all this, for, between himself and his wife walked two slaves, bearing the musical instruments of the minstrels, and in front of them, Orpheus and Agnes. She kept her eyes constantly fixed on the ground, as though she would shut out all consciousness of her surroundings. If Orpheus asked her a question, however, she shyly looked up, and answered briefly and with embarrassment.

Following a gloomy passage, the party soon reached the canal, which united the harbor Kibotus with Lake Moeris, where anchored the ships of the Nile. Karnis breathed more freely, for here it was open and light, a gentle north wind bore the refreshing sea-breeze toward him, and the slim palm-trees on the sides of the street, edging the water, threw long shadows over the broad road below. That was teeming with motley life, while the full crowns of the sycamores made shadows that were broad and deep. Birds sung on every limb, and the aged singer drank in, with deep inspirations, the wondrously light and spicy breath of an Egyptian spring morning.

When he had reached the middle of a high-arched bridge, that spanned the canal, he suddenly paused, and gazed toward the south-east, like one spell-bound.

Possessed by a deep enthusiasm, he threw up his arms, the fire and brilliancy of youth returned to his glistening eyes, and—as was always the case when a glorious work of God or man filled his heart with rapture—unbidden, there arose before his soul the image of his deceased eldest son, between whom and himself had existed a perfect congeniality of spirit.

Soon it seemed to him as though his arm rested upon the shoulder of the early-deceased young man, who far surpassed his second quieter son Orpheus in ideality, and as though he were enjoying in communion with him the grand prospect that lay outstretched before him.

Upon foundations of solid cliff and rock rose up before him an edifice of wondrous size and beauty.

It was gorgeously illuminated by the morning sunshine, and its noble outlines in the sheen of many a hue seemed actually to blaze in dazzling splendor. Above its gilded cupola extended the undimmed azure of an African sky, and like the sun in the firmament the lofty, lustrous dome sent forth glittering rays. Carriage-ways and rows of steps for devout pedestrians led up to it.

The substructure, which sustained this marvelous work of human hands, viz., the temple of the god Serapis, was laid as firmly as

though for eternity, and the columns in its vestibule supported the roof of a structure which seemed destined for the grandeur of heavenly beings rather than for the insignificance of mortals.

Like children sporting under the tall trees of an immense forest, priests and worshipers moved about beneath them.

Upon the projections of the roof, in hundreds of niches, and upon numberless prominent parts, all the gods of Olympus, all the heroes and sages of Greece, seemed to have been convened, and here greeted the comer in shining brass, there in beautifully painted marble.

Gold and a brilliant display of color shone down from all quarters of this structure, and the effect in its entity was like a beautiful choral song from the capacious chest of some benevolent giant.

"Hail! high Serapis! Gladly, humbly do I greet thee. I thank thee, that it is permitted these old eyes once more to behold thy divine, everlasting house!" murmured Karnis, reverentially, to himself. Then he called his wife and son, pointed silently to the temple, and when he saw how Orpheus' eyes hung in awed and silent rapture upon the glorious forms of the Serapeum, he called out with fervor: "Noble fortress of the King of Gods, lofty Serapis! We see here no work of a day. Its past covers half a century, its future eternity! Yes, yes, there she stands, and while she abides in such glory the old gods are not yet vanquished."

"Nobody touches that building," chimed in the steward, "for every child in Alexandria knows that the doom of the world is sealed just so soon as they lay hands on it, and whoever profanes the venerated—"

"It protects itself," interposed the singer. "But you, ye Christian hypocrites, who pretend to hate life and love death, if you long so after the end of all things, set yourselves in array against this prodigy! Just set to! set to!"

The old man shook his fist in the face of an invisible foe, but Herse repeated after him passionately: "Set to, set to!" and then continued more composedly: "If everything comes to naught, the enemies of the gods will perish with us; and since at the same time there is an end to all that is beautiful and all that we love, that can not frighten us!"

"Make yourself easy!" replied the steward. "The bishop had already stretched out his hand against this sanctuary, but the great Olympus stayed the hands of these desecrators of holy things, and they had to withdraw with bloody heads. Our Serapis is not to be trifled with. He remains, whatever else may pass away. 'Eternity,' says the priest, 'is with him as a little minute, and when millions of the generations of men have faded away, he will be ever the same as to-day.'"

"Hail! Hail to the exalted god!" called out Orpheus, extending his hands toward the temple.

"Yes, hail! hail to him the imperishable!" echoed his father.

"Great is Serapis! His house and his images will last—"

"Until the moon is full again!" interrupted a passer-by, taking up his words in bitter mockery, and shaking his fist threateningly at the temple.

Orpheus turned to chastise this prophet of evil; but he had quickly been lost in the crowd that surged onward in an unceasing flow

"Until the moon is full again!" murmured Agnes, who, like the prophet of evil, had shuddered at Orpheus' enthusiastic outburst. Then she cast a troubled glance upon the young singer, and yet when Herse turned and looked at her a few minutes later, the expression of her features had altered, and the matron could rejoice in the happy smile that played about her lips. Many a young Alexandrian, too, who passed by the strangers, both on foot and in carriages, looked around after her, for that smile lent to her pale, serious countenance a mysterious charm. And it clung to her still after she had left the bridge, and approached the shores of the lake, for when a pleasant thought had once nestled in her bosom, long was it fostered there; and now as she moved along in the brilliant light of morning sunshine, there arose before her inner eye the full moon in the nightly sky, she saw the downfall of the huge idol, and over the ruins of the marble temple an unconquerable, shining host. Apostles and martyrs were in the throng, the blessed and glorious Redeemer led the van, and in the light clouds that encircled him floated bright angels singing glorious songs that were distinctly audible to her inner ear in the midst of the confusing hubbub of that busy port.

Not until she was summoned to take her place in a boat were these visions dispelled.

Herse had originally come from Alexandria, and Karnis had spent some delightful years here; but to Orpheus and Agnes all was novel; and so soon as they had escaped from the loud din of the multitude that had so distressed her, even the Christian began to take an interest in her surroundings, and now and then addressed a question to the old singer. The younger man had not eyes enough for seeing, and indeed, there was many a thing here to evoke admiration.

There lay the great water-gates at the entrance of the canal, that joined the lake to the sea; there in an especial harbor rocked the stately, imperial fleet of the Nile, whose ships had to maintain the communication between the garrison of Alexandria and the upper and lower Nile; there basked the gorgeously ornate vessels, that were at the disposal of the comes, the prefect, and other high officials; finally, there lay at anchor merchantmen of every size in countless multitudes. Like immense flocks of birds fluttering over a corn-field, long rows of sails in every color floated above the gently undulating surface of the mirror-like lake. Every inch of the land edging its shores had been built upon and utilized. To the south, stretching far away in the distance, were seen long rows of sepaliers, making rich vineyards, with the shimmering of bluish-green foliage, that told of boundless olive-groves, and hedges of slender-stemmed palm-trees, whose crowns combined to form a beautifully arched canopy overhead.

White garden walls, many colored temples, chapels, and villas shone forth from the green background; and there was, as it were, the flashing of diamonds, when the oblique rays of the sun fell athwart the drops of water that were kept in unceasing play by the perpetual rotation of water-wheels and buckets. Water-works of artistic construction, many of them devised and set in motion by the greatest scientists, had been the weapons with which man had com-

pelled the desert, that originally encompassed this lake, to deck herself in green, and now reward him for his seed with harvest and fruit. Every trace of a wilderness hereabout had been lost for hundreds of years. The generous Dionysius and lavish gods of the garden had blessed the diligent hand of man, and yet, on many estates, yea, on all that belonged to Christians, their images lay crushed and trampled on the ground.

How many changes had taken place in the course of thirty years, and none agreeable, according to this old man's view. Herse, too, shook her head frequently, and when the oarsman had measured about half the distance, she pointed to a broad, bare spot on the shore, where a new erection was already rearing itself, high above its foundations, and called out to her husband, in melancholy tones:

"Do you recognize that spot? What has become of our dear old temple of Dionysius?"

At these words, Karnis rose up so quickly and suddenly that the boat threatened to turn over, and the steward had to urge upon him the necessity for keeping motionless; but he gave poor heed to this warning, for his arms were still waving wildly, as he cried out to him:

"Think you, that in Egypt here, people must turn to mummies while they are still alive? Let somebody else keep quiet! It is shameful, vile; enough to make a dove even swell with rage! That glorious edifice, the ornament of the city, the joy of mankind, swept from creation, blown away, like the dust of the streets. See! Do you see! Shattered columns, marble, limbs, here, there, everywhere, at the bottom of the lake! This head, that torso! Inspired by the gods, great masters have fashioned them, and they, the pitiful, ignoble creatures, possessed by evil demons, have laid them in ruins. They have buried under water what was worthy to have lived forever. Why? Would you know? Because they shun the beautiful, as the owls do light. Yes, they, they! Nothing do they fear and hate so much as beauty. Wherever she shows herself they crush her down, though come direct from the hand of deity. Before the immortals I arraign them; for what has become of the grove—surely planted by heaven; not man—our grove with its cool grottoes, its trees of immemorial date, its shady recesses, and all the pleasure and delight of which it was as full as the ripe berry of sweet juice?"

"An' it please you it was uprooted," interposed the steward. "The emperor presented the sanctuary to Bishop Theophilus, and he devoted it to instant destruction. The temple was demolished, the sacred utensils melted up, and the images mocked at before they were cast into lime-kilns. The house over there is a Christian church. Think of the airy, bright-hued colonnades of other days, and then look at that dismal barn growing up in their place!"

"Why do the gods suffer it? Has Zeus lost his thunderbolts?" asked Orpheus, clinching his fist, without paying any heed to Agnes, who sat there, pale, and reticent, since the conversation had taken that turn.

"He slumbers, to rouse up again with more dreadful power," replied the old man.

"Oh, the broken marbles, the ruins down there! A qu'ck art,

that of the destroyer! Men have lost their senses and put up with the crime. They have cast into the water and oven what enraptured the gods. Prudent, prudent, and wise! The fish and flames are mute, and can not lift up a plaint. A blood-hound, a single hour suffices to bring to naught what it has taken exalted minds and centuries to create. To lay waste and destroy is their boast, but a temple such as the one that stood there can be restored just as little as a grove, with its trees six hundred years old. Look there! Do you see, Herse? There, in your pit, where those black fellows are mixing lime—they have put on shirts, because even the fine form of the human body is hateful to them—there was the grotto, where we found your poor father again."

"The grotto?" echoed the matron, gazing shoreward with moistened eyes, as she thought of that day when the feast of Dionysius was being celebrated, and she, as a young girl, had hastened to the temple of the gods searching for her father. He had been a skillful lapidary, and in honor of that god's festival, in accordance with an old Alexandrian custom, had intoxicated himself with sweet wine, and gone out upon the street to join in the Dionysian procession. When, however, he did not come home the next morning, and both noon and evening found him still absent, his daughter had set forth to look for him. Karnis, at that time, had been a wealthy young student, and, as a boarder, had occupied the best rooms in her father's house. He had met her on her difficult errand, and had been kindly ready to aid her in her search; and they had found her missing parent, in an ivy-wreathed grotto, in Dionysius' grove, cold and motionless, as though struck down by lightning. The by-standers had supposed that the god had entranced his votary.

During these dark hours Karnis had stood her friend, and a few months later she had given him her hand in marriage, and, as his wife, accompanied him to his home at Tauromenium, in Sicily.

All this now passed before her soul, and her husband, too, looked down silently and moodily into the water, for each spot that has witnessed some important crisis in our life's history, if seen again after a long absence, has power to make the past live anew in the present.

All remained thus silent in the boat, until Orpheus touched his father, and pointed out to him the temple of Isis, in which he had yesterday met the beautiful young-lady.

The old man turned his eyes upon that still uninjured shrine, and said bitterly:

"A barbarous structure. Egyptian art has long since been a thing of the dead, and the tiger may only devour the living."

"And yet this shrine is no such contemptible morsel," rejoined the steward; "but it hangs too high for them, because the ground on which it stands belongs to our old mistress, and the law protects private property. But later you must really look at the dock here. There is probably not a greater one on the whole earth. The wood that is stacked up there! Cedars of Lebanon, oak from Pontus, trunks of trees from Ethiopia, as heavy and hard as iron—they are said to be worth hundreds of talents."

"And does that too belong to your master?" asked Karnis.

"No, but the owner is the grandson of a freedman of our house. They are now rich and respectable people, and Master Clement sits in the senate. There he is, that man in the white robe."

"A Christian, I should think," said the singer.

"To be sure," replied the steward. "But justice must be done. He is an honest, good man nevertheless. Strict discipline is maintained both here and at the other dock, on the lake, in the harbor of Eunosus. One thing, though, Clement can not let anybody enjoy his own opinion. In this he is just like all the rest. No matter how many slaves and workmen he buys or enrolls, he contrives to make them all Christians, and his sons are precisely like the old man. Constantine, too, although he is an imperial officer, and as spruce and spry as the next one. As for us, we let everybody believe as they choose. Porphyrius makes no concealment of his views, and yet the crowds of ships that we use in the corn-trade are all built by Christians. But here we are!"

The boat paused before a broad marble staircase that led up from the lake into the garden of Porphyrius, and the deeper Karnis penetrated into this, the more freely he breathed; for here, here, the old divinities were at home. Their statues emerged resplendent from their dark back-ground of evergreen shrubbery; they were mirrored in clear pools, and sweet incense greeted the new-comers, from here a garlanded altar, there, a freshly-anointed stone.

CHAPTER III.

THE minstrel family had met with a gracious reception in the house of Porphyrius, but had not been called upon forthwith to exercise their art; for, no sooner had old Damia learned that the pretty, curly haired blonde, with whom she had been so much pleased the day before, had been left behind in the inn of Maria, than she had brought to Herse a robe of her granddaughter's, and begged her to go back after the young girl.

Some slaves were to attend them and convey their luggage to Porphyrius' Nile ship that lay at anchor before the dock. In this stately vessel there were several rooms which had often received guests of the house, and were now to lodge Karnis and his family. They seemed especially adapted to the use of musicians, for here they could carry on their practicing undisturbed, and the ship was at all hours accessible to Gorgo.

Herse had returned to the inn with lightened heart, her son had been dispatched to the city to supply the place of many a thing lost on their voyage, and Karnis, overjoyed at his escape from that monkish resort, had suffered his new host to detain him in the hall set apart for men only, and there enjoyed the good gifts which fortune had showered upon him in the mansion of Porphyrius. Here breathed the spirit that had permeated his father's house, here he found men who understood the art of adorning existence in a style after his own heart, who shared his enthusiasm as also his antipathies. Here he drank old wine out of an artistically carved ouyx goblet; what he heard pleased him, and what he said met with full appreciation. For the uncertain future of his loved ones here

opened up prospects only a little inferior to those that had been conjured up the day before by his lively powers of imagination. Even though fortune's wheel should again turn for him, the good things that he was here enjoying should be written down to the credit of life, and, at least in memory, remain his enduring possession.

The hoary-headed Damia, her son Porphyrius, the fair Gorgo, were all three persons of a rare sort, such as one does not often meet in life.

The worldly-wise merchant prince had judged the ladies to have been too hasty and incautious in thus distinguishing these strange musicians, and, in the beginning, had treated Karnis with reserve; but after a brief talk with him, he had come to the conviction that, in this case, he had to do with a man of uncommon culture and true stamp. The old lady had been favorably inclined to the strangers from the first, because the night before the stars had predicted to her a pleasant interview on the morrow.

Her will was law under this roof. And Karnis could but smile when he heard her call a son, who must have been a long time gray, "my child," or listened to her admonitions to one who looked fully equal to regulating the affairs of his own household. A tall arm-chair was her throne, only left when she wished to be borne to her observatory on the roof of the house, where were kept her magic tablets and charts. The feet were her only weak point, but there were arms in plenty at her disposal, ready to push her about or carry her to table, into her sleeping-apartment, and, while daylight lasted, into sunny spots of the house or garden. She felt best when the rays of Helios fell upon her back, for her old blood needed their warmth, after the long night watches, which she still kept in the observatory. Even in the hottest part of the day she sat in the sun, with a great green shade over her sharp eyes, and whoever desired to converse with her must seek the shade wherever he could. When, propped upon her ivory crutch, she followed a conversation, in stooping posture, it seemed as though she were perpetually on the spring, ready to break in upon the words of others. She spoke her mind out, without curb or reservation, for in a long life-time the right to have her own way in everything had always been conceded to this heiress of a great estate. Even with her son she claimed this privilege, and yet from that manly head of the house issued a web whose roof extended over half the earth. The husbandman who tilled the fruitful land on the upper and lower Nile, the shepherds in the Arabian deserts, in Syria, and on the sylvan meadows of Syrenaica, the owners of forests upon Lebanon and the shores of the Pontus, the miners in Spain and Sardinia, the brokers, the dealers and ship-owners of all the seaports on the Mediterranean were bound by these threads to this house on Lake Mæris, and felt it they were slackened or tightened by the hand of this graybeard, who submitted like a little child to the guidance of his mother. The property of this great merchant had been so large, while he was yet a youth, that its increase could bring no new enjoyment either to himself or family, and yet its aggrandizement had been his life-long task. Like a wrestler aiming at the first prize, he strove after a report of high profits on the day when his accounts

were annually settled up. And his mother not only looked into the ledger, but followed up each new enterprise of the house. If the decision of important questions was exceedingly difficult for her son and his assistants to come at, her voice settled the matter; and when, in most cases her judgment proved to have been excellent, she ascribed it less to her own sharp-sightedness and knowledge of the world than the hints given her by the stars and magical combinations. Her son did not follow her into this domain, but it was very seldom that he contradicted the results arrived at in her observatory. While she turned night into day, he took pleasure in intercourse with scholarly friends, for the hours of relaxation from incipient struggling after gain, that the great merchant allowed himself, were devoted to philosophy, and the best thinkers of Alexandria esteemed themselves privileged to surround the hospitable board of their wealthy patron. It rejoiced him when they styled him a "Kallias," and the pagan professors in the universities of the serapeum and museum gladly recognized him as a fellow. They knew that he had been baptized, but seeing that he was sensitive on that point, they refrained from all allusion to it. The modesty of his character won people's hearts, but probably yet more a tinge of despondency bordering on melancholy, that imposed itself like a barrier between the too-richly endowed man and the envoy of unfortunates.

In the course of conversation the aged Damia inquired as to Agnes' origin, for if any scandal attached to her, or if she were a slave, Gorgo could not, of course, show herself with her in public, and Karnis would then have to practice "The Lament of Isis" with a free-born songstress.

The old man shrugged his shoulders, and invited the ladies and Porphyrius to form their own conclusion as to that question.

Three years before, he informed them, he had been at Antioch, and witnessed the outbreak of that great insurrection there, on account of the levying of taxes. It came to bloodshed, and just as soon as it was possible, he had left the city with his family. When it grew dark he had turned into a wayside inn, and there found Agnes and her little brother in the hands of soldiers. In the night the girl had sung a lullaby beside her little brother's couch in order to quiet him. So sweet and touching had been the melody that flowed from her lips that himself and wife had been induced on account of it, to purchase both herself and brother for a trifle. He had simply paid the price they charged; but they had not been registered as slaves, and he had caused no description of their persons to be prepared; nevertheless, it rested with himself to treat them as slaves or dispose of them, for the purchase had been made in the presence of witnesses, whose testimony could even now be obtained. He had afterward learned from the girl that her parents had been Christians, and removed to Antioch only a few years before the outbreak of the insurrection. They had had neither relations nor intimate friends in that city. Their father, as a tax-gatherer in the imperial service, had moved about a great deal, and yet she remembered to have heard him speak of Trèves as his home.

The maiden had been present when the excited populace had attacked the house of her parents, and killed these, together with

both their servants, and her elder brother. At all events, Agnes' father had been a high officer, probably, too, a Roman citizen, and if so—the merchant Porphyrius confirmed this—the maiden and her brother are, at any time, entitled to claim their freedom. The rabble that had dragged the children out upon the street, and then beyond the city gate, had been driven off by some soldiers, from whom, however, Karnis had bought them.

“And I have no reason to repent of my bargain,” concluded the old man, “for Agnes is a lovely, gentle creature. I shall not speak of her voice, because you heard it for yourselves yesterday.”

“And with real rapture,” exclaimed Gorgo. “If flowers could sing it would sound just so.”

“Well, well!” rejoined Karnis. “Her voice is delightful, but it lacks wings. An unconquerable something chains the violet to the ground.”

“Christian reflections!” exclaimed the merchant, and old Damia added:

“Just let Eros come; he will loosen her tongue.”

“Eros and forever Eros,” repeated Gorgo, with a shrug of the shoulders. “Whoever loves suffers and drags a chain after him. In order to do the best of which one is capable, nothing more is needed than to be free, true, and healthy.”

“That is a great deal to ask, mistress,” answered Karnis, warmly. “With these three what is highest will be accomplished. But Agnes, how does it stand with her? Who could be less free than a serving damsel! Her body, yes, that is sound, but her spirit suffers and gets no rest from dread of all those Christian horrors—sin, repentance and hell.”

“We know those banes of existence,” interposed the old lady. “Were you introduced into Maria's inn by means of that Christian girl?”

“No, noble lady.”

“But then—that saint usually selects her guests differently; and whoever is not baptized—”

“This time, however, she has entertained heathen.”

“It is exactly this that surprises me. Tell me how it happened.”

“We were in Rome,” began the singer, “and through the intervention of my patrons, Marcus, Maria's son, took us on board his vessel at Ostia. It anchored off Cyrene, for the young gentleman wished to take up his brother there, and have his company as far as Alexandria.”

“Is Demetrius here?” queried Porphyrius.

“Yes, sir. He came on board our ship at Cyrene. But hardly had we lost sight of the harbor, than we caught sight of two pirate ships. Then was our prow turned, but in wheeling her about suddenly, she lodged upon a sand-bank, and the boats were launched, in order to save the lives of the gentlemen and the Consul Cynegius.”

“Cynegius on his way hither?” asked Porphyrius again, straightening himself up with animation.

“He landed with us yesterday in the harbor of Eurostus. The secretaries and officers in his retinue filled one boat, Marcus and his brother with their attendants were to get into the second. We and

the other passengers would have been left if it had not been for Dada--"

"What, the pretty blonde we saw yesterday?" asked Damia.

"On the voyage, Marcus had been greatly entertained with her lively chit-chat and her singing, for in song she can vie with any nightingale. And so, when she began to plead with him, he soon yielded and invited her into his own boat. But the good thing declared that she would rather leap into the water than set off without us."

"Bravo! bravo!" cried the old lady, and Porphyrius added:

"A good sign both for the young girl and yourselves."

"Marcus, then," continued the old man, "took us—all of us—into his boat, and so we had the good fortune to make the land once more. A few days afterward a ship of war brought Cynegius, the brothers, and ourselves comfortably to this place; and, since we had lost our property, Marcus gave us a certificate that secured us admission to his mother's inn. Then the gods conducted my family and myself to the presence of this noble young lady."

"So Cynegius is here, actually here?" asked Porphyrius, once more; and, upon Karnis reiterating the statement, he turned uneasily to his mother, and said: "Olympius is not back yet. Always the same, as rash as a young man. If they catch him! The streets swarm with monks. Something is going on. Hitch up your horses, Cyrus, directly! The great Atlas shall accompany me. Cynegius here! Ah!—ah! Thank the gods!"

This exclamation was called forth by the appearance of a closely muffled man, who had just that instant entered the apartment, and while he threw back the cape of his cloak, and unloosed the great cloth that encircled his neck, and had concealed a long, white beard, he cried out, drawing a long breath of relief:

"Would I were there again! Cynegius is here; it grows serious, friends!"

"And you were in the museum?" asked the merchant.

"Indubitably. I found them all there together. Brave fellows! They hold by us and the gods. Arms enough are in hand. The Jews* do not stir. Onias thinks that he can go their surety, and we are a match for the monks and imperial cohorts."

"If the gods lend their aid both to-day and to-morrow," rejoined Porphyrius thoughtfully.

"Forever, if the people do their duty," cried the other. "Who is that stranger?"

"The chief of the musicians to whom we listened yesterday," replied Gorgo.

"Karnis, son of Herse of Tauromenium," said the singer, making a bow to the stranger, whose majestic shape and finely developed head had filled him with admiration.

"Karnis of Tauromenium!" repeated he, in a tone of joyful surprise. "By Hercules! a singular meeting! Your hand, give me your hand, my old friend! How many years have passed since you and I emptied the last wine-jug at the house of old Hippias? Seven

* At that time two thirds of the whole population.

lusters make the hair gray, but we two hold our own yet. Now, tell me, son of Herse, who am I?"

"You are Olympius, the great Olympius!" cried Karnis, joyfully clasping the proffered hand. "All the gods bless this happy morning!"

"All the gods! That is a speech," cried the philosopher. "You have not, then, crept under the yoke of the cross?"

"The world is only joyful in the company of the gods," cried Karnis, in a burst of enthusiasm.

"And we'll keep them joyful, and guard them against eclipse," responded the other, warmly. "A critical time has come. No more, as of old, is the question one of trifles. No more do we fash our brains over foolishness, and fancy that the fate of the world hangs upon the decision of such idle discussions, as whether man dies in the last instant of life or in the first moment of death. Now, the question is: Are the old gods to reign? are we to lead a free, glad life, with the heavenly beings on high, or bow the neck before the Crucified Son of the carpenter and His gloomy doctrines; the conflict here is fought for the highest good of humanity—"

"I know," said Karnis, interrupting him, "you stood up valiantly for the great Serapis. Hands were about to be laid upon his sanctuary but you compelled the miscreants to give up their design, and retreat. The others came off scatheless—"

"But they have shown me what my head is worth to them," laughed Olympius. "Evagrius has set the price of three talents upon my head. For that one could buy a house, and if his views are modest he might live upon its rent. I have kept it intact, though, yet, as you see. This noble man here keeps me concealed in his house. We have matters for talk together. Porphyrius and you, gracious Gorgo, do not for a moment lose sight of the festival of Isis. Just because Cynegius is here it must be celebrated in full splendor. He is to report to the emperor, who sends him here, how the Alexandrians are minded. Where is that large-eyed maiden whom we saw yesterday?"

"In the garden," replied Gorgo.

"She is to sing at the foot of the bier," cried the philosopher. "That is settled."

"If I can persuade the Christian to do so," remarked Karnis, thoughtfully.

"She must," asseverated the philosopher. "It would be a bad commentary upon Alexandria's rhetorical and logical arts if an old disputant should not succeed in changing the mind of a simple girl. Let that task be mine. We shall see each other soon again, noble ladies. I hope to converse with you later, Friend Karnis. How in the world have you chanced to become the leader of a minstrel band? you, who used many a time to come to the aid of the rest of us with your father's gold. You have much to tell me, my friend; but business will not wait. A word with you, dear Porphyrius."

While this conversation was going on, Agnes had been awaiting Herse's return in the colonnade which conducted to the front garden of the villa. She was glad to be alone, and rested delightfully upon the soft cushion beneath the gilded and frescoed ceiling of this open place. All along its sides stood closely-set shrubs, dense in their

foliage, and full of violet-colored flowers, and their branches boldly intruded and cast friendly shadows upon her resting-place. There she enjoyed the perfume of the strange, sweet blossoms, ever and anon tasting of the light repast that Gorgo herself had placed before her.

What she saw, heard, and felt here soothed her senses. Juicier peaches, fuller, more perfect clusters of grapes, fresher pomegranates and lighter cakes she had never seen or happened to taste before.

In the clumps of foliage-plants in the garden, and on the grass-plots between the paths there was not a single withered leaf, not a dry straw, not a miserable weed. Here buds were swelling on the boughs of some ancient tree, there whole rows of shrubs were covered with richly-scented flowers, white and blue, golden yellow and red; and generous fruits peeped brightly forth from the dark-green glistening leaves of lemon and orange-trees. On a round lake in her neighborhood, black swans described their silent circles, and occasionally lifted up their plaintive voices. The merry singing of birds mingled with the splashing of fountains, and the very marble statues, mute as they were, seemed to enjoy the pleasant morning breezes, and the sounds betokening life around them.

Yes, it was well to be here; and, when she had broken another peach, and its tender juicy flesh had imparted to her tongue its spicy flavor, she could not help smiling at the remembrance of the hard ship-biscuit that had been her portion yesterday and the day before. Ah! how delightful it would be, like that fair Gorgo, to enjoy such good things day after day, and year after year! Here it was like Eden, the first sweet home of man, ere care had clouded his existence. Here there could be no pain, here nobody wept, here no compunction for sin was felt. To die here— Here she paused, and a new train of thoughts forced itself upon her. She was still so young, and yet she was already as familiar with death as with earthly life; for whenever she had confided to her spiritual adviser that she, an orphan and deprived of her liberty, suffered much inward grief, the comfort given her had ever reference to a hereafter, and the joys of Paradise. And out of that hope, the dreamer had created all that a young artist soul needed of enjoyment, to save it from despair.

“Now,” she said to herself, “how hard it must be to die in all this splendor. To live here; was not that to forego the joys of paradise, and in the heaven beyond, among the angels of God, with her Saviour, must it not be a thousand times more beautiful than this place?”

A slight shudder thrilled her, for here she would be no longer accounted among the poor and suffering, to whom Christ himself had promised the Kingdom of Heaven; here she belonged to those rich who had to look forward to no inheritance beyond the grave.

Oppressed in heart, she pushed the peach from her, and closed her eyes, in order to look no more upon all this perishable glory and sinful display of heathendom upon which her senses had been feasting.

She preferred being wretched here below, in order to be forever reunited with her parents beyond the skies.

She not only believed, it amounted to certainty with her, that her

father and mother abode in heaven, and often she had felt the impulse to pray for death and reunion with these dear parents; but, she durst not die yet awhile, for her little brother had need of her. The child lacked not for good attention to his bodily wants with those kind-hearted people in whose service she was; but without that child she did not want to appear before her parents, and he was forever lost if she should commit his young soul to the keeping of the enemies of her faith.

Her heart grew sore, whenever she thought that this whole family were doomed to eternal ruin. Karnis, who certainly could not be deemed a bad man, and whom she was compelled to reverence, as a master in the art that she loved—the kind, ever considerate Herse—the frolicsome Dada, yes, and Orpheus too, all must be lost. To save these last, she would have freely foregone herself many of the joys of Paradise. She saw plainly that he clung as closely to idolatry as his parents, and yet she prayed daily for the salvation of his soul, and she ceased not to hope that a miracle might be performed, that he would live to see his day of Damascens, and become a confessor for Christ.

It was so pleasant when he was near, and she never felt happier than when it fell to her lot to sing with him or accompany his skillful playing on the lute. If it sometimes happened to her to forget herself and put into her full, rich voice all that was noblest and best in her heart, and he—whose ear was no less fine than his father's—would nod her his approval at such a moment, she loved life and found it beautiful.

In music she possessed a link that united her with Orpheus, and when her soul was exalted she could feel and think in song. Music was, for her, the language of the heart, and experience had proved to her that the heathen, too, could speak and understand it. Even her heavenly father must have pleasure in a voice like Gorgo's. This young lady was a heathen, and yet her song had expressed all that she herself felt when her heart was uplifted in fervent prayer.

Often had it been said to her that the Christian must share nothing with idolaters, but God Himself had given her into the hand of Karnis, the church commanded servants to obey their masters; and song seemed to her like a peculiar language with which God had endowed all animated beings, yes, birds too, in order that they might speak with Him, and so she rejoiced, wholly unconscious that it would soon be her portion to blend her own voice with that of the heathen maiden.

CHAPTER IV.

SHORTLY after the merchant and philosopher had withdrawn, Herse came back with Dada. Gorgo's rich blue dress that had been sent to the young girl by Dania became her admirably, but her breath came quick, and her curls were rather disarranged. Herse likewise looked excited, her cheeks glowed, and she drew little Papias, whom she held by the hand, regardlessly along behind her.

Dada felt embarrassed, less on account of the costly things that surrounded her, than of her foster-mother's injunctions to behave courteously and sedately in the presence of their entertainers, and

there was something quite peculiar in her demeanor, as, in obedience to Herse's direction, she bowed low before the aged lady; but the bashful and yet graceful manner in which she discharged her task seemed to please Damia well, for, with a graciousness very unusual with her, she held out her hand, and invited her to draw near, and kissing her, said kindly:

"You are a good child! To be true to one's friends is precious in the sight of the gods, and also brings its reward among men."

Then, following a fortunate intuition, Dada threw herself down at the old lady's feet, kissed both her hands, and remained humbly sitting at her feet.

Gorgo, whom Herse's excitement had not escaped, asked what had befallen her, and learned that they had been pursued by monks in the street, Dada's lyre forced from the hands of a slave, and the maiden's gaudium torn off her head. Damia trembled with rage on hearing this recital, abusing the wild hordes through whom Alexandria, the favorite haunt of the Muses, was dishonored and profaned, and then recurred to the rescue of the minstrel family by Marcus, the son of Maria.

"Marcus," said she, "must be a pattern of self-restraint. He exercises his horse with those young sinners in the hippodrome, and yet—it were a miracle if true—and yet he shuns women as if he were a saint already. His mother encourages him in this; but he, charming Aphroditic, he is the son of my handsome Apelles, who would have gazed into these blue eyes from Rome to Alexandria and would have willingly allowed himself to be caught, but just so surely as I hope to live to see autumn, he would have caught his game too. How red you are, girl! The long and short of it is that Marcus is just like the rest. Keep your eyes well open, Dame Herse."

"I'll be sure to do that," cried the matron. "And alas! there's need for it too. The young gentleman was so modest on the ship, and now to behave so! While we were away, he crept like a marten into his own mother's house, and—is it not shameful?—he opened our room with the keys that are always at his disposal, and invited the maiden—she is my own sister's child—to elope with him, to forsake us, and follow him, he knows best whereto."

Here old Damia interrupted the indignant matron, exclaiming with a malicious smile, while she struck the floor with her cane: "The saintly son of my saintliest of sisters-in-law. Such a marvel one does not live to see every day! Come, come here, Dada. Take this ring, it has been worn by one who was once young herself and greatly courted. Nearer, nearer yet, my darling."

With eyes full of curiosity Dada turned her early head toward the old lady, who drew her closer to herself, and whispered into her ear softly and yet forcibly: "Turn that milksop's head for me, make him fall so madly and foolishly in love with you that he will be quite beside himself. You can do this, and I—no, I'll make no promises; but if the town-talk reports that Maria's son, with sighs and groans, knocks nightly at the blinds of pretty Dada, the heathen and public singer, and if, in broad daylight, he drives you out in his own carriage, riding through Canopian Street past his

mother's house, then, then, child, desire of me what you will, and old Damia will not slight your petition."

Then she lifted up her head and addressed herself to the rest of the party. "For the afternoon, friends, repair to your rooms and make yourselves comfortable. Go with them, Dada. Later we shall procure you pleasant quarters in the city. Come often to see me, my dove, and tell me pretty stories. When work is not pressing I shall always receive you, for you and I have a secret between us."

The maiden arose and looked anxiously at the old lady, who however nodded pleasantly at her, as though they perfectly understood each other, and again held out her hand to her, but Dada could not kiss it this time, and followed her family more thoughtfully than usual.

Gorgo suspected what Damia was doing with the girl, and as soon as the singers had left the room she drew near to her grandmother, and said in a tone of mild reproach: "It will be easy enough for that pretty blonde to lead Marcus to the committal of many follies; it is no concern of mine, for I hardly know him; but why is he to expiate wrongs done you by his mother? How can he help—"

"He can help nothing at all," said the old lady, cutting her granddaughter short in her speech. "He can just as little help what his mother has done as you can, being just twenty years old. So please hold your tongue until you are asked to speak," and this was said with repulsive sharpness.

* * * * *

On board of the ship that lay at anchor in the dock adjoining the grounds of Porphyrius, the minstrel family found themselves reunited. Orpheus had been a witness to the disturbances that agitated the city from one end to the other, and a fierce howl, audible in the distance, confirmed his statement in this particular; but the mirror-like lake looked profoundly peaceful, its blue being unclouded, and its bosom calm, the slaves on the dock were at work as in quiet times, and turtle-doves flew cooing from palm-tree to palm tree. In the floating retreat of the minstrels also no sign of troublous times was perceptible. The steward had made provision for every want. In the roomy vessel there were chambers and beds in superfluity, the spacious cabin furnished a comfortable drawing-room, and from the small kitchen at the rear of the ship proceeded an aroma of roast meat and the rattling of cooking utensils.

"This is something like living," said Karnis, as he cheerfully stretched himself at full length upon a cushion, "and these couches exactly fit our illustrious persons. Sit down, little wife and make yourself comfortable! We are distinguished people now, and to sweeten their task to the servants, we must act as though we did not know that there are people in the world, who, squatting around in a ring, sop their food out of an earthen bowl. Enjoy, enjoy the gifts of the present! Who knows how long this splendor is going to last? Ah! wife, how it reminds one of former days! Charming is it indeed to lie off so, at our ease, side by side, and to convey to our mouths delicacies, with the preparation of which we have had nought to do. And you, old woman, who have been so long toiling and moiling for others, you well deserve, for once, to have others busy in your service!"

Soon small tables loaded with excellent viands were standing before each couch, and the steward was mixing good Mærian wine with pure water in a beautiful pitcher. Orpheus did the pouring out, and Karnis spiced the bountiful repast with lively jokes, and cheerful anecdotes from his youth, of which he had been reminded by his meeting with his old college-mate Olympius.

Dada often joined in the conversation and laughed louder and more unrestrainedly than usual. She was in a fever, as it were, and Herse noted this well.

That matron did not feel herself free from anxiety. For the very reason that her husband always and everywhere went with his whole soul into the affair of the moment she left him to enjoy himself to the full, and, in his stead, looked beyond the present oil into the future. With her own eyes she had seen what was going on in Alexandria, and was sensible that they had come there at an unpropitious time. Heathen and Christian stood arrayed in fierce enmity, the one against the other, and Karnis, too, would be sure to take up the sword soon, now that he had recognized in his old student-friend Olympius, the leader of his party. Did the cause of Christ conquer, then, no pity would be shown those who had openly ranged themselves on the side of the old gods. Gorgo's desire to have Agnes sing with her in the temple of Isis filled her with special solicitude; for, if it came to that, they might easily be accused of misguiding a Christian into taking part in a pagan service and be sentenced to a severe punishment. Yesterday it had all struck her in a different light, for then she had been thinking of the genial old Alexandria, as it had been known to her in her youth. But what an alteration had not more than thirty years made! The church had cast the temple into shadow, and the monk the sacrificial priest.

Karnis and his family were musicians of no ordinary stamp, but the law against females singing in public might affect even them perilously, and now, to make her ill-luck complete, here comes a young Christian, trying to entrap her pretty niece. To what persecutions might they not be subjected, if Marcus's influential mother got wind of her son's going astray!

Herse had long ago remarked what bewitching ways the jade had with men, old and young. Did a suitor please her—and there never lacked one—she could forget herself and carry on a brisk flirtation; but just so soon as she perceived that she had gone too far, and had cause for self-reproach, her sincere regret and the fault she found with her own conduct, atoned amply for what had gone before. She would completely withdraw from him, and if she could not avoid meeting him, would treat him with a reserve and coldness amounting to incivility. Herse had not been sparing in her censure and warnings, but Dada answered to her reproofs, that she could not alter her nature; and Herse had never been able long to maintain the part of a strict censor as regards girlish ways that, after all, were very becoming.

Even now the matron found it hard to decide whether it were more advisable to warn Dada against young Marcus, and enjoin it upon her to reject any new advance on his part, or to pass over what had happened in silence. She knew how the insignificant grows into magnitude, when stamped as important. Therefore, she had only

lightly questioned the maiden, as to what the secret was between old Dada and herself, and appeared satisfied with Dada's evasive reply; but she suspected the truth, nevertheless, and was determined not to be lacking in circumspection. Meanwhile, she would let things take their own course, and not mention Marcus again; but her husband brought her project to naught, while he called out to Dada, with all the cheerfulness of a happy man who has partaken of a good meal, that she must tell him all about that young Christian's invasion. She objected a little at first, but was soon carried away by the old man's good humor and told her story thus:

"There I sat alone with the poor boy, like—I do not know exactly what—you can make the comparison to suit yourselves. For my comfort, the key stood in its lock, but I did not feel at all at my ease, for the monks began to sing in the court outside. If one voice went to the left, the other went to the right. Did you ever see drunken men, arm in arm, swaying backward and forward, reeling to and fro! Do not laugh! By all the nine muses, it was precisely so! Presently Papias got very tired, and asked over and over again, where Agnes was; and at last he got to crying. When I asked him why, he said he didn't know, he had forgotten. Being patient, as I always am—you'll allow that—I did nothing in the world to him, but, as nothing would do but that a plaything he must have, I drew the key out of the lock (for there was nothing else there that he might not have broken), gave it to the youngster, and bade him blow me a tune on it. That he was willing enough to do, and sweetly enough it sounded. Meanwhile, I had lain out my burned robe, and was shocked at the size of the holes; but I conceived the idea of turning the cloth, because other spots are invisible when this is done."

"You are making up that now," laughed Orpheus. "We know you. If you can only tell some story of stupidity on your own part—"

"No, indeed!" exclaimed Dada. "Such an idea actually crossed my brain just as a swallow flits through a room; but I was soon made aware that burned holes go through and through. Then I threw aside the garment as past remedy, and stood upon the footstool, in order to peep through the hole by the door, into the court, for the song was at an end, and the stillness began to oppress me. Papias no longer played his flute, but had stationed himself in the corner, where Orpheus had been writing that letter to Tauromenium."

"The ink was there," exclaimed he, "that wine host lent us yesterday."

"Exactly so, and when mother came back there sat Papias, dipping his finger into the receptacle, and spotting his white gown. You can see the pretty work he made of it for yourselves. But do not interrupt me again. I then looked out upon the court. It was empty; the monks had all forsaken it. Then appeared a slender young gentleman, in the doorway, dressed in a white robe edged with a lively sky-blue border. The old porter humbly crept after him, as far as was allowed him by the cord that fastens him to the post; and while our host spoke with him, he clasped both hands over his breast, as though upon the right side as well as left he had a truly devoted heart. The young man—it was Marcus, our benefactor, of course—crossed the court in zig-zag fash-

in, at first just as a snipe flies, but then moved straight up to our door.

"Nothing more was to be seen of either porter or host. Do you remember those little Gotsis, that their father allowed to bathe in the Sibes last winter, when it was so cold? At first they went up to the river, and let it wet their toes, then they darted off, soon to come back again, and meisten forehead and breast. But they did not take the plunge into the cold stream until after their father had shouted out to them some barbarous word or other. I can see the young urchins now. Marcus did just like those boys; but suddenly he shot up to our door, and knocked."

"He thought of your lovely face," laughed Karnis.

"Maybe. I, though, did not stir, but stood still as a mouse upon my stool, and kept watching him through the aperture, until he asked once and again:

"'Is nobody in?'"

"Then I could hold in no longer, and answered:

"'All are out!'"

"I betrayed myself, you see. One can not keep everything in mind. Well, laugh if you like. A smile, too, flitted across his own handsome face, and then he urged me to open the door and let him in, for he had something important to talk with me about. I said that we could communicate well enough through the aperture. Pyramus and Thisbe had even kissed through a slit in the wall. But he did not enter into the jest; but grew more and more grave as he reiterated his entreaty, for upon this hour depended a great deal, both for himself and me, and that which he had to say to me nobody else must hear.

"The aperture was too high up to admit of whispering, and so nothing was left for me to do but to demand the key of Papias. But that young one no longer knew anything of its whereabouts.

"Although, when I thought afterward to ask him where his flute was, he brought it to me directly. In short, the key was gone. I explained this to Marcus, and now he wrung his hands; but this was only for a short while, because the host, who had been hid behind a pillar, and must have been listening, suddenly stood close beside the young gentleman, as though he had dropped from the skies, loosened a key from his girdle, opened the door wide, and had vanished again as though the ground had swallowed him up.

"Now Marcus and I stood face to face. He was disconcerted, as it were. I verily believe the poor fellow was trembling, and I was not as composed as I might have been: yet I managed to bring out a wish to know what he wanted. Then he collected himself and said:

"'I would like—'"

"'You would like—' said I, encouragingly.

"And so most likely it would have gone on to: 'He would like,' 'we would like,' as in our school-room at Rome, when the teacher would be drilling the boys in their Greek grammar lesson, had not Papias come to his aid, for he ran up to him, and got tossed high up in the air, as had been his wont upon shipboard. Marcus gratified the boy, and then suddenly overwhelmed me with a flow of talk that quite alarmed me. At first he said so many handsome things

that I thought 'now comes a declaration of love,' and was already reflecting as to whether I should laugh at him or fall upon his neck, for he is a dear, handsome young man; and, if you must know it, I would have been greatly inclined to grant him a favor. But he asked nothing, and from me—attend, Father Karnis—from me, whom our Heavenly Parent has crowned with his fairest gifts, he passed over to you, you old, bad, hardened, good-for-nothing pagan."

"I am, am I?" cried the singer, playfully shaking his fist at her.

"Listen again," continued Dada. "He paid many compliments both to you and the mother; but do you know what charges he brought against you? You are imperiling my soul, my immortal soul. As if you had ever spoken to me of any other Psyche than the beloved of—"

"That is a different thing," observed Karnis, more seriously. "In many a song have I exhorted you to plume your soul for a higher flight. You have learned to sing, and for the soul of woman there is no better school than music and song. If that malapert—he might be my grandson—comes to you again with such follies, then let him be told from me—"

"Let him be told nothing from you!" exclaimed Herse, "for we have nothing to do with Christians, and never shall have. You are my own dear sister's child, and I desire, do you hear? I command, that you show him the door if he ever tries to come near you again!"

"Who is to find us out here?" asked Dada. "And what you impute to him is not his design. His concern is for what he calls my soul, not for myself, and he wanted to take me, not to his own house, but to that of some one else, who should be a physician for my soul. I love to laugh, but what he brought forward was all so solemnly and impressively put, that I could not find it in my heart to jest. At least, I grew angrier than I ever was in all my life before, and that threw him into a passion, until he was quite beside himself. You came in yourself, mother, and beheld the dignified gentleman on his knees before me, beseeching me to leave you."

"And, thereupon, I mean to give him a piece of my mind," put in Herse, with gruff self-satisfaction. "I'll let him know just what I think of him. He talks about the soul, and what he wants is the maiden herself. I know my Christian, and predict what is to come. In order to carry his point, he will have recourse to law; you know now, and then you will be parted from us, and stuck into one of those religious establishments—convents, they call them—those dismal dungeons—and there you will get to learn more about your soul than you will care to. No more laughing, singing, and merriment. That is the way it will be; and if you are wise, you will keep yourself concealed from him, until we leave Alexandria, and that will be soon, if you listen to reason, Karnis."

These words had so earnest and convincing a sound, that Dada unconsciously closed her eyes, and Karnis thoughtfully arose from his couch.

But no time was left him for further meditation, because the steward appeared and summoned him, his son, and Agnes, to Gorgo, in order to study with her "The Lament of Isis." The invitation was not extended to Herse and Dada, so they too stayed behind in the ship.

The matron had plenty to do in the lower rooms, so Dada repaired to the deck and looked after the others. Then she watched the ship's crew at their work, and set the children at play on the shore to catching fruits and sugar plums, the remains of her dessert. In so doing, she thought of Marcus' strange conversation, of what old Damia had asked of her, and of Herse's warning. In the beginning, this last seemed to her well founded, but soon her old confidence returned, and she could not believe that the young Christian had any evil designs against her. Moreover, she was as firmly convinced that he would find her out in that hiding-place, as she was that in truth he hankered after the possession of her much admired person, rather than after her soul—for how could that airy nothing benefit a lover? With what warmth had he depicted her grace, how freely had he acknowledged that her image was with him day and night, visiting him even in his dreams, that he could not get her out of his mind, and was ready to devote his life to the salvation of her soul! Only a lover could talk in that way, and from such an one much, yea, everything could be obtained. On her way from the inn to the house of Porphyrius, she had seen him in his chariot, and gloried in his magnificent horses, that he drove so gracefully and with such a steady hand. He was hardly three years older than herself—she was only eighteen—but in spite of his youth and bashfulness, he could not be called unmanly, and besides, there was an especial something about him that attracted her, and inspired her with confidence, so that she could but think constantly of him and ask herself, "Why so?" Old Damia's demand disquieted her, and without this it would have seemed far more fascinating to know herself loved by him, and to be driven by his hand through Canopian Street.

It seemed to her quite impossible that all should be over between him and herself, and while her thoughts continued to dwell upon him, and at the same time she cast an occasional glance upon the workmen who were carpentering near, a boat put into shore close to her ship, and from it leaped ashore a captain of the imperial horse.

A handsome man he was! How finely cut and regular were the features of his embrowned visage, how lightly curled his coal-black beard, and the locks that escaped from the confinement of a golden helmet. The dagger-like sword at his side was that of a tribune or a prefect of cavalry, and what deeds of valor must not have been achieved by this warrior in glittering panoply of armor, since he was not of patrician race, to secure him, at his early age, so high a post. Now, he stood on the shore, and looked around. His glance met hers, and she felt that she blushed; he, however, seemed surprised at sight of her, greeted her reverentially, in soldierly fashion, and then stepped up to the great ship's hulk, to the boldly curved bare ribs of which some master workmen were applying measuring rods and lines.

Here stood an old man of dignified presence, in whom she had recognized earlier the superintendent of the dock. Up to him the warrior hurried. She heard him call out "father," and directly afterward saw the arms of the graybeard open to inclose the officer in a fervent embrace.

Dada gazed fixedly upon the pair, until, arm in arm, and evidently exchanging loving greetings, she had seen them vanish inside a large house on the extreme verge of the dock.

"A handsome man!" repeated Dada, and while she awaited his return, she nevertheless kept her eye fixed upon the road that might lead Marcus to her. At Rome she had seen many splendid-looking soldiers, and the ship-builder's son, after all, had little the advantage of these; but such a young man as Marcus, she had never yet met, and there was hardly his like anywhere. The bold cavalryman was a fine tree among other grand oaks, but Marcus had something quite peculiar to himself; and as she again reflected upon what thus distinguished him above others, and made him so especially lovable, his image presented itself so vividly before her mind's eye, that in its consideration she forgot the fine officer, the ship-builder, and everything else besides.

CHAPTER V.

KARNIS and his two companions stayed away a long while. Dada's amusement of watching for the reappearance of the cavalry officer was but of short duration, and so, after she had played a long time with little Papias, as with a pet dog, she began to grow weary, and find the ship insufferably dull. When at last sunset was at hand, and the others had come back, she reminded Karnis of his promise to walk about some with her in Alexandria, but Herse bade her be patient and wait till the next day. Hereupon Dada, who had been decidedly more irritable and excitable than usual, burst into tears, and cast the distaff banded her to her foster-mother into the lake, declaring with sobs, that she was no slave, and would run away to look for enjoyment where it might be found. It ended by her behaving so improperly that finally Herse lost patience, and reproved her warmly. Then Dada jumped up, threw a mantle around her shoulders, and was upon the point of crossing the gangway, and going ashore; but Karnis succeeded in detaining her, and after he had caught her ear, saying, "Child, child, do you not see how tired I am?" she forthwith heard reason and tried to compose herself; but the traces of distress were too evident, and upon her retiring into a corner, to weep quietly all to herself, the old man's heart was touched, and he felt disposed to speak soothingly to her and stroke her hair, but he restrained himself, whispered a few words to his wife, and then declared himself ready to guide Dada through Canopian Street to Bruchium.

Now the maiden brightened up, dried her eyes, threw her arms around the singer's neck, kissed his rough cheek, and cried:

"You are the best man in all the world! Make haste, and let's take Agnes; she shall see something too!"

But the young Christian preferred to remain, and so Karnis set off alone with Dada. Orpheus followed them, for although the troops had succeeded in quelling the tumult, the city was still in anything but a quiet state.

Veiled, and without anything conspicuous in her dress—Herse had seen to this—the maiden traversed the streets, leaning on the old

man's arm, and getting him to explain to her everything they saw. Thus engaged, the girl's good humor returned so completely, and her ideas were so bright and original, that Karnis soon forgot his weariness, and gave himself up to the enjoyment of pointing out many remarkable things that were familiar to him, but entirely novel to her.

When they reached Canopian Street, Dada was beside herself with pleasure. There rose up one palatial residence after another. Covered colonnades ran along parallel with these rows of houses, a broad walk shaded by sycamore trees divided the thoroughfare into two parts, and on each side of this beautiful avenue that was thronged with people, handsome equipages rolled to and fro, horse-back riders took their exercise, and, in short, something striking or new was to be seen at every step.

A more magnificent street Rome itself could not boast of, and Dada gave loud expression to her admiration, but Karnis did not join her in this; for it infuriated him to observe that the Christians had removed the fountain in the middle of the walk, a venerable image of Father Nile, with frolicsome children, represented as clambering over his knees, and they had also partly thrown down, partly mutilated, the statues of Mercury lining the drives. Orpheus shared his indignation, and this reached its climax, when, on the pedestals on both sides of the lofty front door of a particularly stately mansion, instead of the Ceres and Pallas Athene of Antiphilus, that had been the finest ornaments of the street, and been mentioned to his son by the old man, there stood two roughly-hewn lambs, with heavy crosses on their backs.

"Like rats that somebody has caught in a trap!" exclaimed the old man. "And the worst part of it is, I would lay wager, that those noble adornments of the city have been broken to pieces and thrown out among the rubbish. In my time, this house belonged to the wealthy Philippus. Hold! I wonder if he was not the father of him whose hospitality we are now enjoying, for he—"

"I heard the steward call Porphyrius the son of Philippus," remarked Orpheus. "And Philippus, like Porphyrius, dealt in grain," added Karnis.

The Ceres was to indicate that this house owed its wealth to the blessings of harvest, and the Pallas Athene pointed to the cultivation of science by its owner. When I studied here every rich man belonged to some school of philosophy. Wealth did not stand for everything. Heathen or Jew, merchant or only the inheritor of ancestral property, a man must know how to converse on something else than the price of goods and the incoming or outgoing vessel.

During this conversation, Dada had let go her companion's arm, and lifted up her veil with one hand, for two men had passed between the lambs, that had so aroused Karnis' wrath, and the one of them, who let drop the knocker upon the front door, was the son of Maria.

"See, father, there he is!" called out Dada, while the door was being opened, in a tone far louder than was needful, in order to be heard by his escort; and then the singer, too, recognizing Marcus, turned to his son and said:

"Now we have it all clear. Porphyrius and the father of the

young Christian are brothers. Philippus left his house on Canopian Street to the latter—he probably being the elder of the brothers—and now it belongs to his widow, Maria, the presiding genius of our inn. One thing must be allowed you, child, you have chosen your lover from a good family.”

“I mean to do that,” laughed the maiden. “But for that reason they are proud, too! Not a glance has the gentleman to spare for us. Clap, clap! the door has already closed! Let us move on, uncle.”

After the young Christian had entered the front hall of his ancestral home, together with his companion, he stood still, and said, in a tone of urgent entreaty, “Just come with me to mother; you must not part so.”

“How else, then?” asked the other roughly. “She insists upon her own way, I on mine. You had better look out forthwith for a more suitable manager. To-morrow morning early I shall be off. Let the earth swallow me if I stay among these men turned madmen an hour longer than is necessary. For the rest, Maria is *your* mother, not mine.”

“But, nevertheless, she has been your father’s wife,” retorted Marcus.

“Very true,” replied the other. “And on that account I call you my brother. But as for her—any kindness that she has shown me I have repaid by a ten-years’ term of service. We do not understand one another, and never shall.”

“Yet—and yet I was in the church, and have—do not laugh—and have prayed to the Saviour to compose your differences, and He— You have been baptized, remember, and belong to His fold.”

“To my misfortune. You make me wild with all this sweet gentleness!” passionately exclaimed the other. “I stand upon my own strong legs; and this toil-hardened hand carries out the purposes devised by the brain.”

“No, dear Demetrius, no! You believe in the old gods, there’s the trouble.”

“Actually,” said the other, with growing impatience. “You speak against the wind; and my time is limited. I am busy packing my things now, and, for your sake, will not ask for my dismissal, when I come presently to render up to your mother my book of accounts. At Arsinoë I have land enough for my purposes in my own right. I am tired of being dictated to by a woman about affairs in my own province, that I know perfectly how to manage. I’ll see you again presently, little Marcus. Only announce my coming: in exactly an hour I’ll call on your mother.”

“Demetrius!” called the young man, once more trying to detain his brother; but he broke away from him with a violent exertion of strength, and walked rapidly through an open court, richly adorned with flowers, in the midst of which splashed a playing fountain. On all sides of it were rows of chambers, and one of these belonged to Demetrius.

Marcus followed his brother with a long, melancholy look. The two thought and felt too differently for their intercourse to be perfectly harmonious; and a casual observer would never have taken them for the sons of one father, so exactly was one the opposite

of the other. Marcus was slender and delicate; Demetrius, on the contrary, broad-shouldered, and rawboned.

After Marcus had parted from his brother, he repaired to the spacious woman's apartment, where Maria was accustomed to stay at this hour, after she had finished her superintendance of the female slaves, weaving in the work-room, at the rear of this.

He found the widow in lively conversation with a very aged priest, of mild, dignified aspect. She had crossed the line of the forties, but would have passed yet for a beautiful woman. It was from her that the son had gotten his slender, spare frame, and narrow shoulders; from her the slightly stooping gait, his delicacy of feature, fairness of complexion, and soft, wavy, coal-black hair. The resemblance between the two was made more striking by the slender gold band that encircled the head of each; yes, a rare freak of nature would have been manifested here if the black eyes of the mother had not differed so totally from those of her son—for her glance was keen, sharp, and at times not without masculine hardness, while the dreamy luster emitted by Marcus' blue eye, lent to his countenance an almost feminine charm.

Her discussion with the old gentleman opposite her must have involved important matters, for her cheeks had flushed slightly upon the young man's first appearance, and her delicate, taper finger tapped lightly and quickly on the arm of the sofa upon which she was resting.

Marcus first saluted the priest, then kissed her hand, and after inquiring for her health with filial solicitude, informed her that Demetrius was coming, after a while, to take leave of her.

"How gracious!" said she, coolly. "You know, reverend father, what I desire, and what he refuses to accede to. The peasants, perpetually the peasants! Can you explain to me why precisely they, who depend far more immediately than we townspeople upon the providence of God, why they, whose weal and woe lie so visibly and sensibly in the hands of the Most High, should be the very ones to harden themselves so obstinately against the message of salvation?"

"They cling to old customs," answered the venerable old man. "Their seed has brought forth harvests under the old gods; and because they have to expect no more than the tenth or twentieth part of the grain from our Father in heaven, whom they can not see and touch, like their idols—"

"It is forever nothing but 'mine and thine.' Miserable cupidity!" interposed the widow, sighing. "Demetrius will know well enough how to defend the idolatry of his favorites. Have you time, father, to stay, and help me to refute his arguments?"

"I am already staying too long," replied the priest, "for the bishop requires my presence. I should like to converse with you, dear Marcus. Call at my house to-morrow morning, early. The Lord be with you, dear children!"

The priest arose; and when Maria held out her hand to him to say good-by, she signed to her son that he should withdraw to a little distance, and said, in a low voice: "Marcus is not to suspect that I am aware of his dereliction from the right path. Speak directly to his conscience to-morrow morning. What measures are to be taken

with the girl I'll attend to myself. Will not Theophilus by any possibility be able to spare me an hour?"

"Hardly now," replied the gray-haired old man. "You know that Cynegius is here, and how much depends on these days, both for the bishop and our cause. Give up that wish, I beseech you, daughter, for, even if Theophilus receives you, I believe and—do not be angry with me—I must hope, too, that he never yields to you in this affair."

"No?" asked the widow, casting her eyes down with a troubled look; but no sooner had the reverend gentleman withdrawn than she lifted them, with defiance flashing from their glance. Then she let her son—he had already talked with her, for hours yesterday, about his journey to Rome—entertain her with what Demetrius had said, how he had found his horse, whether he could hope for victory at the next race, and whatever else he had been doing during the day. Meanwhile, it did not escape her that Marcus was less free of speech than usual, and tried again and again to lead the conversation up to his journey and the inn at Alexandria; but she always evaded the subject, for she knew at what he was driving, and would not listen to him to-day.

Slaves had long since placed silver candelabra, lighted, in the room, ere Demetrius finally made his appearance.

His step-mother received him with friendly mien, and asked him after indifferent matters. He gave her information with ill-concealed impatience, for he had not come to chat with her. She felt that plainly; but it pleased her to detain him, and she did so in a manner that reminded him of his boyish years, and the many petty trials which had poisoned his young life, when this woman had stepped into the place of his own genuinely good and tender mother, standing between himself and his father.

Just as to-day, so she had met him in those times; with kindly sounding words, but a heart cold and void of love. He knew that she had put an evil interpretation upon each of his boyish errors and little misdemeanors, and referred them to bad qualities and the evil propensities of his nature; that she had persistently misrepresented his character to her husband, and this crime he could not forgive. At the time when his father, Apelles, was murdered, he had already outgrown the days of boyhood; and as the elder son of the house, it should have been his to share the management of the business with his Uncle Porphyrius; but the thought of living in the same place with his step-mother had appeared intolerable to him, and so, especially as he had always been fond of country life, he left to Maria the house on Canopian Street, persuaded his uncle to wind up the business of his deceased brother, and turn it into cash, while he himself left Alexandria, to undertake the administration of their vast estate in Syrenaica.

In a few years he had attained the position of a distinguished landed proprietor. Agriculturists throughout the whole province gladly consulted him, and profited by his example, and the account book that he spread out, this evening, for Maria's inspection—three immense rolls—proved by the unanswerable testimony of figures, that he had known how to double the returns of those great estates. He had a good right to claim for himself independence of action,

and might reasonably insist upon having his own way, for he was upheld by the proud feeling of the independent man, who regardlessly breaks the bond of irksome relations, because he possesses the means of either resting at his ease, or dedicating his strength to new undertakings.

After Demetrius had stood long enough his step-mother's unedifying talk, he laid his hand on the book of accounts, and remarked, without circumlocution, that it was time now to talk of serious matters. He had already explained to Marcus, that he deemed her demand impracticable. He was no loiterer, and wished to come to a conclusion at this very time, whether he should continue to do the best he could for their landed property, or confine himself to the management of his own lands. If Maria insisted upon the last requisition he would immediately give back to her his credentials, yet would hold himself ready to return to Syrenaica, with the new superintendent, whom she must get soon, and induct him into the difficult relations existing there; but afterward he would have nothing whatever to do with the family property. This was his last word, viz : that when they had made their decision, be it one way or the other, they should part without any life-long breach, for this he did not wish, on Marcus' account.

Demetrius had spoken seriously yet without passion, but his discourse smacked so much of the bitterness that animated him, that it could not escape the widow, and so, in her reply, she emphasized the fact, that it would pain her, if he attributed her desire to motives having any personal reference to himself. She had a great deal to thank him for, and acknowledged her obligations with pleasure. He knew that the estates on which he administered were bought partly with her dowry, and partly with money belonging to her husband, and so belonged to herself, equally with her children, himself and Marcus. However, her husband's will had given her the unlimited disposal of the same. She had striven to prove herself worthy of the confidence reposed in her by the deceased, when she had intrusted the management of her property to him while still so young. The rents had increased under his control, and she verily believed that, in the future, he would know how to attain yet more brilliant results; but the ill-doings that were rife on those lands were unbearable, and must be regulated, although it should lessen the returns by a half.

"I am a Christian!" she exclaimed, "and am one with my whole soul. Soul and body have I dedicated to my Saviour. What should profit me all the treasures of the world, if I should receive hurt to my soul! and hurt it must be if I allow my pockets to be filled by these heathenish peasants and slaves. I am inflexibly resolved that our slaves in Syrenaica—and they constitute a flock of more than three thousand wretched sheep—that our slaves shall either submit to baptism or be exchanged for Christians."

"That were to say—" passionately exclaimed Demetrius.

"I am not done yet," interposed she. "As for the peasants who occupy our land as tenants, they all—you acknowledged it yesterday—cleave obstinately to idolatry. We will allow them time for reflection, and then the annual contract shall be renewed only with those who pledge themselves to give up the old sacrifices and

acknowledge our Lord. If they submit, it will be for their welfare here, and hereafter: if they refuse, give them warning to quit, and next year put Christian tenants in their place."

"As I exchange this chair for another," laughed Demetrius, picking up a seat of heavy bronze, and dashing it upon the hard mosaic floor, so that the din was most startling.

Maria started, and then continued in stronger excitement: "My body may tremble, but my soul stands firm, where their eternal welfare is at stake. I desire—and to this desire, whoever is my representative must accede, be it you or some one else—I require that all heathen temples, every image of rural or horticultural deities, every altar for sacrifices, and every sacred stone, by means of which the peasants carry on their idolatries, be torn away, overturned, or cast aside. That is what I want."

"And that is what I shall never, never agree to!" cried Demetrius with low, wrathful voice. "To blow away like thistledown what has been held dear and sacred for thousands of years, is a task too hard for me. Go and do it yourself; you carry that out!"

"What do you mean?" asked Maria, proudly drawing herself up, with a haughty glance of the eye.

"Yes, you, if anybody, can carry it out!" repeated Demetrius steadily, without allowing himself to be intimidated. "Only to-day I was looking for the likenesses of our ancestors, that had been dear to our childish hearts, the venerable portraits of our father's grandsires and grandmothers, who had made the greatness of our family. Where are they? There where you have thrown our tutelary deities, the Mercury and Pallas Athene, those noble ornaments of our house, street, and city. They have gone to the lime-kiln. Old Phabis owned this to me, with tears in his eyes. Alas! poor house, robbed of its past, its adornment, and its protection!"

"I have given it something better in their stead," replied Maria, with quivering voice, and exchanging with Marcus a glance of intelligence. "For the last time, I ask, will you or will you not do what I ask?"

"I will not do it!" answered Demetrius coldly. "

"Then our estate needs a new manager."

"You will find him, but your land, that is ours likewise, will be converted into a desert. Poor land! For, if you annihilate the sanctuaries of the field, you will destroy its soul also, for they are the soul of the field. Around the sanctuary trooped the first settlers; and upon it and the gods that inhabit it, the peasant rightly fixes his hope for that which he sows and plants, for wife, child and cattle—yes, all that belongs to him. With the sanctuary you destroy the hope of the husbandman, and with it all the joyfulness of life. I know that the peasant will believe all his toil to be in vain, if you take from him the gods, who bestow their blessing upon the hard labor of his hands. The husbandman beholds in seed the type of hope, in the growth of the fruit recognizes the power of the gods, and at harvest delights in returning them grateful thanks. If you destroy his sanctuaries, you take from him what uplifts, supports, and blesses him."

"We give him other, and better ones," answered Maria.

"Only see to it, that they are acceptable to him," gravely opposed

Demetrius. "Persuade him to love, to believe, and hope in what you will force upon him, but take not from him what he holds dearest, before you find him inclined to, and capable of accepting the indemnity that you arbitrarily impose upon him. Let me go now. We are neither of us, any longer, in a mood for devising suitable plans for the future. Only one thing has been settled between us, this evening: I am no longer superintendent of that estate."

CHAPTER VI.

DEMETRIUS had made good use of his time, after leaving his step-mother, and dictated several letters to the Greek slave, his secretary, who had followed him to Alexandria; as for himself, he detested handling the stylus. They all bore reference to his predetermined departure from Syrenaica, and his purpose of confining himself to the management of his own property. Now, as they lay before him, rolled up, wrapped around with string, and sealed, they seemed to be like stones marking a turning-point in his course of life.

Silently he walked up and down, picturing to himself the prospective fate of the slaves and peasants, who had so long been, to him, faithful servants and co-laborers, whose confidence he had won, and among whom there was many a one for whom he felt regard.

He could not imagine the lives of these people, bereft in their activities and their holidays of image, sacrifice, garland and glad song. They would seem, he thought, like children, forbidden to play or laugh; and again was forced upon him the thought of his own boyhood, and he recollected the first day of being sent to school, and made to sit still in a gloomy room, instead of merrily running at large in the sunny garden belonging to his father's house.

He wondered, if the world too had reached that boundary line of existence, where freedom and careless enjoyment of life cease, and the hard struggle after higher things begins.

If the Gospel contained the truth, and its promises should be fulfilled, then it were perhaps advisable to accept its bond, and resign many a brilliant bauble of existence for the sake of imperishable treasures. Many a wise and good man whom he had met in life, yea, the emperor himself, Theodosius, the great and wise, was devoted heart and soul to the doctrines of Christ. Demetrius, too, knew from his own experience that his mother's faith, into which he had been indoctrinated as a boy, and from which the same father who had carried him to the baptismal font had early apostatized, provided poor mortals, in this troublous existence, great consolation and a strong support.

But his peasants and work hands! Were they not healthy and content?

Clinging as they did to old customs, what power on earth could move them to give up venerable superstitions, to which they fancied they owed their well-being and happiness, and seek in uncertainty what they now already deemed their own property.

He did not repent of his firmness, and yet he said to himself

that without him Maria would only too soon carry her purpose into execution and accomplish her work of destruction, and there stood forth before his mind's eye in long array all that she had devoted to downfall, every temple, every marble statue, every leafy grotto, every stone anointed by pious hands.

He was accustomed to begin every day at the first crowing of the cock, and to retire early. This evening, as well, he was preparing to seek his couch betimes, when Marcus entered his room and begged him to spare him another hour.

"You bear a grudge against mother," said the young man, fixing upon him a sad and pleading look: "but you know her devotion to the faith, and for that she makes every sacrifice. There again, how bitterly you smile! Just put yourself in my place. Suppose that you loved anybody as I love mother, would it not pain you if somebody else very dear to you too—for you are my friend and brother—should be so bitterly prejudiced that the one will have nothing to do with the other. My heart is heavy enough to-night without that."

"Poor fellow!" returned the farmer. "Indeed I am your friend and will be so always. You are not to blame at all for any of all this! For that matter I myself am anything but in good spirits. You have made your decree. Down with the sanctuaries, away with those who think differently from what we do! Arrange the matter as you will, here and there it will come to deeds of violence; yes, if no blood flows, it will be a miracle. For you, the question is only about an abstract idea, those heathen peasants in the country. For me the case is entirely different! I know those slaves and tenants personally, and can call their wives and children by name. Every one of them has given me the morning and evening salutation, shaken me by the hand, or kissed my robe. Many a one has come to me weeping and gone off rejoicing. By—— Nobody ever called me tender-hearted, but now would that I were less so! And I boil over with rage when I ask myself, And for what is all this?"

"For the sake of our holy faith, Demetrius; assuredly only for the eternal salvation of these people."

"Indeed?" asked the farmer, drawling out the word. "I know better. Were that and that only the intention then would they build churches and chapels, moreover send us worthy priests—Eusebius, for instance, and men of his stamp—who should try with that love, which you so loudly profess, to win men to your Lord. Early this morning I myself counseled your mother to this course. I believe that, with us, as elsewhere, the aim could be thus attained, not however in a month or a year. The peasant who has become accustomed to going to church and imbibed confidence in the new worship will of his own accord give up the old gods and their shrines. I have seen as many examples of this as I have fingers. Even I would have looked on at this with composure, for what I want with men is their muscle and sinew, not their souls. But, to burn down the old house, before you have even gathered together wood and stone for the new one, that I call criminal, sinful, and foolish. And when so prudent a woman as your mother commits herself unreservedly to so disastrous a policy there must lurk something peculiar in the background.

“ You think that she wanted to set you aside, you, Demetrius?” interposed Marcus, with animation. “ But you are mistaken in this, indeed you are. What you have done for the property—”

“ That, that!” cried the other.

“ What have I or my work to do with all this? In the course of the year—I can see through a grindstone as well as the next one—every trace of a heathenish god will have vanished from the villages and fields of the pious Maria. That is the object held in view! This glad tidings will be borne to the bishop on the wings of the wind, and as one miracle follows another, so increases the chance of winning the saintly crown held in view. Hence this zeal, there lies the sole motor.”

“ You are talking about my mother,” cried Marcus, lifting his eyes to his brother in touching entreaty.

Then the farmer shook his bushy head, and continued in a milder tone: “ Yes, child, I had forgotten that, and it might well be that I err; for I am only a man! One blow after another has struck me in this house, until I hardly know myself any longer. Old Phabis believes that they actually have it on foot now to affix the seal of martyrdom to my father.”

“ Mother is convinced that he died for the faith, and because she loved him so dearly.”

“ Stuff!” snarled Demetrius, striking the table with his fist. “ That lie, sowed by somebody, that accursed weed, has grown up until it overshadows the very roof of this house. You, indeed, what can you know about our father. But I, I knew him. I have been present, when, in company with his philosopher friends, he has laughed at all, not only at that which you Christians, but pious pagans too hold most sacred. Lucretius was his Gospel. The cosmogony of that atheist lay beside his bed, and when he journeyed it was his companion.”

“ He loved the heathen poets, but for all that he was a Christian nevertheless,” retorted Marcus.

“ No more and no less than Uncle Porphyrius and I,” cried the farmer. “ Since our grandfather Philippus received baptism good fortune and harmony have turned their backs upon this house. That he might not lose the job of supplying with corn both the State and emperor he abjured the old gods, he became a Christian, and made Christians of his children. But he had them educated by his heathen friends, and so they passed for what they were not. When it could not be avoided he showed himself with them at church, but their daily lives, their pleasures, their recreations were all heathenish, and when any crisis occurred in their life they offered a bloody sacrifice to the gods. To draw back was an impossibility, for the Christian who proves recreant to the faith and goes back to his idols loses the right to will his own property by testament. You know the law, and if you ask why I myself am without wife or offspring, dearly as I love children, why, as a solitary man I drag out a dreary existence, let me tell you, it is because I serve the old gods openly and freely, not going to church because I despise falsehood. What should I do with children who must be disinherited because of my acts? The right to will property, that alone induced my father to have me baptized as a boy

and pretend to be a Christian. With Lucretius in his traveling-bag—with these hands I placed the little roll beside his purse—he set off for Petra to obtain a contract for supplying the City of Rocks with corn. On his way home he was murdered, evidently by his own servant Anubis, who knew what valuables he carried upon his person, and has never been heard of since. At the same time heathenish Saracens had fallen upon and killed some Christian pilgrims and anchorites in the district of country between Petra and Aila. Upon this and this only your mother founded the right to call our father a martyr. And yet she was well aware of his sentiments, and had shed plenty of tears on their account. Now she expends vast sums on every church being built. Now she establishes an inn on charitable principles, and again casts handfuls of gold to monks and convents, with a never-to-be-sated zeal. To what end? Our father is to be recognized as a martyr! But hitherto she has lavished her means and toil in vain. The bishop is, so far as I am concerned, a hateful tyrant; I know him right well, so he accepts what she offers and yet accedes not to her wishes! Now she brings her best forces into the field, and surprises him with a new marvel. Like a juggler, who makes a black egg out of a white one by a turn of the hand, she converts a pagan into a Christian landscape. For my part, I shall not help her to carry on her little game.”

During this discourse Marcus had sometimes cast down his eyes, then again opened them wide, looking at his brother in wonder and distress. For a long while he found not one word to give back in reply, and it was manifest that a fierce conflict was being fought in his breast.

Demetrius did not disturb him, and silently put in order the papyrus leaves on the table, until Marcus addressed him, and after drawing a deep sigh in a tone of assured conviction and with a blissful smile which illuminated his whole countenance, exclaimed:

“Poor mother! Like you, many will misinterpret her; why I was myself in danger of doubting her. But now, I think, I understand her perfectly. She loved my father so devotedly, and what he failed to gain for himself, while in the flesh, that she would now struggle after in behalf of his immortal soul. He had received baptism, and her prayers, her self-sacrifice, will avail to obtain grace for him from Him, who so gladly pardons. She believes in the death, by martyrdom, of our dear deceased, and if the church extends salvation to them who have bled for her, then is he saved, and she will meet him again beyond the skies, and there in purer light, when her Lord shall summon her hence, overflowing with love and intense gratitude, he will extend his arms to embrace the beloved companion, who will have saved his soul. Yes, now I understand her perfectly, and from this time forth will aid her, and the hardest thing shall not be hard to me, the best thing not too good, to expend in unlocking heaven’s gate to the poor, imperiled soul of our father!”

At the last words the young man’s face glowed with enthusiasm, and even the rough farmer’s heart was softened, but to conceal his emotion he said in a tone more careless and harsh than usual:

"That is bravely put, my dear boy!" Then he hurriedly drew his hand across his eyes, slapped Marcus on the shoulder, and continued with animation: "Rather die than give up what you know to be right. To give candid expression to one's thought never yet hurt anybody. If people can not always agree, they at least learn how to comprehend one another. I have my way and you yours. We have been sincere with each other though; and yet after tragedy comes the farce, so I think that we may as well close this exciting evening with a little harmless chit-chat."

So saying, Demetrius threw himself out upon a cushion at full length, inviting Marcus to do the same, and soon the conversation turned upon horses, as it was exceedingly apt to do when these two came together. Marcus praised the mares which had been trained for him by his brother, and which he had yesterday exercised in the hippodrome, and the farmer added self-complacently:

"All four by the same father and mothers of most excellent stock. I broke them in myself, and should like to— But why were you not in the stable this morning early?"

"I could not come," replied Marcus, and he blushed slightly.

"Then we'll drive out to Nicopolis to-morrow, and I'll show you how to get Megara past the Taraxippus.*"

"To-morrow, say you?" asked Marcus, with embarrassment. "I have to go and call on Eusebius early in the morning, and then—"

"Well, then?"

"Then I must, that is to say, I would like to—"

"What?"

"Of course— Perhaps I might, nevertheless. But no, no, it can not be done—I have—"

"What, what, what?" asked the farmer, with growing impatience. "My time is limited, and if you want those horses to run, and know not my way of managing them, most assuredly they will not do their best for you. When the market fills up, let us take a drive. We shall need a few hours for the hippodrome, then dine at 'the Damon,' and before it gets dark—"

"No, no," asseverated Marcus; "just to-morrow I certainly can not—"

"He who has nothing to do is generally pressed for time," interposed the farmer. "Is to-morrow a holiday?"

"Not that, but, gracious heavens, although I should like to—"

"Should like to, should like to!" exclaimed Demetrius, indignantly, planting himself with crossed arms in front of his brother. "Say in brief: 'I will not,' or, 'What I intend to do, is my secret and none of your business;' but be done with that miserable affectation!"

These vivacious words augmented the young man's embarrassment, and while he was racking his brain for an answer that would come near the truth, and yet not betray himself, Demetrius, who had not taken his eyes off of him, called out:

"By the foam-born Aphrodite! I do declare there is a lady in the case—an appointment! Women, women—everywhere women!"

* Something used for scaring horses.

"An appointment!" repeated Marcus, after his brother, shaking his head in token of dissent. "Nobody is expecting me; and yet better that you should misinterpret me than that I should speak falsely. Yes, then, I am on the search after a woman, and if I do not find her to-morrow, if I do not to-morrow attain that to which my heart urges me, then she may be lost, not to me at all—for I, I cast not heavenly love away for the love of the flesh—but to my Lord and Saviour. The morrow's stake is life, eternal life, or everlasting death for a fair being formed in the likeness of God."

The farmer's amazement was ever increasing, and with a gesture of impatience, he said:

"Again you have overstepped the boundaries of the territory on which we occupy common ground. You are an enigma to me. I should not suspect you of being old enough to be disturbing yourself about the imperiled souls of fair women. With those who swim on the surface one goes into the water without risk, but the drowning ones drag us down with them. You are a handsome rascal, have money, and drive fine horses, and there are plenty of sharp women here spreading their nets—"

"The question is not about me," eagerly replied Marcus. "Here I am the fisher, a fisher of souls, and such should every believer be. She is innocence, simplicity itself, with all her sweet mischief. But she has fallen into the hands of sinful heathens, and here, where seduction goes about like a roaring lion, she will be lost if I do not save her. Twice I have seen her in my dreams, once close to the jaws of a raging dragon, and the other time on the verge of a towering precipice, and both times an angel called to me, and bade me save her from the teeth of the monster, and falling into the abyss below. Since then her image has been ever present with me, whether I eat, talk, or ride, and just as perpetually I hear the warning voice of the angel. And her, upon whom the Most High has lavished all the gifts with which He adorned Eve—her, to guide her into the path of salvation, that is a blessed duty, and I will perform it."

The farmer had followed the inspired words of his brother with increasing solicitude. Now he shrugged his shoulders and said:

"One might envy your acquaintance with this favorite of the gods, but I should think that your work of soul-saving might be postponed. You have been away from Alexandria for a whole half year, and it she has kept her head above water so long—"

"Speak not so; you dare not talk thus," cried Marcus, pressing his hand upon his heart, as though it pained him. "I have no time to lose, for I must learn whither that old singer has led her. I am not so inexperienced as you think. He brings her here to make an ill use of her beauty and to enrich himself. You met her yourself on shipboard. I had procured them lodgings here, you know, in my mother's Xenodochium."

"For whom?" asked Demetrius, folding his arms.

"The singers whom I took into our ship at Ostia. And, now, now, they have vanished from that place of refuge, and Dada—"

"Dada?" cried Demetrius, bursting into a loud peal of laughter, without observing that Marcus shrunk from him in glowing indignation. "Dada, that fair-haired little girl, is before your eyes, night

and day, and an angel exhorts you to the rescue of that merry, lively thing? Shame upon you, my boy! What will you bet me? If I sacrifice this parcel of gold she would be off with me to-morrow, me, the rawboned, freckle-faced countryman with my hair bristling all over my head like a chamber-maid's mop. I tell you she would with me to Arsinoë, or anywhere else I chose. Let the jade go, you foolish piece of innocence! Such a soul as that is fitted for a more commonplace heaven than yours."

"Take that back!" cried Marcus, beside himself, and he doubled up his fist. "But that is just you. With your own impure eyes and heart you soil what is purest, and discern even spots upon the sun. Of a 'singer' anything may be believed, I know. But that, just that, is the very thing! I would save her from that curse! If you can bring one fault to her charge, do so; if you know nothing against her, and would not stand before me in the light of a slanderer, then take back what you have said, on the spot!"

"I take it all back," said Demetrius, composedly, "for I know nothing more of your beauty than what I read in the glances of her pretty, merry eyes, glances speaking to you, me, Cynegius and his scribes. But people say that the language of the eye does not always speak truth. So, no offense, please! If I understood you aright, you are in ignorance now as to the whereabouts of the singer. If you have no objection I'll aid you in your search."

"As you will," returned Marcus, provoked. "In spite of your mockery I shall do what I believe to be my duty."

"Right, right," replied his brother. "Perhaps this maiden is different from other public singers of her sex, among whom, in my younger days, I spent many a night in carousal. At Barca I once saw a white raven with my own eyes, but after all perhaps it was only a dove. In this case your judgment is of more weight than mine, for you concerned yourself about the girl, while I did not; but it is very late already. Good-night, then, till to-morrow, Marcus, my boy!"

The brothers parted, and as soon as he was left alone Demetrius paced up and down the apartment, shaking his head.

When his body-servant came to pack up his things he called out to him peevishly:

"Be done there, we shall stay a few days longer in Alexandria!"

Marcus did not retire to rest. His brother's scorn had shaken his soul to its very foundations. An inner voice told him that the experienced man of the world might be right, but at the same time he reproached himself bitterly for paying any heed whatever to this voice. The old curse of her calling rested heavily upon Dada; she herself was pure, pure as the lily, pure as the heart of a little child, pure as the blue of her own eye and the metal of her voice. What the angel had bidden him do, he would perform. He must, he could save her.

Deeply moved, he peeped through the great front door, out upon Canopian Street, and followed its course. As he was about to turn into a cross-street, in order to reach the lake, he found it blocked up with soldiery, for it led to the prefecture, the present abode of the emperor's ambassador, Cynegius, of whom it was reported that he had come to close the temples, and before its doors the excited

populace had massed itself in the afternoon in order to demonstrate its repugnance to such a mission. Toward sundown an armed force had interposed and dispersed the mob. By another way, however, the young Christian finally reached the lake-shore.

CHAPTER VII.

WHILE Marcus restlessly paced to and fro on the strand with Dada's image before his eyes, and thought out persuasive arguments with which he would touch her heart, and produce in her mind conviction of the true plan of salvation, it had grown quiet in the floating home of the minstrel family. A soft, whitish mist hovered over Lake Moeris, like a light veil that had been woven by the night out of moonshine and clouds laden with moisture.

Work had long since ceased on the dock, and the mighty ribs of hulks for half-made ships threw wondrous ghost-like shadows that rested like dark incorporeal crabs, centipedes, or gigantic spiders on the sandy ground, silvered by the moonlight.

Not a sound from the city penetrated to this distance. She lay there as though under the spell of drunken stupor. The Roman cohorts had cleared the streets, extinguishing the lights in the houses as well as upon the streets and squares, but the moon shone over Alexandria's roofs, and afar off, from the light-house on the north-eastern point of the island of Pharos blazed lamps, with the effulgence of a midnight sun.

In the grand cabin, in the stern of the vessel, reposed the two maidens on downy couches, covered with fine drapery. Agnes was awake, and looked out into the darkness with wide-open eyes; Dada had long since fallen asleep, and yet her breathing was troubled and irregular, and at times her red lips contracted painfully. She dreamed of the excited throng, that, the day before, had torn the flowers out of her hair, and saw Marcus interpose and rescue her from her pursuers; then she believed herself to be falling from the gangway that joined the ship to the shore, while old Damia stood on land, mocking at her without offering her any help. Night had always brought to her hitherto either sound sleep or pleasant dreams, but this time one disagreeable vision followed after the other, although the evening had brought her a great joy.

Soon after her return home from her walk into the city, the steward had come on board, and with his old lady's compliments, presented to her an elegant dress, and an Egyptian waiting-maid besides, who was familiar with all the requirements of a lady's toilet, and would be her personal attendant so long as she remained in Alexandria.

Such a robe Dada had never before called her own. The underskirt was of soft sea-green silk, and was trimmed with wide lace, above which ran a garland of blush roses and rose-buds, executed in fine needle-work. The upper robe was of the same color, and edged with the same lace. This upper garment was to be clasped at the shoulders by costly bands, the center-piece of which was a fine oval-shaped mosaic, representing a half-blown rose set in gold. In a separate box lay a golden girdle, a bracelet of the same precious

metal, in the shape of a serpent, a golden crescent, in the center of which, as on the shoulder-bands, was to be seen the picture of a rose, and a metal mirror of faultlessly polished surface.

The slave was a middle-aged woman with brown, cunning face, and immediately lent Dada aid in putting on her new rose-dress. Nor did this accomplished maid omit to dress the young lady's hair anew; and, while thus engaged, had not wearied, like some young lover, of ringing the changes upon all the fair gifts with which Nature had endowed her young mistress.

Agnes had smilingly watched her, had obligingly handed the maid the pins and ribbons that she needed, and feasted herself on the pleasure and beauty of her companion.

At last Dada repaired in full dress to the grand saloon, and there was gratified by hearing many an approving Oh! and Ah! from the men assembled there, with whom sat also the singer Medius, whom Karnis had met in the street, and with whom he had associated himself.

Even Herse, who had received her rather ill-humoredly upon her return from the city, could not refrain from bestowing upon her a kindly smile, although, at the same time, she shook her finger at her, and said:

“The old lady has set out to turn your head completely. All that is very pretty, but it will only provoke the tongue of slander. Always remember that you are my own sister's child. I shall certainly not forget it, and keep my eyes wide open.”

Orpheus had nothing more pressing to do than to light all the candles and lamps, of which there were an abundance in this richly-furnished apartment, and when Dada now presented herself before Karnis in the full glare of wax-light, he exclaimed:

“Like a senator's daughter! Long live the beauty!”

Then she ran up to him, and gave him a kiss, but, on the other hand, when Orpheus came about her, extolling the fineness of texture and artistic workmanship of her armlets, and, at the same time, turned the serpent encircling her round arm, she drew back indignantly.

Medius, a man of Karnis' age, and a former associate of his, kept his eye continually riveted upon the maiden, and whispered to her uncle that Dada could hold her own in a comparison with any beauty of Alexandria, and that with this jewel he might in the most honest manner again become a wealthy man.

At his solicitation, she must undertake the presentation of many fine characters. She had to pose as Hebe, who hands nectar to the gods, as Nausicaa, listening to the tales of Ulysses, and as Sappho singing.

The girl delighted in this acting, and when Medius, who never left her side, wanted to prevail upon her to show herself in similar characters at the entertainments of Posidonius, the wizard, before a select assemblage, assuring her that thus in a few months she could make her family rich again, she clapped her hands, and exclaimed: “You dragged yourself along with me through the streets, and to reward you for acting as my escort how I would like to buy back for you your pretty vineyard. I am therefore to show myself before the people so—so, and so am I, and let them gape at me? The

idea has suddenly taken me that I can hoax the spectators! If they do not come too close to me, I could in truth—”

“Then you could do nothing better,” said Medius, interrupting her, “than play the parts that would be assigned you by Posidonius. His audiences want to see lovely visions, friendly guardian spirits, and the like. You emerge from the clouds, behind a transparent veil, they greet you with enthusiasm, or adoringly stretch out their arms to you.”

All this seemed very fascinating to Dada, and she was about to give her hand to Medius in token of assent when her eye caught the intensely anxious expression upon the Christian girl’s countenance, who stood just opposite to her, blushing deeply. The blood rushed into her own cheeks, and with a curt, “But it will not do,” she turned her back upon the old man, and threw herself down upon the sofa next an elegant China vase.

Now Medius began to besiege Karnis and Herse with representations, but they rejected his offers, because they hoped to leave Alexandria in a few days; and so nothing was left for him to do but submit. Meanwhile he did not give up the game as utterly lost, and in order to win Dada’s favors made her laugh by comic antics, or showed her surprising tricks of sleight of hand, and soon the floating parlor rang with laughter, the clinking of glasses and merry songs, in which even Agnes had to take a part. Not until toward midnight did Medius take his leave, when Herse hurried off her family to bed.

After the waiting-maid had undressed her young mistress Dada threw herself into the arms of the Christian, who was just about retiring, and kissing her passionately, cried out: “You are much, much better than I! How do you always know what is right?”

And with this she composed herself for rest, but once more addressed Agnes, saying: “Marcus will certainly find us, and I would like to know what plan he has for me.”

A few minutes later, and slumber had sealed her eyelids, but the Christian was still waking, her thoughts found no rest, and sleep that had been so kind to her the night before, now refused to visit her couch.

So much had happened to her to-day that filled her bosom with disquiet. The unrestrained jollity of this family of minstrels had hitherto been witnessed by her as a silent sympathizer, and these light-hearted people had then always struck her as spendthrifts, who wasted their substance in a few days, then to starve long years in rueful penitence and woe. Uneasy about the salvation of these poor souls, but glad in her own faith, she had then sought rest with her Saviour and Redeemer, and soon found it. But to-day matters were different with her, for in the house of Porphyrius she had encountered a new and unlooked-for temptation.

She had again heard Gorgo sing, and blended her own voice with hers. Her ear had drunk in strains breathing of bitter woe, lofty aspiration, and warm outpourings of the heart in praise of that beautiful and mighty divinity, and her soul had been filled with shuddering rapture, although she knew that they had emanated from the brain of heathen poets, and been exquisitely set to music by lost

idolators. And yet, and yet, they had touched her heart, filling her breast with delight and her eyes with tears!

Now she must also acknowledge to herself that she could have lent to her own woe, her own gratitude, her own aspirations, her own hope of life eternal, no fairer, purer, more inspired expression, than had done this fair devotee to paganism.

Astonishment, unrest, yea, a slight feeling of jealousy, had mingled in her rapture at Gorgo's singing.

How was it possible that this heathen could feel and render outward expression to what she had ever considered as the Christian's prerogative, and what she herself had experienced in the liveliest manner, when in closest communion with her Saviour.

Could her own feelings have not been genuine? had intercourse with heathens perverted her? This suspicion disturbed her sorely, and it must have had its origin in something more than mere self-torture; for had it even come into her mind to inquire to whom that hymn for two voices was addressed with its plaintive appeals, when Karnis had first gone through it with her alone, and she had sung it, timidly in the beginning, the second time more confidently, and finally, carried away by the beauty and deep fervor of the lament that it contained, accompanied Gorgo in it without a mistake?

Now, she knew, for Karnis himself had told her.

It was the lament of Isis over her deceased husband and brother—oh! the heathenish outrage! And that deceased one was the idol Osiris! The weeping widow, who called him back "with the still voice of tears," was that chief of heathen goddesses, concerning whose worship her father had frequently spoken with such abhorrence. But this lament was so genuine and true, so permeated by the agonized feeling of an afflicted soul, that it touched her to the heart. The suffering Mother of God might have pleaded just so for the resurrection of her Son; just so must she have bewailed, lamented, and called back to life him, the "godlike one," as he was called in her father's Arian confession of faith!

But all this was nothing but heathenish deception, the jugglery and legerdemain of the devil, and yet had she not looked on to the end, and given herself up to it, with her whole soul? Yes, more, yet. After she had understood that Gorgo represented Isis, but she, Nephthys, the sister of the deified pair, she had only faintly opposed the proposition to take part in this duet, in the temple of the goddess; and when Gorgo had drawn close up to her like an affectionate sister, and besought her not to spoil her pleasure but grant her request, she had not repulsed the fair tempter with severity, but only prayed for time to reflect.

But whence could she have gathered spirit for refusal, when this noble young lady, whose character and singing appeared so very charming and attractive, face to face, and with her beautiful arms thrown tenderly around her neck had implored her thus: "Now, do it, love, do it, to please me. What I ask of you is nothing bad! A pure song is acceptable to every god. Lament, if you choose, for yours, who likewise suffered severely on his cross. It does me good to hear you sing. Say yes! For my sake, do not refuse."

Then had she, whose heart was keenly susceptible of gratitude and affection, flung her arms around the heathen maiden's neck, pressed

her to her bosom, and exclaimed: "As you will, whatever you ask, shall be done!" And Orpheus, too, had urged her to be obliging to Gorgo, himself and the rest of the family, and it had seemed impossible to her to refuse the first entreaty ever made to her by the modest young man to whom she would so willingly have granted everything, but nevertheless she had restrained herself, and in her confusion, without thinking, or weighing properly her words, had she sought only for evasion and postponement.

She might have compromised herself awkwardly enough, but Gorgo had not pursued her entreaties further; and when she had found courage, after leaving Porphyrius' house, to refuse decidedly to enter the temple of Isis, Karnis had answered nothing but: "Be grateful that this blessed virgin, this favorite of the Muses, deems you worthy of singing with her. The rest follows with time."

In these sleepless hours of the night, was made manifest to her the abyss on which she stood. Like Judas, she had been in the act of betraying her Lord, not for filthy lucre's sake, but out of regard to the fleeting melody of a human voice, and her own art, to gratify a suddenly awakened fancy; probably also, because it gratified her childish vanity to be placed on the same footing with a noble lady of distinction, and a songstress that Karnis and Orpheus admired extravagantly.

She was an enigma to herself, and one passage in the Bible after another forced themselves upon her memory, and condemned her.

There lay Dada's rose-dress! To-day it had been worn for the first time, in a month would be hardly presentable, and how very soon would it be cast aside, as worn out. And so, exactly so was it with every worldly pleasure, every joy in this brief, earthly existence. Ah! most assuredly she was here below no happy maiden, in Karnis' sense of the term; but in you bright world on high, there were delights of eternal duration, and what were it to deny one's self little gratifications here in order to secure great imperishable ones, in the world beyond! There should she possess in superfluity what the soul longed for, there, it might perhaps be granted to her—like poor Lazarus for the rich man—to moisten Gorgo's lips.

She knew now what answer she had to give on the morrow; and with the firm resolve to put far from her the request to sing in the temple of Isis, she found slumber and repose just as the dawn began to brighten the horizon in the east. She awoke late, and then followed Karnis and Orpheus, with downcast eyes, and firmly closed lips, to the house of Porphyrius.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE steward had not mentioned Dada to-day, when he invited the singers to Porphyrius' house, and the slighted one worried over it this time. The daughter of that old corn-sack said she is a haughty princess, who cares for other people only just so far as they gratify her purposes. If she had not dreaded being deemed intrusive, she would have availed herself of old Damia's invitation to visit her often, and, despite Gorgo's neglect, dropped, like a meteor, into the middle of Porphyrius' music-hall. That this grand

young lady should have conceived any dislike for her, did not enter into her mind; for it was possible enough that a poor singing-girl might have been overlooked, but who had ever met her in other than a friendly manner? Nevertheless, she claimed for herself the right not to be able "to bear" Porphyrius' proud daughter, and just as the others were setting off, she called out to Agnes: "You need not murder her, in my name, but neither are you to give her my compliments! It is only a shame that I am condemned to stay here all alone with Herse. Do not be surprised, when you come back, to find me turned into a stiff, brown mummy—we are here in Egypt for that to be sure. I'll will you my old gown, my dear; the rose-dress you would not put on as yet. If you mourn for me very prettily, I'll appear to you in your dreams, and put sugar-plums into your mouth—ambrosial ones, such as the gods eat. Why you do not even leave me the boy to tease!"

In sooth Agnes' little brother had been neatly dressed, and was to accompany the party to Gorgo, who had asked to see him.

After the rest had left the ship it was speedily manifest that Dada's vexation was only skin-deep; for, no sooner had she caught sight of the cuirassier's gray-bearded father, than she sprung bare-footed (as she was accustomed to go in the house) up the narrow snip's stairs, threw herself on a cushion, shaded by a linen tent-cloth, leaned over the deck-railing, and began to watch all that was going on in the dock, and upon the road running along the shore. Before time had commenced to hang heavy upon her hands, her new tire-woman returned from paying many little services to her former mistress, that were still incumbent upon her. She crouched down at her feet, and began to give her information about everything that excited her interest. The first questions naturally had reference to Gorgo. This young lady, as she heard now, had already rejected many suitors, belonging to the first families of the city; and indeed if Sachepri the slave, spoke correctly, all for the sake of the old master-ship-builder's son, with whom she had grown up, and who was an officer in the emperor's service. But this attachment, the maid thought, would not lead to a union, for Constantine was a zealous Christian, and his family immeasurably superior to that of Porphyrius', and although it was true that he had come back home, loaded with distinctions, yet Damia, who had control of everything at last, entertained quite different views for her grandchild.

These communications excited Dada's sympathy in the highest degree, but she followed the maid's talk, with yet greater attention, when she came to talk of Marcus, his mother, and brother. The old Egyptian was Damia's tool. She had expected to be questioned about that young Christian, and no sooner had Dada uttered his name, than she glided close up to her, laid her hand softly upon her arm, looked up at her with glittering eyes, and whispered to her hurriedly—for Herse was not within earshot, as she moved to and fro between her cabin and the deck—in her impure Greek: "Such a pretty young mistress, to be kept shut up like a poor slave! If mistress would only choose it, she could have just as fine a time as our Gorgo, easily, just as easily as anything; yes, as good times, and better! So young, so lovely! And I know somebody, whe

would like to set my beautiful mistress in red gold, white pearls, and precious stones, if charming Dada would only consent."

"And why should charming Dada not consent?" said the maiden, mimicking her maid in lively manner. "Who has so much to bestow upon me? You—I no more remember your name than if I were double as old as your lady Damia."

"Sachepris, Sachepris is my name," answered the slave, "but, if you please to, call me anything else. The gentleman whom I mean, is the young son of the rich Maria. A handsome man is Mr. Marcus, and he has horses, such splendid horses, and gold is more plenty with him than pebbles here on the shore. Sachepris knows that he has sent slaves abroad now, to search for pretty mistress. Give him a token, write to Mr. Marcus."

"Write?" laughed Dada. "At my home girls are taught other things; but if I could, do you think I would do such a thing? Write to him, I certainly should not! If any one wants to find me, let him look for me!"

"He is looking, he is looking for you, beautiful lady," asseverated the waiting-maid, "and he is full, quite full of you; and if I only dared—"

"Well?"

"Then I would put right off and say to Mr. Marcus, say all in secrecy—"

"What? Finish your speech!"

"In the first place I would tell him where my lovely mistress is staying, and then, that he might hope—hope I should say, that my most beautiful of mistresses would some time, this evening perhaps—it is not far off—it is right near here. Only see that little white house over there! It is an inn, and the host is a freedman of my noble lady Damia's, and for money would keep you for a day, a night, for several days. And there I should say—why should I hold my tongue? There Mr. Marcus is waiting for his charming lady-love, and will get for her dresses, compared with which the rose-dress is but a beggar's gown. Then you will get gold—as much gold as your heart can desire. I will guide you there myself, where your lover will receive you with open arms."

"And that this very evening!" cried Dada, the blue veins swelling upon her forehead and temples. "Fy! you brown serpent! Have you learned such arts from your Miss Gorgo? How shocking that is! fy, fy, how base and vile!"

Marcus, whom she had taken to be good and pure, was the last person from whom she would ever have expected such an insulting proposition. She did not want to believe all that, and as she met the sly, cunning glance of the Egyptian, her own eye flashed brightly, and with a decision and severity, for which the waiting-maid would never have given her credit, she exclaimed: "It is false, all false! Confess it, woman! How did Marcus get to you yesterday, if he does not know where we are? You are silent, you will not speak! Oh, now I understand the whole thing! He, he would never have dared to have such a thought. But your noble lady Damia, she it is who talks through you; you are only her echo, and Marcus— Quick, this minute, confess it on the spot, you hag—"

"Sachepris is a poor old slave," begged the maid, with uplifted

hands. "Sachepris must only obey, and if pretty mistress should betray her to the lady Damia—"

"She, she it was who invited me to that little inn?"

The slave nodded.

"And Marcus?"

"If pretty mistress had consented—"

"Well?"

"Then— But, great Isis! if you should betray a poor slave!"

"That I will not do. Then you would have also—"

"I, yes, I would have gone to young Marcus, and in your name invited him."

"Shameful!" cried Dada to the Egyptian, and her tender limbs trembled slightly. "How wicked, how horrid is all this! But as for you, you stay here only until the rest come back, when I'll pack you home to your old mistress. I have, the gods be thanked, two sound hands, and need no waiting-maid. But there. What is the meaning of that? That elegant sedan-chair has stopped here, and the old gentleman is bowing to you."

"The intendant of the noble widow Maria," whined the slave, but Dada turned pale and asked herself what business a messenger from Marcus' mother could have here.

Herse too, who, for Dada's sake, kept a continual lookout upon the bridge connecting the ship with the shore, had seen the approach of the widow's intendant, and discerned in him an ambassador of love, in behalf of Marcus; but how amazed was she when the old man politely but very peremptorily summoned her to enter the sedan-chair, and attend him to his mistress.

Was this an artifice? Did he only wish to entice Herse away from the ship in order to leave the coast free for his young master?

But no.

He had handed her a small tablet, and upon it was this super-scription: "Maria, the widow of Apelles, to the wife of the singer Karnis." This, Herse, being an Alexandrian and well educated, could read fluently. To the above address followed the same urgent summons, that had been verbally delivered by her messenger. To secure herself against imposition, she beckoned the slave aside, and learned that the steward Phabis was a trusty old retainer of the widow. No deception was to be thought of in this case, and she was obliged to accept the invitation. This disturbed her greatly, but she was a circumspect woman, heart, mind, and mouth in the right place, and quickly apprehended the necessities of the occasion. While she gave her outer person a presentable appearance, she handed over to the Egyptian maid (whom she had taken with her into her chamber) the little tablet, ordering her to convey it to her husband without delay, to tell him whither she had gone, and to request him to return to Dada without delay. But suppose that her husband and son could not get off? Then the girl would be left all alone on the ship, and then!—Forthwith before the eyes of her motherly solicitude appeared Marcus luring Dada away, or, if the young Christian did not succeed in finding out her abode she beheld her niece escaping of her own accord and strolling about on Canopian Street or in the Bruchium, where at noon all the fashion and frivolity of Alexandria had its rendezvous. She saw, shuddered, pondered,

and suddenly an expedient occurred to her that promised to meet the difficulty. It was not new, and a favorite one among Egyptians. She had seen it resorted to by the lame tailor who had been her father's tenant, when he had to wait upon his customers at their homes, and leave his young wife at home.

Dada lay barefooted upon deck. Herse was going to hide her shoes.

This she proceeded to do with flying fingers, and locked up in their one trunk saved, not only the sandals of the blonde, but Agnes' also and her own. A glance at the hem of the Egyptian slave's robe convinced her that hers could not be rendered available.

"Though a fire should break out here," thought she, "my Dada would not go out upon the street with her pretty little feet deformed by such huge, clumsy coverings as those things there."

After this task had been accomplished Herse breathed more freely and proceeded to take leave of her niece. Because, however, she felt that she had to make up to her for something, she addressed her in a peculiarly endearing manner: "Farewell, child, I hope the time will not seem long to you. There is a great deal to be seen here, and the rest will soon be back again. This evening, if the town is not too riotous, we shall all ride together to Canopian Street and eat oysters. I'll see you soon again, my darling!"

So saying, she gave her a kiss, and the maiden looked up in surprise, for her foster-mother was usually sparing of such demonstrations of affection.

Soon Dada found herself quite alone on the ship, and for diversion nibbled at some candy while she kept herself cool waving her new fan. At the same time her thoughts dwelt continually upon the shameful plot devised against her by old Damia; and while it delighted her that she had not fallen into the snare, but penetrated its design, her wrath kept increasing against the unworthy old woman and Gorgo, whom she could not dissociate from her. Between whiles she would look out, sometimes for Marcus, sometimes for the cuirassier. That it had been impossible for her to attribute evil to the young Christian, and that she could not help trusting him implicitly, endeared him to her peculiarly; but she was curious also about the prefect, the youthful love of the proud merchant's daughter. Meanwhile time slipped by, the sun rose higher in the sky; looking abroad, fault-finding and dreaming wearied her, and yawning, she began to consider whether she should stretch herself out at full-length for a nap or go below, and for pastime once more try on the new rose-dress. But her balancing between the two came to naught, for, in the first place, the slave came back from her walk and immediately afterward she saw the cuirassier approaching the lake through the dock. Hereupon she quickly drew herself up, adjusted the crescent surmounting her curly locks, and waved him a graceful salute with her fan.

The prefect of cavalry who knew from earlier times that the ship was made use of for furnishing accommodation to Porphyrius' guests, and had heard nothing in his father's house of its present occupants, bowed low before the beauty on the deck, making her reverentially the military salute. Dada graciously acknowledged it; but this new acquaintance seemed to be brought speedily to an end,

for the soldier walked on without looking around. His appearance to-day was more striking than on yesterday. His hair was freshly curled and oiled, his cuirass and helmet shone with such luster, and the crimson stuff of his coat was so new and splendid that they could not have been more so, if he had been about to present himself before the throne of the emperor. The merchant's daughter had not shown poor taste, but her friend seemed to hold his head as high as she did herself. It charmed Dada to make his acquaintance and see if he actually had no eyes for anybody else save Gorgo. The opposite, little as she concerned herself with him otherwise, would have given her great satisfaction, and she determined to put him to the test. No time was to be lost, and as she knew there would be impropriety in her calling to him, she yielded to the sudden impulse and threw the pretty fan into the water which had just been presented to her the day before. As she did so she uttered a shriek, in which fright and concern blended in the most natural manner possible.

Her ruse succeeded. The officer turned around, his eyes met hers, and now Dada bent far over the parapet of the ship, pointed to the mirror of the lake, and called out disconsolately: "It has fallen into the water! Oh, my fan!"

Again the officer made a slight bow. Then he left the road and came to the shore, while Dada continued her exclamations in a quieter manner: "There! There! If you only would! I would like to get my pretty fan again so much! See, only see how obliging he is! There it is swimming straight up to you."

Constantine the prefect had soon picked up the fan, which he shook dry as he crossed over to the ship.

She received the fan joyfully, stroked smooth its wet feathers, and thanked him who had rescued it with warmth and animation; but he assured her that he only wished the service done her had been a greater one. Then he would have withdrawn, bowing in as formal a manner as he had done before, but he was detained in a way that was quite unexpected, for the Egyptian slave stepped in his way, kissed the hem of his coat and cried: "What joy for father, mother, and poor Sachepris! Mr. Constantine is at home again!"

"Yes, home again, at last!" returned the soldier with a deep, resonant voice. "Your old mistress holds her own bravely. That is right. I am on my way now to call on the rest."

"They know already that you are here," replied the slave. "Great joy among them all. Have asked if Mr. Constantine had forgotten his old friends."

"Not one, not one."

"And how long has it been since Mr. Constantine went away? Two years, no, three whole ones, and yet not one bit changed. Only that scar over the eye! Withered be the hand of the villain who put it there."

Dada had long ago remarked upon the broad sword-cut which furrowed the whole brow of the soldier, so far as it might be seen beneath his helmet, and now interrupted the slave: "How can you men delight in hewing and slashing at one another so? Only think, if that thrust had gone just one finger's-width deeper you would have

lost your eye, and then rather died than be blind. To be able to see nothing with light all around, how dreadful that must be! The earth then would lie in darkness, you could distinguish nothing any more, neither the lake, nor the ship, not even me here."

"That would be a pity," interposed the prefect, shrugging his shoulders while he smiled.

"A pity!" cried Dada. "That sounds like nothing; the expression should be a much stronger one, I should think. It is dull and tiresome enough sometimes with two open eyes, what must it be then if they refuse to perform their office, and one can not be diverted by seeing what is going on in the world around? Do you know, sir, that you have not merely done me one favor, but two at one and the same time?"

"I?" asked the prefect of cavalry.

"Yes, you. But the second one is not complete yet. And now pray, take a seat for a little while. You must know that it takes away one's sense of repose if a visitor does not seat himself before he takes his leave. There, that is right, and now I should like to ask you if you do not keep that helmet on your head, in battle more especially. Yes? Well, then how did that sword-cut reach your forehead?"

"In a close fight," answered the warrior, "things do not always keep their right places. One man gave me a blow aside of my helmet while another cut at me from the front."

"And where did that happen?"

"At Savus, where we fought Maximus."

"And did you wear that very helmet on your head?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Oh, give it here, and let me look at it? How heavy such a thing must be with its iron hasps!"

Hereupon Constantine patiently took it off his head and handed it to her. She dandled it about in her little hands, found its weight unbearable, and then lifted it up, to put it on top of her own curly locks; but this did not seem to please the warrior, and with a curt "I pray you," he took the helmet out of her hands, set it down, and rose up to go.

Then Dada made an animated gesture, motioning him to remain seated. "No, no, I am not satisfied with your second service rendered. I was about to expire of loneliness when you appeared in the very nick of time, and if you would finish your work of charity you must tell me something about that battle, where you got your wound, and who nursed you, and whether the Pannonian women are really so beautiful as reported."

"Alas! time fails me to do all that," interposed the prefect, "and as for time hanging heavy upon your hands, Sacepris there can help you to pass it away far more cleverly than I can, at least; I know her of old as being excellent at story-telling. A pleasant day to you!"

With this parting salutation Constantine withdrew, nor, as he advanced in Porphyrius' garden, did he look around even once at the ship or its lovely occupant.

Much mortified, Dada looked after him, her cheeks suffused with blushes. She had again done something of which she well knew

Herse would disapprove, and, what was much more painful to her, Agnes likewise. The stranger with whom she had tried to flirt was a worthy man. Gorgo had reason to be proud of such a lover, and now if he should go off, and probably finding her out of sorts, should tell her that he had been detained against his will by that bold public singer, whom could she blame but herself? She had a feeling as though there was something in and about her that made her seem worse than she was and wanted to be. Agnes, Marcus, the prefect, and Gorgo, too, were something higher, nobler than herself and hers, and for the first time she felt that the dangers, before which the young Christian had desired to protect her, were no mere chimeras of the brain. She could not designate them by name, but she felt that, without prop and support, without weapons against the foolish impulses of her own soul, she would flutter through the hours, from one undertaking to another, like a leaf driven before the wind, and she said to herself that everybody, just because she and her family were professional singers, distrusted her, and took the liberty of suspecting her of what was disgraceful. She could not help quarreling a little with the destiny of herself and family, while there came over her a nameless longing after a new and nobler life.

Silently she sat lost in thought, with her eyes fixed upon the water, although she saw nothing of all that was passing around her, until the slave came running up and pointed out to her a carriage that had stood still at the street which separated the hedge of the temple of Isis from the dock, and in which the Egyptian maintained that she again recognized a pair of Marcus' horses.

Hereupon Dada jumped up quickly, and with glowing cheeks ran down into the cabin to get her shoes; but everything in the shape of a sandal had vanished, and Herse had done well to take the Egyptian's foot-gear into consideration, for the maiden was driven at last to do the same, and would not have been ashamed to make use of her shoes if they had not been so huge and ill-shapen.

Herse had played her this trick, and it was easy to read with what end in view. In order to put her off her guard the false woman had put on all that show of tenderness. Such deceitfulness was base and treacherous. And she had heretofore submitted to all this as meekly as a lamb, but this, this was too much, and not to be endured.

Now the slave came into her chamber and summoned her upon deck. There a new visitor had presented himself in the person of an old acquaintance and fellow-traveler, Demetrius, Marcus' elder brother.

At any other time the agriculturist would have met with a friendly reception as a consoler in her solitude, but he had selected an unlucky hour for his visit and project, as he might have conjectured from the girl's flushed cheeks and moist eyes.

He had come—cost what it would—to take her with him to his estate at Arsinoë on the sea coast. The possession of the fair maiden had little fascination for him, but he had a keen desire, yes, he held it to be his duty to redeem his inexperienced brother from the perils into which his silly infatuation for this singing-girl threatened to plunge him.

A purse full of gold pieces and a necklace of turquoises and diamonds were to be his coadjutors in this scheme. He had bought the latter in the jewelry bazaar in the Jew quarters for a sum that he had already several times wrathfully commuted into a shipload of corn and a whole cellar full of wine and oil. The farmer moved clumsily straight up to his mark, inviting the maiden simply and bluntly to forsake her protectors and follow him to Arsinoë.

When she asked him in surprise what to do there, he replied that he stood in need of a jolly companion. He liked her, and if he dared not flatter himself with having heretofore found favor in her eyes he had brought something with him that might sue successfully in his behalf, and something else that might help him to win a smile from her. He was no curmudgeon, and if she liked this and that—so saying he spread out the glittering chain and laid the full purse upon the cushion, then she might consider it as payment upon account, and calculate upon more if her pocket was deep.

Dada did not interrupt him, for the indignation that more and more overmastered her took her breath away. This new humiliation overstepped all the limits of the endurable, and when at last she had recovered the power to speak and act she threw the purse from her cushion, and after it had fallen clinking to the floor kicked it further away with her bare foot, as though it had been tainted with plague. Then she planted herself right in front of the farmer, and called out, "Shame upon you all! You believe because I am a poor girl, a singer by profession, and because you have dirty gold—Your brother Marcus would not have done so, assuredly not! But you, you horrid boor! If you ever again dare to set foot on this ship Karnis and Orpheus shall hunt you down like a murderer or thief. Eternal gods! what, what have I done to make everybody think me bad? Eternal gods—"

Hereupon she broke out into loud and convulsive sobbing, and rushed up to the steps that led into the lower part of the ship.

Demetrius called after her in soothing words, but she would not heed him.

Then he sent down the slave to implore her to give him a hearing, but this only brought him an order to leave the ship forthwith.

Then he obeyed, and as he picked up the purse he thought: I could get back that granary full of corn and that wine-ship, but I would throw away four more besides if I could undo this miserable business. If one were worthier and better one's self one would not be half as apt to accuse others of being base and dishonorable.

CHAPTER IX.

THE city of Alexandria was stirred to its very depths. There were plottings by Christians and heathen, conflicts between the two, and interference of armed force in bloody quarrels, going on from morning till night at the centers of political life; but, as when a house encounters the severest strokes of destiny, afterward as well as before, the little details of every-day life must be attended to, as children, for instance, continue their plays when their father lies upon his death-bed, thus, in the excited and imperiled condition of

the great city, the little interests of individual life maintained their rights.

True, the stream of pleasure and traffic met with many an obstruction, but still it flowed on. The doctor visited his patients; convalescents, with the aid of a friendly hand, made a first effort to totter out of the sick-chamber into the dining-hall, and alms were both given and taken. Hatred spread herself everywhere, but love, too, stood her ground, strengthening old, and forming new ties. Care and anxiety pressed upon thousands, while others sought to draw profit from the general unrest, and as many more went forth, with light heart, on a search after pleasure and enjoyment. Horses were exercised in the hippodrome, and in the Canopian summer-houses, there were entertainments, music, and laughter in plenty; in the popular gardens, encircling the Paneum, they wagered rudely gold or filthy copper at cock or quail fights. So the child sits, and from the roof of his father's house, which still peeps forth above the flood that has swallowed up the whole village, he launches his toy-boat upon the treacherous element; so the boy lets his gay-colored kite mount up to the sky whence black clouds are threatening to burst in fury; so the old man counts up the savings of a life-time, even while the bony hand of death is clutching at his heart-strings; so dances merry youth upon the quaking ground at the base of a volcano.

Who troubles himself about the whole?

Each man has his own individual self to think of and care for. What man himself needs and desires—be it great or small—has for him higher significance and a sweeter charm than the claims of the great body-politic as regards which he is no more than a tiny drop of blood, or an eyelash.

In Porphyrius' house still lingered Olympius, the man whose spirit and will had once already told so significantly upon the fortunes of the city, and for a nod from whom half of Alexandria tarried even now.

The merchant and his family shared the opinions of this party chief and called themselves his confederates; but among them, too, the trivialities of life held sway, and Gorgo, his fellow-combatant in the strife for the old gods, thought only with divided attention upon the great cause to which she was enthusiastically attached, because a friend of her youth, from whom she had a right to expect a visit, stayed away longer than was becoming.

Yesterday she had sung "The Lament of Isis" with her whole soul, and eagerly solicited Agnes' accompaniment; but although to-day, too, she was excellently in voice, yet she had interrupted the song, sometimes upon hearing a door in one of the side-rooms shut, or loud talking in the garden; then again rendered a passage with so much less true sensibility than the day before, that Karnis would gladly have felt free to reprimand her sharply. But this would not do, and so he gave vent to his dissatisfaction by whispering to his son:

"There you see again that the most astonishing gifts and capabilities avail nothing where the two can still be kept apart, *verumtamen* one carries on art, not as the first and last object of existence but more as a luxury or pastime."

Agnes had been true to her resolution, but declared decidedly that it was impossible for her to cross the threshold of the temple of Isis, and this refusal had been received quietly, and without serious opposition. Gorgo's request to repeat the song of yesterday with her, she had not felt able to decline, for all pointed to her being excused from participation in the festival of that goddess. How could she know that the bearded philosopher, who had yesterday listened a breathless auditor to her duet with Gorgo, had taken it upon himself to dissipate her objections, and persuade her to yield?

Olympius laid great stress upon her co-operation, for all the attractions of the ancient worship were to be combined in the temple of Isis, and the more imposing and brilliant were the ceremonies of the coming festivity, the higher must rise the enthusiasm of the heathen, which was evidently to be put to a severe test in the near future. From the temple, the thousands whose hearts were devoted to the old gods, were to march in solemn procession to the prefecture, and if they traversed the city in right mood, it was to be expected that everything would join them, not distinctly Jewish or Christian.

Thus, it would amount to a proclamation of astonishing magnitude, and show Cynezius, the emperor's legate, how the majority of the citizens were minded, and what would be the import of pushing matters to extremity, and laying hands on the chief temple of the city.

He, the mighty orator, who had grown gray at intellectual work, deemed it mere play to overcome the silly scruples of a capricious young girl.

As the storm deals with a light cloud, so would he scatter them to the winds by the weight of his arguments, and he who saw contrasted this man of the Jupiter-like head and venerable beard, his thoughtful brow and broad chest—whence, at his own pleasure, gushed a stream of discourse, either of sweet persuasiveness or irresistible force—with Agnes' modest and maidenly timidity, could not have doubted for which of the two victory would declare.

Not until to-day had Olympius found time to speak at length with his old friend Karnis, and while the girls had gone into the garden to show little Papias the swans and tame gazelles, he seized the opportunity of acquainting himself with all that he desired to learn about the young Christian, and the fortunes of the minstrel as well.

The latter felt complimented that this renowned scholar, the head of his fellow-believers, in the second city of the universe, who was clothed with the office of high-priest of Serapis, and before whose superior powers of mind he had already bowed as a student, should remember his modest person, and listen to his recital of the manner in which he, the accomplished son of a rich family, had come to be a wandering minstrel.

Olympius had been Karnis' friend, when, at the high school, instead of the latter's applying himself wholly to the study of law in obedience to his father's wish, he had devoted himself to the study of music, with all zeal, and already shone as singer, player on the lute, and leader of heathen choruses.

The tidings of his father's death had come to Karnis while still a student at Alexandria. Before he left this place, then, he had

married Herse, who was his equal neither as to fortune or family, and with her sailed over to his home at Tauromenium in Sicily, there to enter into possession of an inheritance whose size and importance were a surprise to himself.

In Alexandria, the theater had been a far more familiar spot to him than the museum and the high-school of the Serapeum. As an amateur he had sung there in choruses, and frequently supplied the place of their leaders.

In earlier days, the theater of his native city, Tauromenium, had been widely famed; but upon his return home he had found it reduced to a melancholy condition. The greater part of the inhabitants of this glorious city at Mount Ætna's foot, had gone over to Christianity, and with them the rich burghers, at whose expense plays had been put on the boards, and choruses supported. Minor pieces were always being acted, it is true, but singers and actors were being starved, and in their great, beautiful theater no more was anything brought before the public at all worthy of its past.

That cut to the heart this rich young friend of music, and with the stirring activity of his nature, he soon managed to find favorers of his plan among those of his fellow-citizens who had remained loyal to the old gods and retained a taste for Grecia's divine arts of music and poetry.

The theater was to be the heathens' rallying point of antagonism to Christians, it was to enter into rivalry with the churches, lure back apostates, and strengthen those who had remained true to their old convictions. From the stage the Greeks of Tauromenium were to be reminded of the might of its old divinities, and the greatness of its past.

To this end was it necessary to rebuild its ruined sanctuary, and after Karnis had advanced, in cash, a large part of the required expenditures, the leadership of the theater was intrusted to him.

He devoted himself heartily to this task, and soon brought it to pass that the stage of Tauromenium and the musical entertainments in the Odeum attracted its citizens, and were spoken of far and near, on account of their artistic perfection.

Such results must be attained by great sacrifices, and Karnis, despite Herse's remonstrances, had never refused to make fresh advances of money, when the failure of his own creation was at stake.

Thus passed some twenty years; but then came the day when his rich inheritance was exhausted; the time speedily ensued, when the Christian community were ready to sacrifice everything in order to give the death-blow to this heathenish stone of stumbling in their midst. Oftener and oftener, during the performances, bloody conflicts occurred between the Christians, who had forced an entrance into the theater, and the heathenish spectators, until finally came a decree from the Emperor Theodosius, prohibiting the presentation upon the stage of heathen plays and operas.

The theater at Tauromenium, to which Karnis had partly given, partly lent, his whole fortune, existed no longer, and the money-lenders who had advanced sum after sum for the maintenance of an art still in a flourishing condition, through his instrumentality, he becoming security, now sold for debt his house and lands, and

would have cast him into prison, if he had not evaded this disgrace by flight.

Good friends had so aided his family as to enable them to follow him, and in combination with them, he had begun his journeyings as professional singer. Often had he and his fared right hardly, but he had always managed to remain true to art, and the Olympic gods.

The philosopher had followed all this narrative with sympathy, and many a token of approval, and when Karnis, at last, brought it to a close, with tears in his eyes, Olympius laid his hand upon his shoulder, drew him up close, and cried:

“Bravo, bravo, old fellow! We keep true to the same good cause. You have sacrificed to it your all, as I have mine. But still we need not despair. If we conquer here, friends will lift up their heads in thousands of places. The cast of the stars last night, and the appearance of this morning’s sacrifice, prognosticate tremendous revelations. What lies prostrate to-day may be soaring on powerful wings to-morrow. All omens foretell the downfall of what is greatest, and what to day should be greater than Rome, that ancient oppressor of the nations? These days will hardly bring the final decision, but much, of deep significance for us, depends upon them. I have dreamed of the fall of the empire and seen emerge from its ruins a great Grecian kingdom, standing there strong and beautiful, under the protection of the Olympian gods, and upon the realization of this dream each of us must stake our all. You have given us a glorious example of the spirit of self-sacrifice, and I thank you for it, in the name of all sharers of our sentiments; yea, of the gods themselves, whom I serve! The most pressing duty now is to avert the stroke aimed at us by the bishop’s hand through Cynezius. It has already effected the downfall of the costly shrine of the Apameian Jupiter. If the legate departs without having accomplished his errand, it will turn the scale greatly, very greatly, in our favor. Then will it cease to be madness to believe in the victoriousness of our cause.”

“Teach us to hope again!” cried the singer. “With that only much is won; only I do not see how this upheaval—”

“What we want is time, and in this way it is gained,” replied Olympius. Everything is prepared, but nothing ready. Alexandria, Antioch and Neapolis are to be the centers of the revolt. The great Libanius is no man of action, but he consents to our plan. No lesser a person than Florentius has taken it upon himself to electioneer for us among the heathen officers; Messala and the mighty Goth generals, Fraiut and Generid, are ready to give in their adherence to the old gods. There will not lack leaders for our army—”

“For our army?” queried Karnis, in amazement. “Have matters gone as far as that?”

“I speak of the army of the future!” cried the scholar, with enthusiasm. “It numbers not a man as yet, but already it consists of many legions. The nucleus of our host is formed of whatever is strong in mind and body, cultured youth, and muscular men. Flying, a Maximus had gathered together the army that deprived Gratian of both throne and life, and came within a hair’s-breadth of slaying Theodosius—and what was he but an ambitious rebel?”

What lured his followers to him but the hope of sharing his booty? But we, we enlist them, by appeals to the loftiest ideas, the warmest wishes of the heart, and as the prize of victory we point to the ancient faith, the old freedom of spirit, the old beauty of life. As for that humanity, about which the Christians prate, that gaudy patchwork cover of disgusting barbarism, let them disfigure their existence with it, if they please; but we are Greeks, as such become the thinking head and the refined and delicately sensitive soul of the universe. The edifice of state, which we are planning to erect, after the fall of Theodosius and the Roman Empire, is to be Hellenic, and Hellenic only. The only natural feeling that made the Greeks strong against the millions of Darius and Xerxes, is to take possession of us anew, and we are to show the barbarians from ourselves, how the patrician hinders the humble man from reckoning himself as one of his illustrious house. The Greek gods, Greek heroism, Greek arts and sciences, will rise up among us out of the dust, with a rapidity proportioned to the force which has been exerted to hold down the wings with which they were meant to fly, and must soar aloft forever."

"I feel that to my heart's core," cried Karnis. "My old blood again flows faster, and if I only had a few more hundreds of talents to devote—"

"Then would you give them all for our new Greek empire," joyfully interposed Olympius.

"And like you, noble man, so think numberless other friends. What glorious Julian would have accomplished, had not murderers stretched him so young upon his bier, we shall succeed in, for Rome—"

"Rome is still all-powerful."

"Rome is a Colossus, cemented together out of a thousand blocks, and among these there are a hundred and more who are hardly kept in place by the crumbling mortar, and, so far as themselves are concerned, could not, too soon, be dissevered from the horrid monster. Our summons shakes them loose, and they will rush to meet us, we selecting the best of them for use. Time—only a few months' time, and the army will assemble on the Campanian plains at the foot of Vesuvius, thronging thither by land and by sea. Rome voluntarily opens her gates to us, who restore to her her ancient gods; the senate proclaims the emperor deposed and the republic born, Theodosius marches forth to meet us; but the idea for which we rush into the field flies in advance of us, and knocks at the hearts of officers and soldiers, who gladly, oh! how gladly, would sacrifice to the exalted occupants of Olympus, and only perforce kiss the wounds of the crucified Jew. They desert from the *labarum* which led Constantine on to victory, and flock over to our banners, and these banners exist already. These have been prepared in this city, and are well concealed in the house of Apollodore. Exalted demons held them out to my pupil Ammonius when he lay rapt in ecstasy, feeling himself one with God, and I had them painted from his design."

"And what do they represent?"

"The bust of Serapis with the *modius* on his head. It is inclosed within a circular border, on which are to be seen the signs of the zodiac, and around them the images of the great Olympian gods.

The head of our god is that of Zeus; the measure of grain upon his head represents the future blessing expected by the husbandman. The zodiac promises us propitious stars, and the figures which form it are not commonplace, but rich in beautiful significance. The twins are the guides of the mariner, Castor and Pollux; by the lion we see Hercules, who masters him; the fish are dolphins, the friends of music. Upon the balance, the scale holding the cross springs high into the air, and the other is weighed down with the laurel of Phœbus Apollo, and the thunderbolt of Zeus. In short, our standard will unfold all that is dear to the Greek, and that fills his soul with reverence. On the top of the ensign hovers the *Nike*, with the crown of victory. Let the right leaders of the movement be found at each center, and then will the banners be forwarded, and with them arms also for the country people. For each province, a rallying point has been selected, the watchword is fixed, and the day for the march determined upon."

"And they flock hither," broke in Karnis upon his speech, "and I and my son will not be missing from their midst! Oh, lovely day, oh, great, exalted day! How gladly shall I die if I may only live to see victims smoking once more upon begarlanded altars before the wide-open gates of every temple in the land of Greece, in honor of the Olympic deities; once more see inspired maidens and young men form in line, to the sound of Hellenic flutes and lutes, and unite their voices in chorus! Then, yes, then will light be restored to the world, then will life again mean enjoyment, and death, taking one's leave of a blessed feast!"

"So, so shall it be!" exclaimed Olympius, intoxicated by the loud echo of his own enthusiasm, and he pressed the singer's hand. We shall again present life to the Greeks, and teach them to despise death as of old. To darken existence, and seek blissfulness in death, that we leave to those barbarians, the Christians! But the ladies have finished their song. There is much to be done to-day, and the first thing is to dissipate the scruples of your retractory pupil."

"You will not find that so easy a task, either," said Karnis. "Arguments are dull weapons wherewith to fight women."

"Not always," replied the philosopher. "One must only know how rightly to handle his sword! Leave me to deal alone with the child. Female singers here have died out, as it were; we have already tried it with three, but they were all badly taught and commonplace. If this maiden accompanies Gorgo, her voice will deeply touch men's hearts. We need inspired multitudes, and she will help to enthuse them for us!"

"Well, well. But you yourself, Olympius, who are the soul of the great revolution, for which we hope—you ought to keep aloof from this festival! A price is set upon your head, and although Porphyrius does protect you, yet his house is swarming with slaves. They know you, and should one of them, allured by the golden bait—"

"They will not betray me," said the sage smiling. "They know that Danta, their gray-haired mistress, and I have authority over the demons of the upper and nether spheres, and that a nod from her or me annihilates them; but even supposing that an Ephiates

should be found among them, a leap into those doors there saves me. Dismiss care, my friend, on that point; oracle and star both foretell for me another death than through the treachery of a slave!"

CHAPTER X.

OLYMPIUS went to look for Agnes in the garden and found her at the brim of a marble lined basin of water, banding her little brother bread, in order that he might feed the swans.

The philosopher greeted her kindly, took the child up in his arms, and pointed out to him the ball that bobbed now up, now down, in unison with the fountain's jet.

Papias showed no fear of the tall man with his venerable, white beard, for out of his clear eyes shone a mild and sunny luster; his voice, too, sounded soft and sweet, as he asked him whether he, too, had a ball, and knew how to play with it as well as did the water of the fountain.

Papias said no to this, whereupon Olympius turned to Agnes and said:

"Get the boy a ball; there is no better plaything, for play ought to be a graceful movement, that is, end and aim to itself. Play is a child's work, and the ball that he throws, pursues, catches, sharpens his eye, makes his body supple, and teaches him a twofold lesson, that man must put in practice, at every stage of his life, viz.: to look down upon the earth, and then direct the glance upward."

Agnes thanked him by an approving nod; but Olympius set the boy down again upon the ground, and sent him to the inclosure where the tame gazelles were kept. Then he went straight to his point and said:

"I hear that you decline to sing in the temple of Isis; they have taught you to regard as an evil spirit that goddess, to whom, nevertheless, many good men turn in trustfulness; but do you know what she typifies?"

"No," replied Agnes, casting down her eyes; but quickly she raised them again and added courageously: "And I do not wish to know, for your gods are not mine."

"Well, well, your faith diverges from ours at many points; but you and I, methinks, have still something in common. We both belong to the number of those who have learned, and joyfully exercise that 'looking upward'—there the ball mounts up again. Do you know that there are many men who believe that the world had its origin in a series of mechanical processes, and that there is no deity who guides, guards, and adorns the existence of mankind?"

"Ah, yes! I have been compelled to hear so much of such blasphemous talk at Rome."

"And it has run off from you just like water from the silver-white plumage of yonder swan, who has been diving, and now comes up to the surface. Those who deny the being of God have appeared to you foolish, perhaps even contemptible: isn't it so?"

"I have only pitied them from the bottom of my heart."

"And with good right. You are an orphan, and what parents are to their child, so are the gods—that is divinity—for all that is

yclept man. In this, Gorgo, I, and many others whom you style heathen, feel precisely as you do; but you—have you asked yourself, why you, to whom life has brought so many ills, are so firmly persuaded that there is, nevertheless, a benevolent deity who regulates benignly the world and your own destiny? In short, why do you believe in God?"

"I?" asked Agnes, looking at the philosopher, with wonder depicted in her eye. "What could there be without God? You put such strange questions: all that I see, has been created by Our Father in Heaven."

"But there are some born blind who believe in Him."

"They feel him even as I see Him."

"Say, rather, as I think I see and feel Him. But I think that reason has a right to put to the test what the soul only suspects, and that it must be delightful to see this supposition confirmed by well-weighed arguments and changed into certainty. Have you happened to hear of Plato the philosopher?"

"Yes, Karnis often mentions him when he is conversing with Orpheus about matters that I do not understand."

"Well, this same Plato has with reason supplied proof for the example which the heart can solve so satisfactorily for itself alone. Only listen: Suppose you were to stand on a point of land at the entrance of a harbor, and you were to see a ship approaching from afar off, which carefully avoided all shoals and came in a straight line to the protecting roadstead, would you not be justified in believing that there was a steersman on that ship guiding and directing it? Certainly. You not only may, but must, agree that such a vessel is directed by the hand of a pilot. And if you look up toward heaven, and observe the well-ordered course of the heavenly bodies, if you see how all upon earth, both great and small, follow fixed and eternal laws, move undeviatingly within predetermined limits, then again you may and must believe in the hand of the steersman: and who other than Almighty God is the pilot of the universe? Does my similitude please you?"

"Very much. And yet it only confirms what I knew without that."

"And yet, methinks, it must delight you to find your convictions so beautifully established."

"Quite assuredly."

"And you esteem the sage who thought out that similitude? Yes? Well, then, this man was one of those whom you call heathen, believed as I do, and has found for you, too, confirmation of the principles upon which your own faith is founded. But we, Plato's more modern disciples,* have gone further than he, and stand in closer proximity to you Christians than you are apt to believe. That we, just as little as you, can conceive of the existence of the world and the destiny of man, apart from deity, is obvious to you. And yet you are equally persuaded that your divinity and ours are entirely different. But can you tell me in what that difference consists?"

"I do not know," answered Agnes, in distress. "I am a poor

* The School of Philosophy known as that of the New Platonists.

ignorant girl: and who can even remember the names of your many gods?"

"Yes, yes," continued Olympius. "There is the great Serapis, whose temple you saw yesterday; there is Apollo, to whom Karnis loves best to sacrifice; there should be, too, the friendly Isis, and her sister Nephthys, whose lament you sung so thrillingly with my young friend; and besides them I could mention so many immortals that Gorgo, who is leading your little brother there to the lake, might walk backward and forward ten times between us and the shore before I should have finished, and yet, and yet, dear child, our deity is yours, and yours ours."

"No, no, it is not!" cried Agnes, with growing anguish.

"Just hear me," continued Olympius, with the same benignity as ever, but surpassing dignity; "and answer my questions simply and candidly. We are agreed in this, too, are we not, that you recognize deity in the works of creation, and also in the workings of your own inner senses? So far, good. What appearances in nature are those that make you feel peculiarly sensible of its nearness? You are silent, are you? Yes, yes, the young lady has outgrown her school-days, and needs not respond to the questioning of her officious tormentor.

"And yet, what I desire to hear from you is beautiful and dear to your heart, and if you would not press those white lips so firmly together, but rather give me the answer for which I entreated you, then you would, in so doing, remind yourself of much that is high and glorious. You would tell me of morning's young light, of the soft blush that tinges the clouds when the shining orb of the day-star rises out of the sea. You would say: In the thousand blossoms that unfold themselves at morn, in the dew that they drink and that decks them with diamond-showers, in the ripening heads of wheat in the fields, in the swelling fruit on the trees—in all these I recognize the ruling power of deity. I feel its infinite greatness when the immeasurable expanse of the ocean rolls before me in its wonderful blueness. I feel it when I raise my eyes by night and watch the course in the sky of its myriads of shining stars. Who has created them in such inconceivable numbers? who guides them so that they glide by one another in exquisite harmony, moving to and fro in well-measured minutes and seconds, silently and yet full of deep significance, at immeasurable distances, and yet in close conjunction with the fate of the individual man? Yes, that, all that, bears witness to the existence of deity; and when you consider and gratefully wonder at it, then you feel yourself close to the Almighty. Yet, if you were deaf and blind, and lay imprisoned and fettered within the gloomy precincts of a fast-locked dungeon, you would feel it none the less if love, pity, or hope touched your heart. But rejoice, child! The celestials have endowed you with fair gifts, and with sound senses you may enjoy the beauty of all creation. You practice an art that links you with deity as though by means of a bridge, and when a song pours forth from your full heart, the divine itself speaks from you; when you hear strains of noble music, it is the voice of divinity itself that touches your ears. In and around you is traceable power from on high, which we are conscious of everywhere and at every hour. And this immeasurable,

infinite, unlimited, gracious, and unfailingly wise power which permeates and controls as well the life of the world as the hearts of men, is called differently by different people, but is the same to all nations, wherever they dwell, however they are named, or whatever they believe. You Christians call it your Heavenly Father, we have given it the name of the Original. Your God, too, speaks to you from the everlasting sea, the waving grain-field, and the pure light of the sun; you, too, call his gifts music that ravishes your heart, and the sweet love that attracts man to man; but we go a step further and bestow upon every appearance in nature, and every exalted impulse of the heart, in which we recognize the immediate agency of the Most High, especial names, and thus call the sea Neptune, the corn-fields Ceres, the charm of music Apollo, and the delights of love Venus. When you see us offering sacrifice before a marble statue, you must not think that our devotion is paid to the inanimate, perishable stone. Deity comes not down into the image, but the image is fashioned after the idea which the deity that it is to represent personates, and through this idea it becomes one with deity, precisely as through the bond of spirit everything else natural is linked with the phenomena of the supernatural world. But this is going too far for you. Let it suffice, if I assure you that the statue of Ceres, with the sheaf in her hand, is only for the purpose of reminding us of the gratitude due to deity for daily bread vouchsafed us; a song of praise in honor of Apollo thanks the great being for those wings woven out of harmonies upon which the soul mounts upward until it feels the nearness of the Most High. It is names, only names, that part us, as though you would be any other than yourself if I were to call you Ismene or Eudoxia. And now—no, keep your seat—now you must hear this one thing more, viz: that Isis, the much abused Isis, is nothing, and signifies nothing, but the benevolent agency of the deity in nature and in human life. What we esteem our own under her, you call the goodness of the Most High, made manifest in friendly gifts, whithersoever we turn. The image of Isis reminds us in the same way of the lavish generosity of the Creator, as the cross, the fish, and the lamb remind you of Christ. Isis is the earth, out of whose motherly bosom the will of God makes food and refreshment flow for man and beast; she is the sweet attachment that God implants in the hearts of lovers; she is that tender sentiment that unites husband and wife, brother and sister; that imparts bliss to the mother with her infant at her breast, and makes her willing and strong to undergo any sacrifice for the pretty darling to whom she has given birth. She shines as a star in the firmament by night, she pours consolation into suffering hearts; she, who has known herself the torture of ungratified longing, cools the fevered brow of the afflicted and forsaken, and cures the sick with a soft and healing hand. When in winter and days of drought nature refuses to let new life germinate; when light is obscured; when falsehood and criminal pleasures estrange the soul from its pure source, then Isis lifts up her wail and calls back her lost husband Osiris that he may take her again into his arms and fill her with fresh power to prove God's goodness toward the earth and its inhabitants. You have heard her lament, and if you will join in it at her festival, fancy yourself standing with the much-suffering

mother of your crucified God before His open sepulcher, beseeching Heaven to let him rise from the dead!"

These last words Olympius had spoken in high excitement, as though he were sure of the maiden's assent; but their effect had been exactly the opposite of what he had expected; for while Agnes had listened to him with growing embarrassment, and bowed before his arguments, like the bird whom the serpent's gaze fascinates and attracts, in consequence of the last proposal of the philosopher, the spell of his ensnaring discourse fell from her like autumn leaves from the crown of a tree shaken by a gust of wind; for they immediately called up before her her Saviour and His sufferings, reminding her too of the spiritual conflict through which she had passed the night before, and of the resolution with which she had come into Porphyrius' house. Forgotten, blown away, like light dust from rocky roads, were all the corrupting propositions which she had heard, and her voice sounded firm and repellent as she replied to the philosopher: "Your Isis has nothing to do with the mother of our Lord, and how can you compare your Osiris with Him who hath redeemed the world from death?"

Surprised at the decided manner of this objection, Olympius got up and retorted quickly, and as if he had anticipated it: "I will just explain that to you! Osiris—we put him, the Egyptian god, in place of our Serapis, in whose mysteries you would find much that might prove exalting even to a Christian heart—Osiris, like your master, voluntarily took death upon himself in order to—again, just like Christ—redeem the world from destruction. To whatever is extinct, dead, and withered away, he, the resurrected one, restores new life, new blossoming and fruitage. Whatever has seemed to be given up unto death, he awakens to a fairer existence. Risen from the dead himself, he knows how to bring the departed soul to resurrection; and if it has kept itself, by high flight, above the befouling filth of the sensual, and he, the judge, finds that it has kept itself worthy of its pure source, then he allows it to return to the eternal, unclouded world of pure spirits, whence it originated. Do you not also strive after purity, in order that your soul may find an everlasting abode in the realms of light? Again, ever again, we meet the same ideas, only bearing different shapes and names. Only try to apprehend rightly the meaning of my discourse, and you will gladly join in that pathetic lament, which calls back the exalted one. How much he resembles your master! For, like him, is he not one risen from the dead, and a redeemer? Whether temple or church, both are the tabernacles of deity. At the ivy-crowned altar of the mourning goddess, at the foot of the lofty cypresses, that cast their deep and pleasant shadows upon the snowy whiteness of the marble steps, which sustain the god's bier, you will tremble with that sacred awe which seizes upon every pure soul the moment that it feels conscious of the presence of the Godhead—call it what you will, Isis, whom you know now, and who is nothing else than the reflection of divine goodness, will understand how to thank you, will restore to you that perfect freedom, after which you pant. She will give to you, through us, introduction into a Christian family, in recognition of the service that you will have rendered, not to her, but to faith in divine goodness. There,

with your little brother, you may live free, and after your own heart's desire. To-morrow you will attend Gorgo to the temple of the goddess—"

Here Agnes interrupted the philosopher, crying out, "But I shall not attend her!"

Her cheeks had become flushed, and her bosom heaved tumultuously, while she continued:

"I will not. I dare not. I can not! Do with me what you will. Sell me and my brother; let us turn the hand-mill; I do not sing in that temple!"

Upon this exclamation, Olympius frowned, and his bearded lips framed an angry reply, but he restrained himself, drew nearer to Agnes, laid his hand upon her shoulder, and said, with the deep measured tones of a fatherly adviser:

"Consider, child; think well over all that you have heard from me. Take to heart, too, what you owe to that dear boy, and to-morrow give us your maturely-weighed consent. Your hand, my daughter; old Olympius is one who means well by you!"

So saying, he turned his back upon Agnes, and returned to the house. Before its door stood the singer and Porphyrius, engaged in animated discussion. Word had reached Karnis that young Marcus' mother had sent for his wife, and forthwith his lively imagination had pictured Herse encompassed by a thousand dangers, threatened by the widow, and under examination before judges. The merchant advised him to await the issue, as also did Damia and Gorgo, who had been attracted hither by the loud talking of the men; but he would not be detained, and hurried off, with Orpheus following, to carry help to his wife.

Agnes was left behind, alone with her little brother, in the vast garden; and so soon as she found that no one was paying any attention to her, she fell upon her knees, drew the boy close up to her, and whispered to him: "Pray with me, Papias, pray, pray, that the Saviour may protect us, and not let us lose the way that leads us back to our parents. Pray, pray, with me, now!"

For a minute she and the boy remained kneeling on the ground. Then she got up suddenly, took the child by the hand, and with fleeting breath drew him along after her through the open garden gate, into the road on the lake-shore, thence into the first street leading into the city.

CHAPTER XI.

AGNES' flight was unnoticed at first, for each member of the merchant's family was particularly engaged.

After the singer's departure, Gorgo had stayed a long while with her grandmother, and at last repaired to the colonnade fronting the garden, whence was an outlook upon the park terraces and the beach as far as the dock. There she leaned against the shaft of a pillar, and from under the shadow of the purple-flowering shrubbery gazed earnestly and thoughtfully forth toward the south.

She thought of her childhood, its privations and enjoyments.

Fate had denied her a mother's love, that sunshine of life's spring. Down yonder in that splendid mausoleum of dark porphyry rested

the mortal remains of the beautiful woman to whom she owed her being, and who had been snatched away from her ere she had enjoyed her first caress.

But round about that gloomy monument lay the blooming garden bathed in sunshine; and there, beyond that wall, overgrown with the foliage of green creepers, was the dock, that scene of innumerable joyous sports to her as a child. Sighing deeply, she looked at the tall hulks of the ships in view, and tarried for the man to whom her heart had belonged ever since its awakening, with whose image was associated everything delightful in her childhood, as well as what had perturbed her youthful spirit.

Constantine, the youngest son of the master ship-builder, Clement, had been the fellow-student and most intimate friend of her brother. He had excelled them both in mind and gifts, and naturally become the leader in their games. When quite a little thing, she had run about after the boys, and Constantine had always been patient with, brought out, and protected her. Afterward the time had come when both he and his brothers sued for her participation in their merry-makings. When her grandmother had read in the stars that evil influences crossed the course of her granddaughter's planet, then Gorgo was carefully shut up in the house, otherwise she had been allowed to follow the boys freely in the garden, on the lake and dock. There ships and houses had been built by the happy band; there old Melampus, in a room set aside for the purpose, used to cut out figure-heads for the prows of the finished vessels, and would give them clay and let them help him. Constantine was his apt scholar; and she used to sit still, when he would model her head; and among the twenty likenesses which he made of her, many had been quite good.

Melampus declared that the young gentleman might have become a great sculptor if he had been a poor man's child; and Gorgo's father admired his talent, and was pleased when the lively boy tried to copy the beautiful busts and statues in his house; but to the parents, and especially the mother of the young artist, these attempts were a horror; and he himself never seriously entertained the thought of devoting himself to such heathenish work, for he had fully imbibed the Christian spirit of his house, and had managed, also, to fill with enthusiasm for the faith Porphyrius' sons, who had early received baptism.

The merchant noted this well, and suffered it in silence, for his boys must remain Christians in order to retain the right to will property; and his originally noble, but rather yielding nature revolted so painfully against the necessity of confessing a faith that was hateful to him, that he would gladly spare his sons this pain, and so, with a shrug of the shoulder, but quiet satisfaction, he saw them follow Constantine to church and wear the blue color of the Christians at races and public spectacles.

With Gorgo the case was different. She was a woman, and had no call to show her colors in life; and it made her father happy to see her share his own enthusiasm for the old gods, and his Greek-like views of the world. She was the ornament of his life; and when he heard ringing in his ears from her juvenile prattle, and later on her conversation and taking songs, the same sentiments

that animated his own bosom, he was grateful to his mother and friend Olympius, who had awakened and fostered in her such feelings and opinions.

Constantine's attempts to show her the beauty of his faith, and to win her over to the same, failed utterly; and the older the two grew the greater became their diversity of sentiment, and the more indignantly did the one brook opposition on the part of the other.

A passionate affection, conceived early, attracted the ship-builder's son to his lovely playmate; and the more enthusiastically he clung to his own faith, so much the more vehemently he glowed with desire for her conversion. But Olympius' pupil was not easily to be won over; yes, she often cornered him with questions and arguments, and while for *her* contending for their faiths was no more than a wrestling-match, bringing all her powers into exercise, with *him* it was an affair of the heart.

Damia and Porphyrius were pleased spectators of these hot disputations, and clapped their hands in applause, as at the public games, when Gorgo pressed hardly upon her highly-excited opponent with merry laughter and slashing arguments.

Then came a day when Constantine observed that his whole-hearted advocacy of what was, to him, most sacred, had become a theme for jest and ridicule. From that time the youth, who was already approaching the verge of manhood, kept himself rather aloof from his neighbor's house. But Gorgo ever drew him back with magnetic power; and if they chanced to be alone, ever and anon the old conflict would be renewed; and when this was the case, more earnestly and more bitterly than in earlier days.

The attraction was mutual, so that if he had more effectually exerted self-control and remained longer absent, she would have pined away through longing for his return. They felt that they belonged to each other, and yet, that an impassable gulf yawned between them, and just as often as they tried to bridge it over or fill it up, a mysterious, irresistible fascination drove them to deepen it, through new contention; and finally Constantine found it insupportable to see what he held most sacred, contemned and dragged into the dust, by her of all people in the world.

He would be gone from Gorgo and Alexandria at any price.

The narratives of the captains both of war and merchant ships, without this, had filled him with a craving to become acquainted with foreign people and lands. His father's trade, to which he was destined, had no attraction for him. He wanted to get away, only to get away, and a fortunate accident soon opened up to him the road to travel.

One day Porphyrius had taken him with him on an excursion to Canopus. The old gentleman had ridden in a carriage while his sons and Constantine accompanied him on horseback. Outside the city gate they had been met by Romanus, the chief commander of the imperial troops, attended by an escort of high officials. He stopped by the carriage of the distinguished merchant, and finally, in the course of conversation, pointing to Constantine, he had asked if that was his son.

"No," Porphyrius had replied, "but I would that he were."

At these words the ship-builder's son had blushed deeply, but

Romanus had turned his horse toward his, and laying his hand on his arm called out to the colonel of cuirassiers from Arsinoë: "A soldier after Ares' own heart! Hold him fast, Columella!"

Before the cloud of dust raised by the hoofs of the retreating cavalry had cleared away, Constantine had made the firm resolve to be a soldier; but in his paternal mansion this proposition was received in very different ways.

His father found little to object to in it, for he possessed only two docks and three sons. The balancing of the scale was turned by the consideration that Constantine, with his powerful will and great strength, was well fitted for the profession of arms. His pious mother opposed it, on the authority of the great teachers Clement and Tertullian, who had forbidden believers to take the sword as soldiers, and cited the case of the holy Maximilianus, who, under Diocletian, had been compelled to enter the army, and had suffered death by an executioner's hand because he could not be induced to shed his neighbor's blood in battle. The profession of arms, she declared to be irreconcilable with a devout Christian walk and conversation.

The father, however, did not heed this argument; for new times had come, the greatest part of the army had received baptism, the Church herself prayed for victory, and at its head stood the great emperor Theodosius, that pattern of a genuinely orthodox and zealous Christian.

Clement was master in his own house, and so Constantine entered the corps of cuirassiers at Arsinoë.

In the war against the Blemmyer he had succeeded in meriting his first distinctions.

Later Arsinoë again became his garrison, and because Alexandria could be easily reached from that town, he kept up constant intercourse with his own family and that of the merchant.

Not quite three years ago he had aided in quelling the mutiny which had broken out in his native city, on behalf of the usurper Maximus, and soon afterward had been summoned to Europe, in order to take part in the war, which Theodosius had undertaken against that same Maximus.

A disagreeable misunderstanding had interfered with the harmony of Constantine's leave-taking of Gorgo; for, when he had held out his hand to old Damia, she had promised with her granddaughter to offer up a sacrifice in his behalf, from time to time. Perhaps this offer had been made in good faith; but he had regarded it as meant in derision, and so turned to go with his feelings deeply hurt.

Gorgo, however, could not bear to part from him thus; and so, without paying any heed to her grandmother's astonishment, she had called him back, held out both hands to him, and bidden him a cordial "farewell."

Damia had looked after him in silence, and ever afterward avoided calling his name before Gorgo.

After the victory over Maximus, Constantine had been advanced with unprecedented rapidity, to take Columella's place at the head

of the cuirassiers, and yesterday entered Alexandria as prefect, with his *ala miliaria*.*

Gorgo had not ceased to think of him fondly, but her love for him had again and again struck her in the light of a treason, a breach of faith toward her gods; and, to atone for her fault, she had departed from the neutrality of her father's house, and actively joined Olympius in his battling for the faith of their fathers. She had become a daily visitor at the shrine of Isis, and the prospect of hearing her sing at high festivals had filled the temple of that goddess more than once. That time when Olympius had protected the sanctuary of Serapis against the assaults of the Christian mob, she and her grandmother had stood chief among the ladies who supplied their struggling fellow-believers with the means of subsistence.

All this had lent interest to her life, but every little victory accorded her in this battle had filled her soul with pain and unrest. Months and years had passed by with her as adversary of her lover's faith. The glad, lively child had changed into the serious grown girl, the determined woman. She was the only one in the house who ventured to gainsay her grandmother, and to insist upon whatever she deemed right. The desire of her heart remained unsatisfied; but her strong mind found fit food in her surroundings, and so would have gained the upper hand and controlled her character and actions, if music and singing had not kept awake and lively the softer stirrings of her deep, true, womanly nature.

The tidings of Constantine's return had moved her to the very depths of her being. It brought her either the highest bliss or fresh inquietude and torture.

There he was.

There was the crest of his helmet emerging from the green, and now his whole figure was discernible, as he stepped forth from the shrubbery; she pressed closer up against the pillar because she felt that her knees were trembling.

Proud and loftily erect, in glittering armor, he came to her, exactly as he had appeared to her in imagination upon many a sleepless night.

Now he was passing by her mother's mausoleum, and it seemed to her as though a cold hand were laid warningly upon her loudly-beating heart. Now flashed upon her the image of her father's mansion, with its rich artistic decorations, and side by side with it the home of the master ship-builder, with its plain, coldly-naked, and uncomfortable rooms; and it seemed to her as though, in the latter she must stifle, wither, perish. But then he himself appeared on his paternal threshold, and it seemed to her as though she heard again the silvery laugh of his boyish voice, and now again her heart began to grow warm. She, the clear-headed woman, well versed in the doctrine of self-knowledge, forgot that she had said to herself the night before, that he would just as little renounce his Christ as she her Isis; and although the summit of her wishes be attained, it could signify for him and for her brief happiness followed by long misery. All this she forgot; she knew nothing more now of reason-

* An *ala miliaria* consists of twenty-four *turme* or nine hundred and sixty horse; a prefect had command of them.

ing and nice balancing; for, as her ear caught the sound of his step, she had to exert strong self control to keep herself from rushing out to meet him with wide-open arms.

Now, at last, he stood opposite to her, now he extended his right hand warmly and honestly; and as their hands remained firmly clasped, the hearts of both were so full, that they found not one word for salutation. Only their eyes spoke what they felt; and when he remarked that hers swam in tears, he called her name once, and then again rapturously and yet questioningly, as though he were not quite sure of the meaning of her emotion.

Then she laid her tender left hand upon his strong one that still kept her right hand closely clasped, and said with a sunny smile: "Welcome, Constantine, welcome home. How glad I am that you have come back!"

"And I, I too!" cried he deeply moved. "Oh Gorgo, Gorgo! Can it be that whole years have passed between that farewell and now?"

"They have indeed," replied she, "and what troubled, warring years they have been!"

"But to-day we solemnize the festival of peace!" exclaimed he fervently. "I have learned to leave to every one his own, provided that he leaves mine untouched. The old quarrel is buried. You accept me as I am, and I, I shall hold to the noble and beautiful in which you are so rich. The fruit of every right battle is peace. Let us pluck it, Gorgo, and enjoy it gratefully together. Ah me! now, that I stand here, looking down upon this garden and yonder lake, hearing the strokes of hammers coming from the dock, and looking into your eyes, it appears to me as though the days of our childhood were to begin anew; only richer, more unclouded and fairer."

"If my brothers were only here."

"I have seen them."

"Where?"

"In Thessalonika, well and cheerful, and I have letters for you from them."

"Letters?" cried Gorgo, withdrawing her hand from him. "That is what I call a slow messenger. House adjoins house, and an old friend finds not one minute from one noon to the other to acquit himself of his trust, and carry to his neighbors—"

Here he broke in. "My parents came first, you know. And then that exacting tyrant, the service, did not allow me to call my breath my own, from yesterday afternoon till a few hours ago. Romanus has even trenched upon my time for sleep, and kept me with him until the moon set. For that matter I did not lose much thereby, for, before I had seen you again, I could hardly have closed an eye! Early this morning I was on duty again, and seldom have I ridden more unwillingly to the front. Later, too, came delay after delay, even on my way here; and now I must render acknowledgments to the interruption, for to that I am indebted most likely, for finding you alone. Care for it now, that we remain so, for such an instant returns no more. There goes the door already."

"Come with me into the garden," cried Gorgo, beckoning him to

follow. "My heart is as full as yours. At the fish-pond underneath the old sycamore-tree—there is the quietest place!"

Under the dense foliage of this venerable tree, stood a bench that when children they had constructed themselves. There she sat down, but he remained standing before her, and said:

"Here, here, you shall listen to me! Here have we often been happy."

"So happy!" echoed she, softly.

"And to-day," continued he, "to-day, we are so again. What a hammering and thumping there is here! It is well that my coat of mail so well panoplies my breast, else I verily believe it would burst from sheer hope and gratitude."

"Gratitude?" asked Gorgo, casting her eyes down: but he went on passionately:

"Yes, from gratitude, the purest, strongest gratitude! How rich, inexpressibly rich you have made me, you hardly know yourself; but no emperor has ever known how to reward love and faithfulness more generously than you, the trouble and comfort, the pain and joy of my life! You have—it was the first thing my mother told me after I got here—you have shed burning tears on her bosom when the false tidings of my death reached here. That has fallen upon my heart like morning dew upon withering hope; so rich a present as that was never bestowed upon a poor wanderer before. I am no orator, and how can empty words give expression to what I feel? You must suspect without that; no, no, you know what for so many years—"

"I know," answered she, looking him full in the eyes, and suffering him to sit down beside her and take her hand again. "If it were otherwise, I could not bear it, and I admit freely, too, that I have shed more tears about you than you imagine. You love me, Constantine—" Here he threw his arms around her; but she freed herself, and exclaimed urgently: "No, I beseech you, no—not so, not yet, until I have told what distresses, what hinders me from casting myself freely and gladly into the arms of happiness. I know indeed, what you must, will, and may ask, but before you do so, Constantine, let me remind you of what used to disturb the tranquillity of our lives so cruelly, even while we were still children. Like a whirlwind it has often torn us apart, us whom the current of our hearts had been forcing together, so long we think! Of what unites us I need not remind you, we both know that well, only too well—"

"No, no," responded he, firmly.

"That we are yet to learn to know in all its fullness and beauty. The other thing, that whirlwind, of which you speak, has troubled and disturbed me again and again more than it has you; but since I have learned that you wept for me, and that you love me, all solicitude has been swept away, and I confidently believe that all will work well. You know me, Gorgo, know that I am no dreamer and enthusiast; yet I expect all that is fairest and highest, at your side, if one thing only stands fast: Is your heart full, quite full of love, as mine is? Have you thought of me daily, hourly, during my long absence, as I always, always did of you?"

Hereupon Gorgo bowed her head and repeated with glowing

cheeks: "I love you, and have never loved any one else: all the time that you were gone I followed you in thought, lovingly, and longingly; and yet, yet, Constantine, there is one thing else—"

"It parts us no more," exclaimed the enraptured prefect, "since we have love, that great, perfect love that conquereth all things. At her nod that whirlwind melts away like an infant's breath, she bridges every chasm—she—in the most beautiful words of the greatest apostle—she can remove mountains, she is long-suffering and kind, believeth all things, endureth all things and never faileth! She abides with us to the end, and will teach us how to find that peace of which she is the refuge and adornment, the child and mother!"

At these words Gorgo had looked warmly into the warrior's eyes; but he pressed his lips to her hand, and continued, full of deep emotion:

"Yes, mine, mine you shall be, and I will and may sue for your hand. There are words spoken in life that one never forgets. Your father once said that he wished I were his son! On the march, in my tent, in battle, everywhere, that speech went with me: for me it had only one sense: I shall be his son if Gorgo is my wife! And now, now that hour has come—"

"Not yet, not this very day," interposed she, urgently. "What you hope for is my hope too. Our love can bring us all that is delightful. What you must believe, believe, and for my part, I shall never urge upon you what I deem most sacred. I shall leave everything, bear everything, and find all easy for your sake. What shall be granted to your Christ, and what to our gods, has already found solution; but not to-day nor to-morrow even. Let that be past first which I have taken upon myself for these days. My heart and love are yours; but should I flee from the battle to-day or to-morrow, others, Olympius especially, would have the right to point the finger of scorn at me."

"What means that, what can you contemplate?" asked Constantine earnestly and anxiously.

"The winding up of my past life. Before I can say: there, you have me, I am yours."

"And do you not belong to me already, not to-day?" asked he, pleadingly.

"To-day, no!" answered she, firmly. "To-day I am claimed by the great cause that for your sake I renounce. It bears about with it the death sentence of its own dignity, and yet to only one other is conceded the right to despise it. I perform that which I have taken upon myself. Ask not what I mean. It would vex you—but day after to-morrow, when the feast of Isis is over—"

The young lady's last words were cut short by a shrill call from old Damia, and several female slaves were seen hurrying through the garden on a search after her.

Both rose from their seats, and while they were approaching the house, Constantine said gravely: "I insist upon nothing, but trust to my experience: what we give up hardly, yet must resign, the more quickly and resolutely we break with it, the better. Nothing is gained by that delay, the pain is only prolonged. Consider, Gorgo, this postponement, this procrastination is a barrier that you

interpose between us and our happiness. You were ever of a resolute spirit; courage this time too, and cut short off what can not last!"

"Yes, yes," returned she quickly. "But what transcends my power, and makes me break my word, that you can not, may not ask. The coming morrow does not yet belong to you; it shall be a day of leave-taking. But then—I want nothing but you. I can not leave you, your happiness shall be mine: only do not make too hard for me parting from all that has been dear to me from a child. Shut your eyes to what will take place to-morrow, and then—Oh! that we had only found out, from the first, how to keep the step upon the right road! We know each other so well, and I am sure, I am sure that our hearts will find exquisite pleasure in bearing for one another's sake whatever diversities the mind will not apprehend nor assent to. I could be so unspeakably happy, and yet, and yet, my bosom is so oppressed, and I am—no, I am not yet happy!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE returned soldier had been cordially received by his friends in the neighborhood, but old Damia had been made uneasy by the deportment of Constantine and Gorgo when they entered the house after their first meeting.

He appeared thoughtful and agitated, she in a state of joyous excitement, as though she had made up her mind to something unusual.

Had Venus had a hand in the game? Could the pair have turned into seriousness the old sports of their childhood? The young prefect of cavalry looked handsome and fascinating enough, and her granddaughter was only a woman at best.

As far as Constantine was concerned the old lady had no personal dislike of him, nay, she prized his steadfast, manly gravity, and taking all in all, was glad, too, to see him again, but to think of—the ship-builder's son, the grandson of a freedman, the Christian, and bearing service under the emperor, be it as prefect or something yet higher—as a suitor for her Gorgo, the charming heiress of the largest part of her wealth, who was courted by all the youth and nobility of Alexandria—this was something surpassing her ability. And since she never exercised self-restraint, her hand was extended to him, it is true, with an ill grace, but quickly enough she showed him by sharp and cutting speeches that her aversion to his faith kept as lively as ever.

She joined in every discussion, and when Demetrius (who had repaired to his Uncle Porphyrius' house, after having been snubbed by Dada) spoke of the horses that he had trained for Marcus, and Constantine asked him if there were any Barbary blood-horses from his stud now to be purchased in Alexandria, Damia exclaimed: "You excel your crucified God in all respects; He rode on a young ass, but for you even the best horses of Egypt are not good enough!"

But the prefect was not to be discomposed this day, and although he would have been perfectly capable of making a biting retort to each sarcasm, yet he restrained himself, and made it appear as

though he mistook the old lady's onslaught as bits of harmless pleasantry.

Gorgo rejoiced at his moderation, and thanked him for it with mute glances, and a pressure of his hand when she could bestow it unobserved. Demetrius, who had known the prefect when a boy, and through Porphyrius' intervention had sold him the first horse that he had ever called his own, had met him cordially. As soon as they had exchanged the first salutations, he had remarked to him jocularly that he had already had the pleasure of seeing him a while ago, that he was in a good school, and had the luck of scaring up the finest game in Alexandria. So saying, he had tapped him on the shoulder, and winked at him knowingly. His meaning altogether escaped Constantine; but Gorgo had thought him presumptuous and disagreeable.

Porphyrius besieged the new-comer with questions, and the prefect enjoyed talk with him, until there arose a great stir in the garden. Soon a most unpleasant scene was witnessed there: Dame Herse was to be seen pushing and dragging Dada's Egyptian maid before her beside herself with rage, and indulging in violent reproaches, while her husband was exhorting her to moderation. Orpheus, too, who came behind the others from time to time, addressed a soothing word to his excited mother.

Soon the minstrel family had come up to the other group, and Herse undertook, unsolicited, to explain the cause of her anger.

She had only had a brief conversation with Marcus' mother, for she had been exactly of her mind as to the advisability of their forthwith leaving Alexandria, and refused positively to be paid by her for what she meant to do of her own accord. Upon the widow's threatening to bring her before the judge, she had replied that they were no public singers, but exercised their musical talents for their own pleasure as free citizens. To the anxious mother's accusation that Dada was trying to entrap her son answer had not been lacking, but she had indignantly declared that the good fame of her own sister's daughter was a far weightier consideration with her than what might be said concerning a young man in Alexandria, seeing that so much license is allowed his class here. Thereupon Maria had retorted that, on her side, Herse must not forget that means stood at her, viz., Maria's command, for bringing punishment upon those who should manage to beguile a Christian young man, and entice him into the paths of ruin.

Here the interview had drawn to a close. In front of the Canopian mansion Herse had found her husband and son, and, with them, had returned immediately to the ship.

There they had met with a dreadful surprise; for they had found nobody on board but the old Egyptian slave, and by her been informed that Dada had sent her off to get her a pair of shoes. When she had come back with them, the maiden had vanished. The slave had also seen Argus and her little brother make their escape into the open country, through that gate of the garden which opened upon the beach.

"As to what has gone with the Christian," cried Herse, "that is a matter of small moment;" but Dada, her niece, she went on to say, had ever been true to them, and as many conjurors and

magicians as there were in Alexandria, to talk of allowing a well woman to vanish was an absurdity. Some deceiver had taken advantage of the child's inexperience, and most assuredly that Egyptian hag, that brown slave, had had a hand in the game.

She did not mean to accuse anybody, but she knew people who would like above all things for Dada and that milksop of a young Christian to go to ruin and misery together.

All this she had poured forth sometimes passionately, sometimes amid tears, in so doing rejecting with indignation, her husband's attempts to pacify her; for delicate as were his sensibilities, he had felt deeply pained by his wife's loud and unladylike manner in the presence of strangers, their superiors in station.

Old Damia had attentively followed the wrathful woman's stream of talk, but had only noticed with a shrug of her shoulders and slightly scornful smile, her covert insinuation against herself.

Porphyrus, who had found this scene highly distasteful, now interposed, and after the fact stated had been proved, that Agnes had secretly left the garden, he bade the slave narrate the series of events that had taken place on shipboard, in the absence of the singers; for every untrue word that she spoke, she might expect a half-dozen strokes of the bastinado upon the bare soles of her feet.

This threat brought from the Egyptian a loud wail of distress, but Porphyrus knew how to put a speedy stop to such a demonstration; and now Sachepris began to tell, in accordance with truth, what had happened until Herse's return to the ship.

The beginning of her recital contained nothing of special interest, and after she had been urged to greater haste, she continued: "And then—then came Mr. Constantine, into the ship where we were, and pretty mistress jested with him, and begged him to take off his helmet, for pretty mistress wanted to see his scar, that bad sword-cut over the eye there, and Mr. Constantine took it off—"

"That is not true!" interposed Gorgo.

"Yes, but it is though. Sachepris loves the soles of her feet, mistress," lamented the slave. "Just ask Mr. Constantine himself."

"I was on the ship," affirmed he. "As I was coming from the dock a young lady's fan fell into the water. I fished it out for her; at her request, and gave it back to her."

"Yes, it was so, just so!" cried the slave. "And pretty mistress laughed, and talked with Mr. Constantine, and—was it not so?—and took his helmet away from him, and rocked it backward and forward in her hands."

"So you stopped to trifle with that blonde hussy on your way here, did you?" asked the indignant young lady. "Fy upon you men!"

In these words were discernible the keenest anger and resentment against Constantine. He interrupted her speech, however, calling her name earnestly, and reproachfully; but she could not control her wrath, and continued, firing up anew: "So you flirted with that girl, did you, on your way, in the middle of your way here? For shame! once more, for shame! They call it a blessing to be light of heart! For my part the gods preserve me from such a gift! Toying, trifling, and ho! what a sudden change, deepest—most solemn earnestness! And then, who insures me against it—before the

shadow has advanced the breadth of two fingers on the dial, trifling again!"

Gorgo laughed bitterly and scornfully. Then suddenly she ceased, and turned pale, for a change had come over Constantine that terrified her.

The scar over his eye assumed a purplish tint, and his deep voice had a strange, husky sound, as, with bowed neck, and head bent far forward, he exclaimed: "And though you had seen me with your own eyes flirt with the girl, you should not have believed it; and if you say once more that you do believe it, then I give you back your fy! for shame! with interest. It cuts me to the quick; but so be it!"

The hand of the prefect, meanwhile, had clutched convulsively at the back of the chair before him. Like a threatening war-god he stood confronting the maiden, and his glowing eye sought hers.

Hereupon Damia could hold in no longer, but struck the floor hard, with her staff, and ground her teeth with rage against the warrior.

"That were my prerogative! To threaten and dare the daughter of this house, as one would treat a common soldier! Ears are open, my little man in the gay coat. In the house of a free Alexandrian citizen, nothing is to be gotten by ordering, but by showing good manners!" So saying she turned to Gorgo, and gently wagging her head from side to side, continued thus:

"So it turns out, my little dove, when one condescends too kindly. Let us make a quick thing of it. How d'ye do and good-by lie often close together!"

Then the prefect turned and had put his foot upon the stairs leading into the garden, but Gorgo rushed after him, grasped him by the hand, and called to the old lady:

"He is right, grandmother; certainly he is right! And you, Constantine, stay and pardon my folly. If you love me, mother, keep silence; he will give us the explanation afterward!"

The soldier breathed a sigh of relief, and nodded to her silently; but the slave began anew:

"And when Mr. Constantine left, Mr. Demetrius came, and Mr. Demetrius—what can poor Sachepris know?—let Mr. Demetrius tell about it himself!"

"That is quickly done," said the farmer, who knew not how to understand half of what was going on and being said before him. "My brother Marcus is over head and ears in love with the pretty little minx, and to guard his inexperienced youth from a snare, I wanted to take the burden upon my own shoulders, for they are broader, and stronger. I went into the affair whole cloth, and offered the girl—I am ashamed of my mad proceeding—why, I offered her the treasures of Midas; but to offer and take are two different things, and the tigerish thing sent me off—Castor and Pollux—sent me off with a flea in my ear. My consolation was, that Constantine had just left the girl when I got there. Thought I, against such a Mars as that, a poor rustic Pan, from the woods, stands no chance whatever; but, as Mars renounces his Venus, then, not to fall too low in my own opinion, I must agree that the lively blonde is a much better girl than we take her to be. My offer, for

which any other beauty that I am acquainted with hereabout would have followed a cripple to Hades, insulted her so that she shed tears, and I have long since begun to respect that same Dada."

"She is my own sister's child!" interrupted Herse, who had been made really indignant at the slighting tone used by every one in speaking of her foster-child, and so emphasized the word "own" as strongly as if she were overrun with step-sisters. "If we do have to earn our bread by singing, nevertheless we have seen better days! He that is Cræsus to-day may be Lazarus to-morrow. As for ourselves, Karnis has not squandered away his wealth—it was foolish of him but splendid none the less, and maybe we would do it again—but he sacrificed his inheritance in the interests of down-trodden art. But who inquires where wealth went, provided that it is gone! If one wins and keeps, then people all praise him; dogs bite the poor! The maiden—we have kept her well, treating her like our own daughter, and sharing with her our last penny. Karnis has gone to no end of trouble cultivating her voice; and now when they could have done something, and their singing satisfied even strict judges, now they might have helped us to earn a good living—now—now."

The worthy matron, at these words, burst into tears; but Karnis sought kindly to soothe her and said: "We'll come through all right without them: *Nil desperandum** says the Roman Horace. For nothing but that? Only such a reason as that?" cried Karnis. "How will it vex the noble Olympius? and—by Apollo—my heart has not been so heavy for a long while! Fir, do you remember our conversation on the ship concerning the dirge over Pytho? Well, we had transposed the 'Lament of Isis' likewise into lyrical harmony, and to hear this young lady's wonderful voice and that of our Agnes blending with the accompaniment of Orpheus' flute-playing—oh, it was enchanting! Wings grew out of my old heart, as I listened to that singing. Day after to-morrow all the people were to have shared this enjoyment with us in the temple of Isis. It would have inspired such enthusiasm as was never felt before! Yesterday, the maiden's whole soul was in the thing; why, even this morning she sung that lament with the noble Gorgo from beginning to end. To-morrow, one more practicing, and then these two young ladies would have made such music as probably was never before heard in the old temple of Isis."

Constantine had listened to his last words with increasing chagrin. He stood close beside Gorgo, and while the rest were consulting as to what measures should be taken in order to recover the fugitives, he asked his beloved in a low voice, with lowering brow:

"You thought of singing in the temple of Isis? Before the whole crowd, and with a creature of that stamp?"

"Yes," answered she, firmly.

"And even yesterday you knew that I had come home?"

She nodded assent.

"And still you could practice with that actress while you were waiting for me?"

"Agnes is no actress like the other one who played with your

* Nothing is to be despaired of

helmet," replied Gorgo; and the strong lineaments of her dark eyebrows contracted defiantly. "I gave you to understand a while ago that I was not yet yours. As yet, we serve different gods."

"Yes," he exclaimed so loudly that the others looked around at him, and old Damia again stirred uneasily in her arm-chair.

Then he forcibly restrained himself, looked silently down for a long time, and finally whispered to the young lady:

"I have suffered enough for one day. Consider what you do, Gorgo; God save me from despair!"

So saying, he bowed before the young lady and the rest of those assembled, muttered an excuse on the plea of being called away by duty, and rapidly retired.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE horse-loving frequenters of the hippodrome could give no tidings as to Dada's whereabouts, for she had followed no frivolous young man—not she.

Shortly after the slave had left on the errand after her shoes, the singer Medius had made his appearance at the ship, asking to speak with Karnis.

He had only come to persuade Karnis and his wife to let Dada do him the favor to appear in some of Posidonius' entertainments. His hope of success had been small; but now all turned out exactly as he could have wished, and Dada's desire to keep her family ignorant just at first of where she was, came very opportunely for him.

While Karnis had been manager of the Tauro-nenium Theater, Medius had been employed there as leader of the churus, and been the recipient of many an act of kindness from the hand of the girl's uncle.

These, he said to himself, he could now repay, for matters went wretchedly enough with the old man, and whatever was made out of so brilliant a star as Dada, should be honestly shared with his benefactor. No harm should come to the girl, and gold, he thought, still shines and retains its value, even though it be made for us against our wills.

Since Medius was a provident man, he induced Dada to take with her the new rose-dress and the ornaments belonging to it, and his clever fingers packed away neatly whatever she handed him. In the basket which he used for this purpose, he laid moreover confectionery, oranges, and pomegranates, "for the children at home," and quickly consoled the maiden for the loss of her shoes. He would lead the ass, and she should ride him. A veil covered her face, and her little bare feet were safely disposed of under the folds of her skirt.

At home, the first thing he should do would be to order a sweet little pair of sandals for her from the same shoemaker who worked for the wife of — and the governor's daughter.

Their getting off, including the preparations incident thereto, occupied but a few moments, and so much that was amusing occurred in the hurry-scurry of the hasty retreat, that Dada recovered her spirits, and tripped laughingly across the street with her little bare feet.

In wanton mood she swung herself up on the little gray donkey's back, and when it then moved forward, and she hugged up the little basket holding her own things that Medius had placed between her and the animal's neck, she said that they would take her for the young wife of a horrid old man, carrying home her marketing.

With mischievous glee she pictured to herself Herse's face when she should discover upon her return home that it was possible for folks to find their way abroad without shoes.

"Let her worry about me, if she chooses to!" cried she, contentedly. "Why does she attribute to me everything that is silly and bad? But this I tell you at the outset, that if I am not pleased at your house, and do not like the parts I have to perform, then you and I will part company as speedily as we have formed one. Why do you lead me through such mean little streets? I want to see everything, and ride through the main streets!"

But Medius durst not gratify this wish, for in the great avenues of the city's traffic there were great disturbances to-day, and he might account himself blessed if they got safely home without challenge.

His humble house was situated on a square between the Greek town and Rhakotis the Egyptian quarter, just opposite St. Mark's church, and contained room enough for Medius, his wife, his widowed daughter and her five children, although, from top to bottom, it was stuffed and hung with wonderful objects.

Dada's curiosity was never sated here, and in the course of a few hours, Medius' pretty grandchildren hung about her as fondly as if they had been old friends.

Agnes, the Christian, had not been fortunate enough to find a home so easily and quickly.

Without protector, unveiled, and wholly self dependent, she hurried aimlessly along, holding her little brother by the hand.

She would away, only away from those who threatened her with the loss of eternal salvation.

She knew that Karnis had bought her with money, that she was his property. According to Christian doctrine, too, the slave owed obedience to his master, but she did not feel as if she were a slave, and even though she were, the master had a right to the service of her body, but not her soul.

And yet the law was on the singer's side, and he might pursue and capture her.

This thought would not forsake her, and so from fear of the police, she avoided the more frequented streets, and pressing close up to the houses, passed through by-streets and lanes.

She had once, at Antioch, seen how a runaway slave had succeeded in reaching and touching the emperor's statue, and found protection from his pursuers.

There must be such a one here; but where was it? A woman whom she questioned directed her to a larger street. She was to follow this as far as Canopian Street, which she was to cut through, and the first cross street to the left would lead her out upon the great Bruchian Square, where, in front of the prefecture, close to the bishop's palace, she would find the new statue of Theodosius.

This intelligence and the mention it made of the bishop gave a new direction to her course.

To defy her master and run away from him was wrong, to obey him would have been a great sin.

What should she do, what leave undone?

There was only one to whom she could turn for counsel, only one who could redeem her from the anguish that tormented her, viz., the shepherd of souls for this city, its bishop.

She, too, was a sheep of his fold; to him, to him only, could she, must she turn!

This thought fell like a ray of light into her heart, beclouded as it was by doubt and fear. Drawing a deep sigh of relief, she drew her little brother close up to her—he had been crying bitterly to be taken back to Dada—and told him that they were going to a good, good man, who would show them the way to their parents.

But the child did not want to go to that man, he wanted Dada.

Sometimes by main force, sometimes by promises and entreaties, she had to drag the boy along, until they reached Canopian Street.

Here it swarmed with excited multitudes, here there were soldiers afoot and on horseback, endeavoring to keep the peace, and all this piqued the child's curiosity and distracted his mind from the longings after home and its surroundings.

When Agnes found the street which opened upon the square of the prefecture, she was borne away by the stream of people pressing forward in a dense mass. To turn around would have been impossible here, and she had to summon up all the strength and determination left in her to prevent being separated from her little brother.

Pressed upon, pushed, bantered and insulted by men, and severely scolded by women for dragging a child along with her in such a tumult, she finally arrived at the square that she sought.

A hideous medley of dissonant noises grated upon her keenly sensitive ears. She would have fallen to the earth and wept, but her eyes kept dry, and she maintained her footing, for from afar off, surmounting a lofty portal, she saw a great, gold cross; that beckoned to her like a hand outstretched in welcome from a father's house, and beneath its protection she must find calm, comfort, and safety.

But how should she get there?

The vast square was as full of men as a quiver of arrows. One was crowded up against the other. To move forward here meant breaking one's way, and nine tenths of those through whom she must force her passage were men, fiercely excited, raging men, men whose wild, strange appearance aroused in the spectator horror and disgust.

The most part were monks, who had streamed hither in response to the bishop's summons from the caverns and cloisters, from the hermitages and cells of Colceum on the Red Sea, and even from the Upper Egyptian Tabenna, joining together their rough voices in the passionate outcry:

“Down with the idols! down with Serapis! Death to all the heathen!”

These hosts of that Saviour, whose character was goodness, and whose feeling love, seemed to have deserted his bright and friendly

banner for the bloody standard of murderous hate. The disheveled hair of their heads and beards made a terrific framing for excited faces with glowing eyes.

The nakedness of their emaciated or bloated bodies was sparsely covered by shaggy sheep or goat-skins, scars and stripes were thick upon their meager limbs, which had been inflicted by the thong hanging from their girdles.

From the brow of that one called "the crown-bearer," ran red blood, for just to-day, with ostentatious zeal, he had pressed into the flesh a crown of thorns, that, conformably to his vow, he durst not lay aside day or night, for, in his own body he wanted to bear about a perpetual reminder of what his Saviour's sufferings must have been. Another, whom they called, in his convent, "Little Oil-jug," supported himself upon the two standing nearest him, for his meager limbs could hardly support any longer the swollen body which for nine whole years had received no other nourishment than slugs, snails, locusts, and Nile water. A third was bound to his companion by a heavy chain. They dwelt together in the same cave in the chalk mountains near Lycopolis, and had sworn to each other to deprive one another of sleep, so that they might double the term of their penance, and for the hardest privation known on this side of the grave, reap twofold enjoyment in the world to come.

All felt that they were fellow-combatants in the same strife. The same thought, the same vehement desire moved them all.

What was to them an abomination, what threatened hundreds of thousands with ruin, what lured Satan to maintain his kingdom in this world, was now to fall, was to be forever annihilated.

In their eyes, the heathen world was an abandoned woman, and supposing that the adornments she wore were beautiful to the heart and mind of fools, nevertheless it must be torn from the painted Jezebel. They would continue to lash her away from the ransomed earth, and forever cut off the temptress from return thither.

"Down with idols! Down with Serapis! Down with the heathen!" was bellowed and roared around Agnes; but just when the raging multitude yelled loudest, the form of a tall, majestic man was seen on the balcony above the cross, and his hand waved a gesture of peaceful greeting to the seething crowd below. His manner was cool and dignified. So soon as he extended his arm those present knelt, and Agnes with them.

She suspected, nay, she knew, that yon lordly man up there was the bishop whom she sought; but she did not point him out to Papias, for Theophilus looked far more like a proud prince than the good, kind man of whom she had spoken to him.

She could never dare to present herself before this grand gentleman. How could such a ruler over millions of souls find thought and time for her and her little concerns?

But in his retinue there must be many presbyters and deacons, and to one of these she would turn, if the crowd would only disperse and let her make her way to the door with the cross over it.

Twenty times had she striven to advance, but with what poor result! Most of the monks thrust her back with abhorrence when she tried to slip past them. One, upon whose arm she had laid her hand, in order to persuade him to move aside, had shrieked out, as

though a snake had bitten him; and when the crowd had pushed her against the "crown-bearer" he too thrust her away, and yelled out:

"Away with thee, woman! Touch me not, thou imp of Satan, thou spawn of the evil one, else I shall tread thee down!"

For a long while to return had been no less impossible than to press forward, and so passed hours that seemed to her like long days. And nevertheless she felt no exhaustion—only anguish and disgust—and stronger than any other feeling, longing, the keenest longing, to reach the palace and speak to a priest.

The sun had long since crossed the meridian, when something occurred that, striking the weeping Papias as new and unusual, attracted him and diverted his mind from his sorrows.

Upon the balcony of the prefecture Cynegius showed himself, the emperor's legate, a strongly-built man of medium height, with the round head of a cunning lawyer. That dignitary, consul and prefect of the whole East, no longer wore the woolen toga of the old Roman patrician, which was wrapped about the body in graceful folds, but a long, close-fitting gown of purple silk brocaded with gold flowers. On his shoulders glittered the insignia of his high offices, a circular ornament of a peculiar texture, very strong and artistic. He greeted the crowd with a condescending bow, and after a herald had thrice sounded the trumpet, Cynegius pointed to his private secretary, who had followed him; this official straightway opened a roll and called out in a loud, far-reaching voice, "Quiet, in the emperor's name!"

A fourth blast of the trumpet, and now the vast square was so still that the heavy breathing of the horses of the guard in front of the prefecture could be distinctly heard.

"In the name of the emperor!" repeated the officer selected to deliver the imperial mandate.

Cynegius bowed, but again pointed to the private secretary, and then to the effigies of Cæsar and his wife, which, on the two sides of the balcony, at the top of gilded poles, were in full view of the assembled throng, and that officer continued:

"Theodosius Cæsar, through his trusted envoy and servant, Cynegius, sends greetings to the people of the great and noble city of Alexandria. He knows that its good and faithful citizens piously and steadfastly confess that holy faith which Peter, the prince of the apostles, has transmitted to believers; it is known to him, that they are orthodox Christians, and cleave to the doctrines which the Holy Spirit dictated to the fathers at Nice. Theodosius Cæsar, who styles himself with humility and pride, the sword and the shield, the champion and defense of the only true faith, congratulates the good citizens of the great and noble city of Alexandria, because, in their majority, they have abjured the devilish tenets of Arius and adhered to the true Nicene creed; and makes known to them, through his faithful and honorable servant Cynegius, that this and no other faith shall prevail, as in his whole empire, so, too, in Alexandria. As throughout all his dominions so also henceforth in Egypt any doctrine opposed to this true faith shall be put down by law; those also, who cleave to any other doctrines, profess or

propagate them, shall be regarded as heretics, and treated accordingly."

The private secretary had to pause, for loud shouts of applause from the assembled multitude interrupted him again and again.

Not a note of disapproval was heard, and should any one have dared uplift it, most assuredly he would not have escaped scathless from that assembly.

Not until the herald had sounded the trumpet several times did he succeed in reading further, as follows:

"To the deep concern of the Christian heart of your Cæsar has it come to his ears, that the old idolatry which has so long struck humanity with blindness, and held it aloof from the gates of paradise, still possesses temples and altars through the stubborn power of the devil's followers. Now, because it was repulsive to the most merciful and Christian heart of the emperor to take vengeance upon the posterity, accomplices, and companions in error of that raging foe to our holy faith, for the persecution unto death, which so many sainted martyrs have suffered through blood-thirsty and cruel pagans, since forsooth our Lord says, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' therefore, Theodosius Cæsar has only decreed that in this great and noble city of Alexandria the temples of heathen idols be closed, their images destroyed, and their altars overturned. He who stains himself with blood sacrifices, who slaughters an innocent animal as a victim, he who enters an idolatrous temple, who performs a religious service there, or bows down to the image of any idol, yes, whoever puts up a prayer in a temple, be it in country or town, he shall be subject to a fine of fifteen pounds in gold, and he who has knowledge of such a crime, without calling public attention to it, shall be liable for the same fine."*

The last words remained inaudible, for a jubilant shout shook the air, so loud and unmeasured, as even in this state of popular uproar had never yet been heard.

There was no end to it, and no blast of the trumpet could drown it this time, for it swept through the streets and lanes, and over the city squares. It reached to the ships on the lake, it penetrated into the houses of the rich and the huts of the poor; yes, it was faintly audible to the watchman who trimmed the far-off lamps of the Pharian light-house, distinctly visible by night; and in an incredibly short space of time, the whole of Alexandria knew that the emperor had pronounced sentence against the heathen worship.

■ The great, fatal news had penetrated also into the museum and serapeum; once more gathered together the young people, who had grown up in heathenish wisdom, in the high schools of the city, having nourished and purified their spirits at the noble fount of Greek philosophy, and had their hearts filled with enthusiasm for the good and the beautiful in the sense of the old Greeks. They answered to the summons of their teacher Olympius, and under the guidance of Orestes, the grammarian—for the high-priest himself had to make preparations for the defense of the Serapeum—and rushed, with the arms held in readiness for them by Olympius, beneath banners set up by him, to the square fronting the prefecture,

* Codex Theodosianus xvi., 10, 10.

in order to chase away the monks, and send Cynegius back to his emperor, with the requisitions which he had made upon the heathen. Youthful, noble figures, clad like the Hellenes, when Athens was in its pristine glory, hurried hither to the fray. As they dashed along there burst from their lips a battle-song of Calpinus, in which slight alterations had been made to suit their case, nobody knew by whom:

“ How long ye young heroes? What, slumbering yet?
To arouse you, the heart in your bosom was set!
Does shame not o'erwhelm you? Your foes, see appear!
Those Christians how scornfully laugh, mock, and jeer!”

Whatever opposed them they overthrew. Two maniples of infantry who held the approach to Konig Street by the way of Bruchium made a show of resistance, but they could not withstand the pressure of the inspired throng, and so they succeeded in gaining Casareum Street and the square fronting the prefecture.

Here they sang the last verse of the summons to battle:

“ Who cowardly from his duty flies
No judge's hand shall crown with bay.
But who in battle bravely dies
Of him shall unborn nations say:
‘ He stood for us, in stormy hour,
A strong defense, like to a tower.’”*

Here these garlanded youths with their fine, Greek heads, thoughtful brows, anointed locks, redolent of perfume, and beautiful limbs developed in the gymnasium, measured their strength with those dark men in sheepskin, those ascetic dreamers, those penitents grown gray under fasting, scourging, and mortifications of the flesh.

These opposed themselves to the oncoming of youth, intoxicated by enthusiastic devotion to freedom of thinking and inquiring, to art and beauty.

Both stood up for that which they deemed the highest good, both were equally sincere in their conviction, both deemed what they fought for dearer and more precious than their own brief span of life.

But the heathen youth carried swords, while the monks possessed only one weapon, viz., the scourge, which they had been wont to wield not against others, but only against their own rebellious flesh.

A wild, disorderly wrestling and struggling began, in which adjurations and psalm singing mingled with the battle-song of the heathen.

Here fell a wounded, there a dead monk, yonder a tender, beautifully formed youth was struck down by the hard fist of a penitent. Breast to breast wrestled a recluse with the young scholar who had just yesterday begun to elucidate the new Platonic doctrines before enthusiastic auditors.

And in the midst of this turmoil stood Agnes, with her little brother, who had pressed close up to her, and whose tears and cries of distress had hushed for very horror.

* Brande's book of Greek songs.

Agony, intense agony bewildered her brain, and tortured her body as though with corporeal pain, that began at her heart, and radiated through every fiber of her being.

Already, wholly under the domination of fright, the imperial mandate had fallen upon her ears without its meaning being more than half comprehended. Now she kept her eyes fast shut, and in her stupefaction neither saw or heard anything of all that was passing around her, until, in her close proximity new noises and warlike clangor touched her ear; the clattering of horses' hoofs, the blare of trumpets and ever increasing loud shrieks and shouts of murder!

At last, at last it became quieter, and when she ventured to open her eyes again, the square round about her was emptied of men, as though it had been swept by unseen hands. Only here and there lay a corpse, and in the Cæsareum Street there was still a dense throng; but this, too, retreated further and further back, before the advance of a troop of mail-clad cavalry-men.

Now she drew a sigh of relief, and freed the boy's head from the folds of her skirt, in which she had buried it through fright. But the end of horrors had not come, for over the square dashed, in wild flight, a crowd of young students, and behind these a company of the cuirassiers, who had parted the fighting Christians and heathen.

The pursued raced straight toward her, and again she closed her eyes, expecting to be trodden under the feet of the rapidly approaching horses. A fugitive knocked the boy down. Then for the first time her senses completely failed her, as well as strength to stand up, and with a low moan she sunk lifeless upon the dusty flagstones. Hard by her, over her, chased pursuer and pursued; then, when at last—she knew not after how long a time—she opened her eyes again, it seemed to her as though she were flying; and all of a sudden she became aware of having been picked up by a warrior and being borne on his strong arms like a child.

Then was she seized with shame and fresh fear, and she sought to disengage herself from him, but he voluntarily let her down, and when she found herself standing upon her feet, and found that she could stand alone, she cast a bewildered glance around, and suddenly shrieked hoarsely, for her mouth and tongue were both parched: "Lord Jesus, where is my brother?"

With this shriek she pushed back the thick hair from her brow, and breathlessly examined her surroundings with long looks of feverish inquiry.

She found herself still on the square, close up to the door of the prefecture; a horseman, probably the servant of her deliverer, led by the bridle close beside him an unencumbered horse; upon the pavement lay gasping, wounded men, mail-coated soldiers formed a long, double fence on the side next Cæsareum Street; but of little Papias nothing was to be seen.

Hereupon she cried out again, and this time with such deep grief that the warriors at her side looked upon her most compassionately.

"Papias, my little brother! Oh, my savior, my savior! where is the child?"

"We shall look for him," replied the soldier; and his deep voice

sounded mild and consoling. "You are young and beautiful: what led you into that crowd at such a time of tumult?"

Here she blushed deeply, cast down her eyes, and said, in low hurried tones: "I was on my way to the bishop."

"At an evil hour," replied Constantine, the prefect, who had found her, apparently lifeless, on the square, and had deemed it advisable not to trust the safety of this graceful young creature to any of his men. "Thank God that you have come off as well as you have. I must return to my command. Do you know the bishop's residence? There it is, and as for your little brother— Wait! Are you at home here in Alexandria?"

"No, sir," answered she, timidly.

"But you are living, maybe, with relatives or friends?"

"No, sir, no. I am—I have— You know, I only wanted to get to the bishop."

"Strange. Try your chance, then! My time is limited; but later, directly afterward I have to speak with the chief of police. How old is the boy?"

"Not quite six years old yet."

"Is he dark-haired, like you?"

"No, sir, fair-haired," and as she spoke, tears started to her eyes. "He has light, curly hair, and such a dear, lovely little face."

Here the prefect nodded smilingly at her, and questioned her further:

"If they find him—Papias is his name—to what place shall they bring him?"

"I do not know, sir; for—or—my head, my poor head! If I only knew— Yes, if you find him, then bring him here to the bishop's."

"To Theophilus?" asked the officer in amazement.

"Yes, yes, even to him," answered she quickly. "Or—wait—bring him to the bishop's gate-keeper."

"That is less distinguished, but might be more advisable," answered the warrior, who, beckoning to his servant, wrapped his horse's bridle around his hand, vaulted into the saddle, waved to her with his hand, and galloped back to his troops without paying any heed to her modest "I thank you, sir."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE spacious vestibule of the episcopal palace was alive with human activities. Priests and monks went in and out, widows, who as deaconesses were in attendance with bandages ready to administer the friendly consolation of their office, and acolytes were lifting the wounded and placing them upon stretchers, in order to bear them to the hospitals.

The deacon Eusebius, young Marcus' old instructor, was the leader in all the good works being carried on here, and saw to it that the wounded heathen youth received equal attention with the Christians.

In front of the palace veterans of the twenty-second legion marched up and down, supplying the place of the door-keeper, who had been accustomed to stand here in quiet times.

Agnes looked around in vain for such an one, and then, without being noticed by the soldiers, she joined the company of women and men who were ministering to the wants of the sick.

She was very thirsty, and when she saw one of the widows mix wine and water, and that refreshing draught rejected with disgust by the wounded man for whom it was meant, she plucked up heart and asked the deaconess to spare her a little swallow of it.

The one thus appealed to immediately offered her the cup, and asked whom she had come to see there.

"I want to go to the lord bishop," answered Agnes; but she reflected, and quickly corrected herself, "I should like to speak to the bishop's door-keeper."

"There," said the widow, pointing out to her the gigantic form of a man who stood in half obscurity at the extreme rear of the vestibule.

Then, for the first time, the maiden remarked that it was already evening.

If night came on, where should she stay, where find shelter?

Cold chills ran over her, and with a brief "Thank you," she went up to the door-keeper and asked him please to receive her little brother if he should be brought to him.

"Good," returned the giant kindly. "If he is brought here he shall be carried straight to the orphanage of 'The Good Samaritan,' and you have only to inquire there."

Now the girl took courage, and begged him to take her to a priest; but the door-keeper directed her rather to the churches, for the ecclesiastics about the bishop had plenty of work on their hands to-day, and no time left for trifles.

Still Agnes persevered in urging her request, until finally the other lost patience, and bade her go her ways. Just then three ecclesiastics passed through the door, before which the porter had planted himself, so as to block up the way, and now again Agnes took heart, stepped up to one of them—a presbyter in advanced years—and made an earnest appeal to him:

"Ah, worthy father, I implore you to hear me! I must speak with a priest; and that man there drives me off, and says none of you have time left for me."

"Does he say that?" asked the presbyter, turning and indignantly addressing the porter: "The Church and her servants are never, at any hour, too busy to heed the call of the pious souls who seek them for spiritual aid. I shall see you again, presently, brethren. What would you have, my child?"

"I am so heavy at heart," answered Agnes, lifting up eyes and hands imploringly toward the priest. "I love my Saviour; but can not do what I choose, and know not how I shall act so as to escape falling into grievous sin."

"Follow me, then," said the other, going in advance of her, through a little garden, into a large open court.

Then he entered a side chamber, whence a flight of stairs led into the upper story of the palace.

While mounting them, her heart pulsated in anxious and yet hopeful excitement. She kept her hands crossed over her breast, and

tried to pray, but hardly succeeded for thinking of her little brother, and what she should say to the presbyter.

Presently they reached a lofty apartment, where the window-shutters were already closed, and branching lamps burned above cushioned seats, occupied by scribes, men of various ages.

"Here we are," said the presbyter, dropping into an arm-chair quite remote from the scribes. "Lay bare your trouble to me, but be brief, for I am neglecting important business in order to spare you these minutes."

"Well, sir," began Agnes, "I am of free parentage, our home having originally been in Augusta Trevirorum.* My father was a tax-gatherer under the imperial government."

"Well, well: but does that belong to the subject?"

"Yes, sir, yes. Father and mother were good Christians, but were killed in the insurrection at Antioch—you know about it, three years ago it happened—and then I and my little brother—Papias is his name—"

"Well, well—"

"And then they sold us both. My master gave money for us; I saw him do it; but still we were not treated as slaves. Now they require of me, for they are heathen, and wholly devoted to—"

"So they ask of you idolatrous things?"

"Yes, worthy father, yes; and that is why I ran away."

"Right, right, my child."

"But it is said that the slave shall render obedience to the master, is it not?"

"To be sure; but our Father in Heaven has precedence over our masters in the flesh, and one should a thousand times rather break faith with the one than the other."

This conversation had been carried on in low tones, in consideration of the busy men at the desks; but as he uttered those last words the presbyter had spoken louder, and they must have been heard in the adjoining room, too, for the heavy, plain stuff curtain was drawn back, and a voice of rare power and depth called through the opening:

"Back already, Irenæus? That suits admirably; I have something to say to you."

"Directly, sir; in two minutes I shall be at your service," returned the other, while he stood up and said, addressing Agnes: "You know now what your duty is. And if your master should have you apprehended and require you to observe heathenish practices, helping at their sacrifices or such like matters, then you will find protection from us: my name is Irenæus."

Here the presbyter was again interrupted; for, once more the curtain had opened, and this time a man had stepped out of the next room, whom nobody could forget that had ever met him before.

It was the bishop, whom Agnes had seen upon the balcony, and she recognized him immediately and moved toward him on her bended knees, that she might humbly kiss the hem of his robe.

Theophilus accepted this homage, and measured the maiden with his powerful eyes; but Agnes dared not lift hers, for there was

* Trèves.

something overpowering in this man's presence. Now he opened his lips and inquired, while he pointed to Agnes with his small hand:

"What would this maiden have?"

"The child of free, Christian parents from Antioch," replied the presbyter, "she has been sold to idolaters; was asked to engage in idolatrous practices; has run away from her master, and would now consider—"

"You have told her to which master honor is due?" said the bishop, cutting him short in his speech. Then he turned to Agnes and asked: "Why did you turn hither and not to the deacon of your church?"

"We have only been here a few days," answered the maiden shyly, and now she ventured to lift her eyes to the countenance of this prince in the church, whose pale, handsome features looked as if they were chiseled out of fine marble.

"Then go to the holy sacrament at St. Mary's Basilica," suggested the bishop. "The service is about to commence: meanwhile, however—you are a stranger here, have run away from your master, and are very young for such a case, very— Night is coming on. Where do you expect to find lodgings?"

"I do not know," returned Agnes, and tears started to her eyes.

"I call that courage," murmured Theophilus to the presbyter, and then continued as he again turned to Agnes: "Thank the saints, we have places of refuge in this city for persons in your situation. The scribe there shall give you a paper that will procure you admission to one. From Antioch, are you? That was the asylum of Selincus. To what parish did your parents belong?"

"To that of John the Baptist."

"The Baptist? Where Damascius preaches?"

"Yes, holy father; he used to be our pastor."

"That Arian?" asked the bishop, drawing up to its full height his commanding form, and firmly compressing his lips, while the presbyter, taking his cue, asked severely:

"And yourself, most likely, you too are infected with the Arian heresy?"

"My parents were Arians," answered Agnes with embarrassment, "and taught me to pray to the god-like Saviour."

"Enough!" interposed the bishop, shortly and sternly. "Come, Irenæus."

So saying, he beckoned to the presbyter, parted the curtain, and retired, with lofty dignity, in advance of the other.

Agnes stood there as though struck by lightning, pale, trembling, hopeless.

Was she then no Christian?

Was it a crime for the child to share her parents' belief?

Were those who had just held out a saving hand to her only to withdraw it so inimically and abruptly, were they Christians in the sense of the all-merciful Redeemer of the world?

There fell upon her soul torturing doubt as to all that she had hitherto deemed holy and immaculate, doubt as to everything, only not Christ and his god-like, yea, godly goodness, for what a difference there was to her between Him and this man pronouncing such

harsh sentence against his fellow-man? And, in the agitation, grief and despair that had taken possession of her, she could shed no tears, and stood there motionless, rooted, and, as it were, spell-bound to the spot, where she had listened to the bishop's speech.

At length she was aroused to consciousness by the squeaking voice of the oldest scribe, who, addressing a younger assistant, called out: "That girl disturbs me; show her the way out, Peter-bastis!"

To this person, a handsome young Egyptian, the interruption to work which had been prolonged through the whole day, was more than welcome, so he got up leisurely, collected his writing materials, stroked back the black hair which in writing had fallen over his forehead, and instead of the stylus, stuck a deep blue larkspur behind his ear. Then he danced up to the door, opened it, stared boldly at the beautiful girl with the look of a *connoisseur*, gave her a passing bow, and said as he pointed her the way out:

"By your leave."

Without delay and with bowed head, Agnes left the writing-room; but the Egyptian slipped after her, and as soon as he had closed the door behind him he seized her hand and whispered:

"If you can wait a short half-hour, my dear, then I'll take you to a charming place."

She had paused and looked at him questioningly, for she had not understood his meaning. But, emboldened by this, he had lain his arm over her shoulder, and tried to embrace her. She thrust him from her like some repulsive beast, and hurried down the steps as fast as her feet could carry her, and through the little garden, gained the spacious vestibule.

Meanwhile it had grown dark and quiet there.

Few lamps lighted the lotty apartment with its many columns, and the flickering glare of a torch fell upon the benches which were set there for waiting clergy, laity and supplicants.

Exhausted to the last degree—she herself knew not whether from anguish and disillusion or from weariness and hunger—she sunk down and hid her face in her hands.

During her absence the wounded had been conveyed to the hospitals. Only one they had not ventured to move. He lay on a cushion, between two pillars, at a tolerable distance from Agnes, and the light of a lamp, which they had placed on the medicine chest, fell upon his bloodless features, displaying their youthful beauty.

At his head knelt the deaconess, gazing silently into the still face of death. Beside the deceased lay old Eusebius stretched out on the ground, and pressing his face against the sleeper's breast, never more to heave with the breath of life.

Only two sounds broke the deep stillness of the deserted hall: these were the low moans of the aged man, and the tread of the veterans who kept watch in front of the bishop's palace.

The widow, with folded hands, gazed fixedly upon the countenance of the dead, and did not disturb the deacon, for she knew that he was praying, praying for the safety of this heathen soul, cut off in the midst of its sins.

After some long minutes the old man arose, dried his wet eyes,

pressed his lips upon the cold hand of the corpse, and then said, as he pointed to his face:

"So young, so handsome, a *chef d'œuvre* of Our Heavenly Father's skill. Early this morning an exultant lark, the delight of a mother, and now—and now! How many hopes, how much warm happiness is extinguished there! Oh, my blessed Saviour, thou who hast said, 'not every one who saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven,' who hast shed thine own blood for the redemption of the heathen, redeem, save me this one, too. Thou good shepherd, take into thine arms this poor lost sheep!"

In deep, passionate sympathy, the old man lifted up both arms, gazing upward a long time, as though in an ecstasy of woe. Then he composed himself and said:

"Good sister, do you know? That was the only son of Berenice, the widow of the rich ship-owner Asclepiodore. That poor, poor, bereaved mother! Just yesterday he drove in his own chariot and four on the road to Marea, outside the city walls, and to-day—to-day! Go to her and impart the dreadful news to her. I would go myself, but I am a priest, and it would pain her to receive the tragic tidings through one of us, I mean one of those against whom the blinded youth drew the sword. You go to her, then, sister, and touch her mother's heart softly, very softly, and if she will listen, point out to her, prudently point out to her that there is one with whom balsam may be found for every wound, and that we, each and all who believe in him, lose our beloved ones only to find them again. Direct her to hope. Hope, hope is everything. They call hope green, for it brings spring-time to the heart. Perhaps for her, too, there will come a fresh spring."

The deaconess rose to her feet, imprinted a kiss upon the eye of the dead, promised the deacon to do her best, and was soon out of sight.

Eusebius, too, prepared to leave the vestibule when he heard the sound of low weeping coming from the direction of the benches. He paused to listen, shook his gray head, and murmured to himself:

"Oh, Lord, thou alone knowest why thou hast beset the rose of this existence with so many and sharp thorns!"

Then he went up to Agnes, and when she got up at his approach, he said kindly:

"Why do you cry, dear child? Have you, too, your dead to weep?"

"No!" replied she, quickly waving him off with her hand.

"But what do you seek here then at this late hour?"

"Nothing, nothing," answered she, impulsively. "It is all over! Dear me, dear me, how long have I been sitting here? I know, I know, that I must be gone."

"And have you nobody to go with you?"

She shook her head mournfully.

Then he looked at her more closely, and said:

"Then I shall take you home with me. You see I am an old man and a priest. Where do you live, my child?"

"I—!" stammered Agnes, and with hot tears gushing from her eyes, she cried: "Oh, God, my God, whither shall I turn?"

"So you have no home, no place of refuge?" inquired the old

man. "Trust me, child, and tell me candidly what afflicts you; perhaps I may know how to help you."

"You?" asked the girl, bitterly. "Are not you, too, one of the bishop's presbyters?"

"I am a deacon, and Theophilus is the head of my church; but just for that very reason—"

"No," resumed Agnes, bitterly, "I want to deceive no one. My parents were Arians, and because their faith is mine the bishop thrust me from him, hardly, and without pity."

"Ah, indeed," said Eusebius, "did the bishop do that? Yes, he, he is the head of so many Christians, and must ever keep the great in view, and the small, what is the small to him? But I, I am an insignificant man, and the individual rests on my heart. You see, child, the Master has said: 'In my father's house are many mansions,' and the quarter in which Arius sought his abode is not my choice, but none the less it belongs to the Father's house. It is not so wrong in you, after all, to hold fast to what your parents taught you. How shall I call you?"

"Agnes is my name, sir."

"That means a lamb. Beautiful, beautiful! I love that name, and because I am a shepherd, although a very humble one, let me be your comforter. Why do you weep? What seek you here? How comes it that you know not where to find a home?"

All this the old man said so lovingly, and such sincere fervent sympathy was expressed in his fatherly manner that Agnes began to hope again, and with full confidence answered all the questions that he had put to her.

With many a hem, hem! and "just hear that!" Eusebius listened to her. Then he invited her to follow him home, where he knew that his wife would find a little corner in which to tuck her away.

She joyfully consented, and thanked him warmly, when he ordered the porter to send her little brother to him, if he should be brought back.

Calmed, and as though freed from a heavy burden, she followed her new friend through a few streets and lanes.

Finally he stood still before a little garden-gate, and said:

"Here we are. What we have we give gladly, but it is little, very little. Who can live luxuriously when so many of their fellows are pining in misery and want?"

While they walked forward between two narrow flower beds the deacon pointed to a peach-tree and said:

"In former years that tree has borne as many as three hundred and seven peaches, and it pays for itself well, even now."

From the humble dwelling to the rear of the garden twinkled a hospitable light, and as they entered the small front-yard a queer little dog limped to meet his master with glad barks. It hopped along quite briskly upon its front-legs, but its back had been injured, and one hind leg hung uselessly suspended in the air.

"My friend Lazarus," said the old man, cheerily; "I found the poor little beast one day on the street, and he, too, is a creature of God; as for his being lame, I console myself with that verse from

one of the psalms: 'The Lord hath no pleasure in the strength of the horse, nor in the legs of a man.'"

All this sounded so cheerful and pleasant that Agnes had to smile with him, and when, after waiting a little while, she received a cordial and motherly greeting from the deacon's wife, she would have felt happier than for a long time if anxiety about her brother had not weighed heavily on her mind, and if she had not longed so very much to see him.

But soon even this care was hushed for the time, because so worn out and exhausted was she, that after eating only a few mouthfuls, she had lain down upon the neat couch prepared for her by old Elizabeth and immediately fallen asleep.

She was resting on the old man's bed, who expected consequently to pass the night upon a small sofa in his study.

The husband and wife no sooner found themselves alone, than the old man told Elizabeth how he had found Agnes, and wound up by saying:

"It is strange about those Arians and other heretical Christians. I can not think so badly of them, if they only hold to the one thing needful. If we are right—I believe that we are—and the son is equal with the father, then is he without spot or blemish; and what were more divine than to overlook the error of another, if it relates to our own person? What could be more wretchedly human than to be angry at that error, and take cruel vengeance upon the person who commits it? Understand me, please. Alas! or rather, God be thanked. I have not risen high, down here, and am nothing but a humble deacon. Now, if a boy were to come and take me for an acolyte or something so, am I to condemn and punish him for his mistake? By no means! And our Saviour, methinks, is much too purely divine, to hate those who deem Him only godlike. He is love itself, and when the Arian gets to heaven and beholds Jesus Christ in the whole glory of His divinity, and falls down before Him, full of rapture and penitence, at most, the Saviour would take him by the ear, and say: 'Thou fool! thou seest now who I am; but thine error is pardoned thee!'"

Elizabeth nodded at him approvingly, and said: "That is so; yes, it will be just so! Did our Lord thrust the adulteress from Him? Have we not the parable of the Good Samaritan? That poor girl! We have always wished for a daughter; now, we might have one, and how lovely she is! God graciously gratifies all our desires! But you must be tired, old man. Go to rest now!"

"Presently, presently," replied Eusebius; but at the same moment he struck upon his forehead, and continued, as if shocked and vexed: "There now, in all this trouble I have quite forgotten what was my bounden duty. Marcus! He is still like a person possessed, and if I can not quiet his conscience before he goes to rest, no good will come of it. Tired am I, very tired; but duty goes before rest. Do not oppose me, mother. Give me my cloak. I must go to the young man."

A few minutes later the old man was on his way to Canopian Street.

CHAPTER XV.

AFTER Constantine left, care and anguish pressed heavily upon the house of Porphyrius.

Messenger after messenger had appeared to summon Olympius away. A pagan secretary of the vice-regent Evagrius had betrayed the plot on foot, and the philosopher forthwith made ready to depart.

The merchant himself gave the order for harnessing the horses to his close "harmamaxa," and undertook to convey arms and banners to the Serapeum. The magazine where these were stored lay on one of his estates, in the Rhacotis, at the back of a wood-yard that was approachable from here by two streets, and was hidden from the views of passers by sheds and timber.

The old aqueduct, which had supplied with water the altars and subterranean rooms allotted to the mysteries of Serapis, had passed hard by its back wall. Since its removal, under the Emperor Julian, the subterranean and well-cemented canal had been dry, and allowed men, in a stooping posture, to reach the temple unseen.

This hidden passage had, just a short time before, been opened again, and was now to be used for conveying arms into the temple.

Damia had been, for the most part, a silent witness to the engrossing but brief interview between her son and the philosopher; but every now and then she could not forbear throwing in between the sentences of the men a sott, "Earnest, solemn Earnest!" or an emphatic, "That is right, there must be no sparing!"

Olympius seemed to find it peculiarly hard to say farewell, this time, and when the merchant held out his hand to him, he drew him to his bosom and said, with deep emotion: "Thank you, friend; thank you for much! We have lived, and if we fall, it is for the good of generations yet to come. What would existence be for us two, with the scourge and torturing scruples. The omens are not propitious, and if everything does not deceive, we are on the threshold of the end. What lies beyond, we philosophers see approaching with equanimity. The everlasting thinking over us has ordered all things so beautifully, that we may well believe all that is inscrutable to our minds will likewise be arranged so as to conduce to our best good. The pinions of the soul move more freely and lightly, even now, at the bare thought of the time when they shall be relieved of the weight of this burdensome body!"

Then the high-priest threw his arms upward, as though he felt a drawing from on high, and pronounced a prayer of inspiring eloquence, in which he laid before the gods what he and his had done for them, and vowed a sacrifice.

All this sounded so exalted, and the flow of his speech was so pure and smooth, that the merchant ventured not to interrupt him, although he found this delay on the part of the leader of his cause painful and unbearable.

When the youthfully emotionate old man had, at last, come to a close, his white beard was bedewed with many a tear, and when he saw that the eyes of neither the old lady nor Gorgo were dry, he

would willingly have begun to talk again, but Porphyrius only allowed him time to put Damia's hand to his lips, and to whisper to Gorgo: "You were born in a time of excitement, but beneath auspicious signs. Two worlds are coming into collision. Which will conquer? For you, darling, I have only one wish: be happy!"

Olympius had left the hall, but still the merchant strode thoughtfully up and down; and as his eye, in passing, caught his mother's, which impatiently followed him, he said, without looking at the old lady, half to himself: "If he anticipates such an end, he, who among us dare hope any longer?"

Hereupon Damia straightened herself up, and cried out, passionately: "1? I dare and can hope, and be confident! Shall everything go to ruin that was devised and fashioned by our forefathers? shall that dark superstition, like lava over the city of Vesuvius, pour down over the whole world, and bury whatever in it is light and fair? No! a thousand times no! Perhaps our degenerate, cowardly race (that has lost courage for fear of future nothingness, and the power to enjoy life) may be voted to destruction, as in Deucalion's days. Well, then, well! What must come, let it come! But a world such as they want can not exist! Suppose their monstrous efforts succeed, and they lay in ashes that temple of temples, the house of our Serapis, and overthrow the image of that great one? Well! Once more, I say well! Then, truly will it be done and over with us, with all, but with them, too—with them, I say."

With fierce hatred she doubled up her fist, and then continued, with a sigh: "I know what I know—there are indubitable signs, and I—I understand their interpretation, and say true, indubitably true it is, what every Alexandrian child has learned at its nurse's breast, is, that with the fall of Serapis, the earth caves in, just like a ball of dry earth that is crushed by a horse's hoof. A hundred oracles have predicted this, it is written by the stars on the chart of the heavens, and inscribed upon the book of fate. Let it, let it be! Forward, only move ever forward! He dies sweetly, who departing, his breast pierced by his own sword, beholds his enemy in like case with himself.

Beside herself, with a rattling in her throat, and gasping for breath, old Damia sunk back; but she soon recovered in Gorgo's supporting arms, and no sooner had her eyes unclosed again, than she called to her son, with strong indignation: "What, still here? Is time so cheap? Wait. Will you wait? You have the keys, and they lack arms!"

"I know my duty," retorted the merchant, composedly. "One thing after the other. I shall have been long on the spot ere the young men assemble. Syrius brings the signal agreed upon; I am dispatching couriers, and then it will be time to leave."

"Couriers! To whom?" asked Damia.

"To Barcas. He has command over several thousand Lybian peasants and slaves. The other is to the Egyptian Pachomius, who is enlisting recruits from among the fishermen and country people in the Eastern Delta."

"I know, I know. Twenty talents—Pachomius needs money—twenty talents from my coffer if they are here in good time."

"Ten—thirty-fold more would I give, were they now in the city!"

exclaimed the merchant, for the first time giving outward manifestation of the strong feeling with which he was penetrated.

"When I entered into life my own father dedicated me to that superstition. Still I wear its chains; but now, at this crisis, I feel more strongly than of old; will show, too, that I know how to remain loyal to the old gods. We shall not be found lacking, and yet there is no chance of safety, if the imperialists do not procrastinate, if they put at the work before the arrival of Barcas, then all is lost; on the contrary, if Barcas comes, if he comes in time, then may we hope that, after all, everything will turn out for the best. What can those monks do? To the two legions of the garrison only the cuirassiers of our Constantine have been added."

"Our?" screeched the old lady. "Whose, I ask, whose? We, we have nothing to do with that paltry Christian!"

Here Gorgo interrupted the enraged old lady, and exclaimed: "Have a care, grandmother; have a care! Consider what he was to us! He is a soldier, and must do his duty; but he loves us!"

"Us, us?" laughed Damia. "Did he declare his love to you awhile ago? Did he? And you only believe him, simpleton! I know him, know him well. For a bit of bread, a sup of wine from the hand of his priest, he would plunge us all, and you with us, into misery! Ah!—ah! those must be the counters!"

Porphyrius promptly dispatched the young men who had entered the hall, then clasped Gorgo gravely and fervently in his arms, and lastly stooped down to kiss his mother, which was something he had not done for a long while before.

Then Damia let her crutch fall, pressed her hands long and firmly upon her son's temples, and, at the same time, murmured many words, some of them seeming to be the heart's outpourings, others magical incantations.

The ladies were alone, and for a long time both kept silence.

The old woman sat crouched up in her arm-chair, but Gorgo leaned her back against the pedestal of Plato's bust, and looked down thoughtfully. Finally, Damia broke the stillness, and asked to be carried into the women's apartment.

Gorgo waved her back with her hand, stepped up to her, and said, impressively: "Not yet, mother. You must hear me first."

"Hear you?" asked the old lady, with a shrug of her shoulders.

"Yes, mother. I have never deceived you; but one thing I have always kept hid from you, because I was not certain of it myself until this morning. Now I am. Now, I know that I love him."

"That Christian?" asked the old woman, and, with a violent movement, she pushed back the shade from her eyes.

"Yes, him, Constantine; and I will not, may not hear you speak disrespectfully of him."

Hereupon the old woman uttered a shrill peal of laughter, and cried out, scornfully: "Ah, indeed! Then shut your ears, my pretty one, for so long as these lips stir—"

"Hold, grandmother, hold!" interposed the maiden. "Do not impose upon me more than I can bear. Cupid has hit me of late, as he does other girls, and he did it only once, but you do not know how deeply. When you revile him, you cut into the wound, and so cruel you can not be. Do it not, I beseech you; give it up, else—"

“ Else?”

“ Else I shall die, mother, and you love me yet.”

Earnest and tender at the same time was the sound of these words. They related to the future, but this seemed spread out before Gorgo's eyes with the certainty of what is already past; but Damia cast a quick, stolen glance upon her grandchild, and there-with a slight shudder thrilled her frame; for a divine effulgence was resting on the maiden's brow, and over herself there stole a feeling as if she were in a temple, conscious of the presence of heavenly beings. Gorgo waited in vain for an answer, and then, inasmuch as her grandmother persisted in silence, she returned to the pedestal where she had leaned before. Finally Damia lifted up her withered countenance, looked straight at her and asked: “ And what is to come of it?”

“ Yes, what is to come of it?” repeated the girl despondently, as she shook her head. “ I ask myself and can not find the answer, for although his image is quite near me, yet high walls and mountains, as it were, rise up between us. That image—his image—perhaps I may succeed in obliterating it. But remain and revile it, never!”

Now the hoary-headed old woman relapsed into a fresh reverie, and her lips mechanically repeated Gorgo's last word, at ever longer intervals, until at last almost inaudibly she murmured, “ never, never—no, never!”

The present and all its belongings retreated and she felt revive again pains that she had long forgotten. She remembered the cruel day, when the young freedman, that noble astronomer and philosopher, who had been given to her for a teacher, and whom she had loved with all the passion of her ardent nature, on her account, and because he had dared to aspire to her hand, had been expelled from her father's house and by slaves.

She had been compelled to renounce him, and after she had become the wife of another, he had risen to fame and distinction; yet she had given him no token that he still dwelt in her thoughts. Two-thirds of a century lay between the present and those blissful and yet horrible days. He had long since departed this life, and still she had not forgotten him, and now too thought of him. A strange power of double sight showed to her her own person as she had been then, and the image of her granddaughter Gorgo, whom she saw not with her natural senses, although she stood just opposite to her. The two swam together, and the same pain which had imbittered the soul of the one was now also threatening the other. But she, Damia, had dragged hers with her through long decades, like that chain with the iron ball which holds the criminal fast to the bench of oars, and accompanies him like an incorporate, oppressive shadow wherever he goes; Gorgo's sufferings could not last long, for she saw the end of all things coming; slowly, but with inevitable certainty, it came nearer and nearer.

When had enthusiastic youth and hurriedly assembled country-folk even been able to make an effectual stand against the Roman soldiery?

She who only a short while before had expressed such confidence to her son, now beheld the emperor's legions rout Olympius, Barcas'

Lybians and Pachomius' fishermen, while the temple of Serapis was besieged and stormed. Firebrands were hurled into its hallowed halls, its roofs were broken in, its ceilings crumbling; struck by heavy stones, that noble work of Bryaxis, the God's exalted statue sunk amid clouds of choking dust. And now, now from nature rose a universal wail, as though she had endowed with voice every star in the firmament, every wave of the sea, every leaf on the trees, every blade of grass in the fields, every cliff on the seashore, every grain of sand in the boundless desert; and this woe! woe of the world was drowned by peals of thunder, such as no mortal ear had ever heard before, no earthly creature could endure.

The heavens opened, and out of dense darkness poured death-dealing clouds of fire, while from the riven lap of earth darted forth consuming flames which leaped up to the very dome of heaven. Everything was changed into fire and ashes, what had been air, in its heavy fall struck the gold and silver of the stars from the far-off bell of the heavens; and now this too bowed, bent, and broke, burying the earth, shivering into a thousand splinters. Ashes, ashes, gray, choking, dusty ashes filled the world, and now arose a hurricane, wildly scattering this too and dispersing it, when the Nothing opened its huge, insatiate mouth, drinking in thirsty, mighty draughts, whatever more was left, and, instead of the world and the gods, men and their works, there was left only one thing; that horrible, grisly, incomprehensible Nothing. And in, about and above it—what dimensions however could have nothing?—reigned in cool, unsympathetic, self-sufficiency beyond all reality, and even that thought which presupposes a plurality, the unimaginable unity of that primordial being of the new platonian school which she believed in.

Cold chills ran over old Damia's body, followed by fever heats at this thought, but she believed in it, and would believe in it. The "No" which she had been murmuring to herself changed imperceptibly upon her lips, into a distinct and ever louder "Nothing."

Gorgo kept her eyes fixed upon her grandmother as though spell-bound.

What had come over her?

What signified her wandering eyes, the rattling in her throat, the contortions of her features, the convulsive quivering of her feet and hands?

Had she become a lunatic? What meant that Nothing, that ghastly Nothing, which she was perpetually repeating?

The girl could bear it no longer, and driven by torturing anxiety, she rushed up to the old lady, placed her hand upon her shoulder and cried out: "Mother, grandmother, wake up! What mean you by that dreadful Nothing?"

Upon this Damia started, shook herself, shuddering slightly; and asked, at first in a hollow tone, but then with an enforced cheerfulness that struck Gorgo as yet more awful. "That Nothing? Did I speak then of that Nothing, my pet? You are sensible. That Nothing! ah! You too have learned to think; are you able to define precisely the exact meaning of the idea 'Nothing'—the monster you know has neither head nor tail, face nor back—I say are you ready to determine its exact limits?"

“What is the use of it, mother?” asked Gorgo, with renewed solicitude.

“She too does not seize and apprehend it,” smiled the old woman, absently to herself. “And nevertheless, only yesterday Melampus was saying that you followed his lectures on conic sections more easily than many a male student. Yes, darling, I too once upon a time studied mathematics, and how much I calculate even now, in my observatory; but it comes ever harder to me to conceive of what a mathematical point is. It is nothing, and yet it is something. But that great last Nothing! How foolish it sounds, for that Nothing can be neither great nor small, can approach neither earlier nor later. Is that so, my dear? Who could not think nothing; but to think of that Nothing is hard; for that we two are not prepared. But why fash our brains with it? We need only wait till to-morrow or the day after; then comes something that will reduce our own dear persons, and this excellent world to what we can not even imagine to-day. That Nothing will come: I hear from afar off the iron tread of that airy monster without body and feet. A droll giant that, smaller than the mathematical point of which we were speaking, and yet great beyond measurement. Yes, yes! Our spirit has long polyp-like arms, and can embrace that monster too; but that Nothing he reaches with more difficulty than the ‘unbounded’ and ‘infinite.’ And this Nothing, have I dreamed, comes to the throne now and opens its mouth, its toothless jaws, and gulps us all down into the maw that it has not, all of us; me and you and your prefect together with the good-for-nothing town, together with heaven and earth. Wait, only wait! Still shines the sublime image of Serapis, but the cross casts a powerful shadow; it has already obscured half the light of the earth. The emperor—our gods are an abomination to him—Cynegius only puts his wishes into action.”

Here Damia was interrupted, for the steward rushed breathlessly into the room and cried:

“Lost, lost! An edict of Theodosius shuts up all the temples of the gods, and the cuirassiers have dispersed our men!”

Hereupon the old lady shrieked: “Do you see it now? Now it is coming. The oncoming of the Nothing has begun. Yes, yes; your cuirassiers are brave troops! They dig a great, great grave! there is room in it for many; for you, for me, and for themselves, and their prefect too. Call the bearers, man, and have me borne into the Gynæconitis;* when I get there tell me what has happened.”

Arrived in the women’s apartment the steward imparted all the information that he possessed. It sounded melancholy enough; but one thing seemed to him consolatory: Olympius was in the Serapeum and had begun to intrench himself there with a great host of the faithful.

Damia was minded to hope no more, and therefore hardly heeded this intelligence; but over Gorgo’s soul this exerted a powerful effect. She loved Constantine with all the devotion of a first, only, long pent-up love. Her paltry suspicion had been long since repented of, and it would have cost her little to humble her pride,

* The private apartment assigned the ladies of the family.

hasten after him, and make apologies. But that loyalty to the gods, on account of which he had left her in anger, that she would maintain at any price, that she durst not break now when everything was at stake. That would have been cowardly desertion. Yes, if Olympius conquered then she could go to him and say: "You remain a Christian and leave me my childhood's faith, or else open my soul to yours." But now, now her part was to subdue her heart's leaning and stand steadfastly at the post of danger. She was Greek to the core; she knew, she felt this, and nevertheless her eye had gleamed with pride during the steward's recital. It had seemed to her as though she saw Constantine before her, as, at the head of his knights, he rushed upon the heathen, to scatter them, like a flock of sheep, to the four winds of heaven. Her heart had beaten more warmly in behalf of the foe than of her unhappy friends. The latter had appeared to her like a shaken reed, while he embodied for her all that was strong.

This conflict of feelings pained her, but her grandmother had shown her the way in which they could be accommodated.

Wherever he commanded there perched victory, and if the Christians did succeed in overturning the image of Serapis, then the joints of the world would be broken, and the earth cave in. She too knew the oracles and writings which predicted this as with one voice, she had heard it repeated by her nurse, by the workwomen at the loom, by worthy men and keen-sighted philosophers; and for her the horrible that impended, involved the solution of every puzzling contradiction, the bitter-sweet hope of perishing with him.

When it was growing dark the inspector of sacrifices appeared, whose daily duty it was to examine the entrails of an animal for Damia, and their aspect was so unfavorable that he feared to report what he had found.

The old lady had known it beforehand, took it coolly and had herself carried to the observatory, in order presently to consult the stars.

Gorgo remained in the women's apartment for a long while alone. From the rooms adjoining this sounded the monotonous clatter of looms, at which many women were at work, to-day as ever.

Suddenly it ceased.

Damia had sent word to her female slaves from the watch-tower, that they might stop work and rest the next day if they chose. According to her orders wine was to be shared out to them in the great servants' hall, as generously too as on the great Dionysian feast.

It grew right quiet now in the Gynæconitis. There lay the garlands of flowers which she herself had woven with her young friends for the purpose of decorating to-morrow the temple of Isis. The steward had informed her, that this venerated sanctuary was closed, and had been occupied by soldiers.

So it was all over with the festival, and she might have found it in her heart to rejoice at this, because it relieved her of the necessity to offend Constantine; but now she thought again with subdued melancholy of the friendly goddess, in whose beautiful temple she had so often found comfort and enlivenment. She reminded herself of the time, when, as a little girl, she had plucked the first flowers from her own *parterre*, and had stuck it in the ground beside the

fountain, from which water was procured for libations. With her own money she had bought rare perfumes wherewith to anoint the altar of Isis, and when she had been heavy of heart, relief had come to her in prayer offered up before the goddess' marble image. How glorious had been the feasts held in the honor of Isis; with what a glad, full heart had she herself joined in those songs. The most of the poetry and exaltation of spirit that had been hers in childhood were associated with Isis and her temple. And now they had closed it, and the image of the heavenly probably even now lay shattered in the dust.

Gorgo knew all those lofty ideas upon which the worship of the goddess was founded, but she had never turned in prayer to them, but only to the statue, in whose magical power she confided.

What had happened now to Isis and her sanctuary might soon happen to Serapis and his.

This grieved her, for she had been accustomed to deem the temple of this god as the heart of the world, the center of gravity, which maintains the equilibrium of all cosmical life, and Serapis himself was inseparable from his abode, filled with magical and mystical powers.

All the prophecies, all the Sibylline sayings, all the oracles lied, if the downfall of his image remained unpunished, if the destruction of the earth did not follow it just as surely as the breakage of a dam causes the overflow of the land. And how could it be otherwise after the explanation which her new Platonic teacher had given her of the nature of God!

Not like an overflowing vessel did Serapis pour out, but that great, unapproachable one exalted above all being and imagination, for whose greatness every name was too small; the transcendently good and beautiful in which 'all was and will be, that is it, the quintessence of that which is called godly, and out of this abundance originated the godly thinking, the pure thought, that pertains to the one, as light to the sun.

This thinking with its life—this, too, not in time, but eternity—could move or rest at pleasure; it comprehended a plurality, while the one was only one, and completely indivisible, could only remain one.

The idea of each living being came from the second, the eternal thought, and this all-animating, quickening power of thought included all the original forms of beings endued with life, comprehending the immortal gods themselves; their ideas, their original forms only, not themselves. And as eternal thought emanated from the one, so from him emanated as a third the soul of the world, whose double nature touched here upon eternal, lofty thought, there upon the lower material world. She was the heavenly Aphrodite, who rocked herself blissfully in the pure splendor of the bright world of thought, and could not free herself from the dust of the corporeal, viz., matter, on which the senses fasten, and in which sin conceals itself.

The head of Serapis was that eternal thought, in his broad breast rested the soul of all, and the fulness of the originals of every created thing. The exterior world served him for a footstool. That mighty creative power served him which soared up to the in-

comprehensible and unimaginable One, as did also the subject powers. He was the sum of all, the totality of the created, and at the same time also the power which inspired and animated, guarding it from destruction by perpetual renovation. His power kept in harmonious accord the manifold divisions of the material and immaterial universe.

Whatever was animated, inspired nature as well as inspired man, were inseparably connected with him.

If he, if Serapis fell, then would the key to the arch of the universe be destroyed, and with it "the sum of all," nay the all itself ceased to be.

What was left, was not that nothing, of which her grandmother spoke; it was the One, the cold, beingless, unintelligible One.

With the fall of Serapis came the world to nought, and perhaps it would please him, out of his superabundance, to call into being another world for other strange creatures of the future.

From such thoughts Gorgo was startled by a terrible noise, that, proceeding from the remote quarters allotted the slaves, penetrated easily the ladies' apartment. Could her grandmother have opened too freely to them her wine-cellar; were those unhappy creatures already madly drunk? But no! Not thus sounded the merry-making of slaves, who, under yoke to Dionysus, forgot the present and gave unbridled expression to their delight.

She listened, and now distinguished the mourner's howl, and passionate lamentations. Something terrible must have occurred. Had her father met with an accident?

Deeply solicitous, she hurried across the court till she came to the servants' quarters. Servants of all classes were behaving as if they had lost their senses. Disheveled hair covered the faces of the women, and howling they beat their breasts; the men sat crouched up before the untasted pitchers, and wept in silence.

What sorrow had fallen upon their household?

Gorgo called up her nurse, and now learned from her that the augur had reported soldiers drawn up in array before the Serapeum, and moreover that the emperor had commanded the prefect of the East to lay hands upon the temple of the king of gods. To-day or to-morrow that monstrous event was to take place. They must pray and repent of their sins, for with the downfall of the holiest of all holies will be involved that of the whole earth too. The entrails of the sacrificial victim offered by Damia had been black and gangrenous, and from the breast of the god in the holiest of all has issued an awful lament. The columns in the great *hypostyle* had trembled, and the three heads of Cerberus, at the feet of Serapis, had opened their jaws.

Gorgo listened to her old nurse in silence, and made only this answer: "Let them mourn!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE day had passed away rapidly enough to Dada in the house of Medius; for there had been various costumes and most wonderful stage-scenery to be looked at, the children had been lively and

sociable, and playing with them had pleased her peculiarly, since all her little tricks and songs with which Papias had long been familiar met with great applause from them.

It entertained her also, to investigate wherein consisted the domestic grief by which the singer had represented himself as victimized, to her foster-parents.

Medius was one of those, who buy all that strikes them as especially cheap, and so, this morning, in the harbor Kibotus he had chanced to be present at an auction sale of herrings, and purchased a great tun full of salt fish for "a mere song." These goods being now delivered, his wife fell into a great rage, which she expended in the first place upon the unfortunate carrier, and then upon the guilty purchaser. Each of them (so she calculated) must needs be a hundred years old before the bottom of the tun should be seen and the last herring eaten up.

The singer, on the other hand, showed the monstrous error of her calculation, eagerly emphasizing the point that the very healthy nourishment furnished by this excellent fish, was certainly fitted to prolong indefinitely the lives of the whole family.

These reckonings, which were by no means made in sport, amused Dada far more than the tablets, cylinders and balls covered with figures and cabalistic signs to which Medius desired to draw her attention. In the midst of his eager explanations, she ran off from him and began to show his grandchildren how a little rabbit snuffles when a cabbage-leaf is offered to him, and how he moves his ears.

The account of the occurrences in front of the prefecture, which reached Medius in the afternoon, disturbed him greatly and drove him right away into the town.

Toward evening he came homé, an altered man. He must have learned something horrible; for his countenance was ashy pale, and the usual assurance of his manner had been replaced by a troubled, disconcerted air distressing to behold.

Sometimes he walked up and down, uttering groan after groan, then he threw himself on the sofa, gazing fixedly at the ceiling, and again he would run into the vestibule, and from there peep cautiously out upon the street.

Dada's presence seemed suddenly to have grown irksome to him, and the considerate girl immediately perceived this, and she declared to him, without circumlocution, that she would like to go back to her friends—the sooner the better. Hereupon he shrugged his shoulders and sighed: "Do as you choose. So far as I am concerned, you can stay either: it is all one!"

Up to this point his wife had taken no notice of his proceedings, for he was ever eccentric and often violent, if anything crossed him; but now she wanted to know, without any concealments, what had come over him, and he forthwith gratified her wish. He did not want to distress the ladies any sooner than he could help, but it had to be told some time: Cynegius had come to destroy the image of Serapis, and what would happen then she knew herself. "To-day," he cried, "we live; but to-morrow—a thousand to one—to-morrow joy is at an end, and the earth swallows up the old nest and ourselves in it."

These words fell upon receptive soil. The singer's wife and daughter were terribly shocked, and since it pleased Medius to depict the approaching ruin in so much the more vivid colors, as he saw that his words produced a deeper impression, they soon began to whimper, and then burst into loud wails of grief. When the children, who had been carried into the sleeping-room, heard the lamentations of the grown people, they imitated them, and Dada too soon caught the infection. As for Medius, his own eloquent representation of the threatening end of the world had made so profound an impression on himself that he completely gave up his boasted character of a "strong mind," and his favorite saying that everything called God has been designingly invented by priests and princes to take advantage of ignorant men, and forced upon these forsooth in order to subsidize them, until finally he was heard to whisper prayers, and dived deep into his purse, when his wife asked for leave to sacrifice a black lamb the next morning in partnership with one of her neighbors.

She forsook all eyes that night. Dada found the singer's house intolerable. Perhaps Medius only imagined such horrible things, but if ruin really was coming, she would a thousand times rather perish with her own people than in company with this family, somehow—she could not herself say why—peculiarly uncongenial to herself. She expressed her wish to her host, the following morning, and he forthwith made ready to escort her back to Karnis.

In the first place, he could not make the use of her that he had expected. He was in the service of the great magician and conjurer Posidonius, to whom half the city of Alexandria resorted, Christians, Jews, and heathen, in order to hold intercourse with the departed, with gods and demons; to gain ways and means for attracting love and injuring one's enemies; to learn the art of making one's self invisible and discerning the future through his instrumentality.

Dada was to have made her first appearance, in his master's behalf, before a matron, as the glorified spirit of her deceased daughter; but, in consequence of the recent disturbances in the city, this rich lady had gone into the country, yesterday, at noon. Also, of the other patrons of his chief it was not to be expected, even if affairs turned out more favorably than could be anticipated, that they would venture forth upon the street by night. These rich gentlefolk were so cowardly and circumspect, and inasmuch as the emperor besides had issued some new and stronger edicts against magic, the magician himself deemed it advisable to postpone the sittings that had been announced.

Medius could make no present use of the girl, therefore; yet he put on the appearance of yielding so readily to her wish, merely to spare his friend Karnis anxiety.

The morning was clear and hot, and the city, despite the early hour, full of excited multitudes. Anguish, curiosity, defiance were painted upon all faces, but Medius got unchallenged, with his young companion, as far as the temple of Isis, on Lake Mæris. The gates of the temple had been driven in, and were guarded by soldiers, but close to its southern and western walls pressed hundreds and hundreds of the heathen. Many of them had watched through the night

here, in prayer, and expectation of the horrors impending and not to be averted, and now they knelt around in groups, whimpering, weeping, cursing or gazing hopelessly on the ground, in dull resignation, worn out and broken-hearted.

They presented a pitiable spectacle, nor could Dada wholly escape participation in so universal a sorrow, although, for that matter, all the way along, she had dreaded Dame Herse's scolding, far more than the destruction of the world.

Medius, with a loud groan, fell upon his knees, and dragged the girl down with him, for upon the temple's inclosure-wall a priest of the goddess had just shown himself, and after elevating the sacred *sistrum* of Isis, and muttering unintelligible prayers and incantations, began to speak.

He was a short, thick-set man, from whose forehead the perspiration was running in streams, while in the glow of the ever-increasing heat of the sun, he sketched a frightful picture of the gigantic horrors soon to overtake the city and its citizens.

His speech was pompous and bombastic, declaimed in a loud, dissonant voice. Every now and then he would wipe his dripping cheeks with the end of his white linen priestly robe, or snap after air when his breath failed him, like a fish on the sand.

All this did not disagreeably affect the multitude, for the hatred in which his speech was steeped, and anguish in view of the near future, which was mirrored in his every word, fully voiced their own feelings; only Dada grew livelier and livelier the longer she looked at him, and because the day was so bright, because on the wall, close by the priest, a cock-pigeon, with just as droll flappings of the wing as ever, tripped everywhere after his mate, and most especially because young life beat so vigorously in her own bosom, as though everything must turn out for the best, the world struck her, in spite of the evil prophecies of the passionate old man up there, as a right beautiful and not specially unsafe place of abode. On the eve of destruction the Earth must assuredly look very different from what she did to-day, and it would recur to her as very unlikely that the gods should have confided their plans to such a buffoon of all men in the world. For the very reason that this fat man predicted the horrible so confidently, she would not believe it; and now when some helmet-plumes appeared behind the orator, and two strong soldier-hands clasped each of his plump ankles, and forcibly lowered him from his lofty stand into the temple-court below, she could hardly restrain her laughter.

Meanwhile, serious grounds for apprehension speedily made themselves manifest, for a trumpet sounded, and a maniple of the twenty-second legion advanced determinedly against the grieving populace, and dispersed them.

Medius was among the first of the fugitives. Dada kept by his side, and when he quickened his pace through tear, she did the same, because, in spite of the cold reception that she apprehended, she longed to be reunited to her family—the sooner the better.

Never had she felt so conscious of the warm love she bore them. Let Herse scold as much as she chose. Her most angry words were better than Medius' sweetest flatteries. She delighted in thoughts of each individual, yes, in Agnes and little Papias too, and it seemed

to her as if she were going to meet dear ones, from whom she had been parted for years.

Now they came to the dock which was separated from the temple-hedge only by a lane, and then approached the ship. She pulled off her veil and waved it, but her greeting was not responded to. Surely they must have removed to Porphyrius' mansion, for even now some men were withdrawing the bridge, which connected the vessel with the land. Swift of foot she now took the lead of Medius, and was fortunate enough to overtake the steward, who had been giving directions to some slaves at work on the ship, before he had reached his master's garden.

That official was delighted to see her, and immediately informed her that his old mistress had promised Dame Herse to receive her under her own protection, in case she should return. But Dada had a pride of her own, as well as others. She had no fancy for either Gorgo or her grandmother, and by the time Medius came up with her, out of breath, she had already positively declined the old lady's invitation.

The ship was once more empty.

Karnis, so the steward informed her, had repaired, with his son, to the Serapeum, in order to share in its defense, and Herse had followed them, because women too—Olympius had said so—might make themselves useful in the imperiled sanctuary, by giving food to the combatants, and tending the wounded.

Disappointed and out of spirits, Dada looked upon their deserted, floating abode.

She would have liked best to follow her family into the beleaguered temple, but how could she get there, how make herself useful there? Neither was she a heroine, for, from a child, she had ever sickened at the sight of blood. Nothing was left for her, then, but to follow Medius back to his house.

The singer allowed her time enough to reflect, for he had joined the steward under the shade of a sycamore-tree, and there they proved to one another, with all the arguments which they had picked up in these last days and hours, how inevitable the destruction of the world was, if the statue of Serapis were overthrown.

During this lively discussion, the two paid no heed to the maiden, who was resting on Mercury overturned in the road. Dreams, grumbling, sleeping in broad daylight, were things opposed to her wide-awake, healthy nature, but heat and excitement of mind had exhausted her to-day, so that she was soon overcome by a light half-slumber.

So often as her weary head sunk upon her breast, it seemed to her as if the temple of Serapis were falling; when she lifted it again, she became conscious of the heat, that she had lost connection with her friends, and against her inclination must go back to Medius. Finally her lids shut more closely, and because she sat in the full glare of the sun, things before her eyes assumed a roseate hue, and she had a wonderful vision: Marcus, the son of Maria, took the *modius* or wheat measure (which she had always seen on the head of the statue of Serapis) off the god's head, and handed it to her. It was full of violets, lilies, and roses, and she was charmed with the flowers, and as he had held out the *modius* to her, she had

thanked him. Hereupon, he kindly and calmly extended his hands to her; but she gave him hers, and her feelings were very pleasant under the quiet, compassionate gaze of those large eyes which had often been present with her upon the ship, for minutes at a time. She would have so gladly spoken to him, but could not, and looked on tranquilly, too, and without solicitude, when she saw the statue of the god and the hall it occupied enveloped in flames. No smoke mingled with this bright, kindly fire, but it forced her to protect her blinded eyes, and when she raised her hand, in order to do this, it awoke her, and upon opening her eyes, she saw Medius standing before her in the sun, inviting her to come and go back home with him.

She acceded, and silently listened to his assurance, that the lives of Karnis and his son were not worth a copper, if they fell into the hands of the Roman troops.

Downcast and sorrowful to a degree such as she had never known before, she had passed by the half-finished vessels on the dock, upon which no busy laborers were at work to-day, when there emerged from the little street which separated the workshops from the Isis temple an elderly man with a boy, and the latter—she had no time to ask herself whether she saw aright, or were deceiving herself—broke away from the hand of his guide, as soon as he caught sight of her, and ran up to her, calling her by name.

A minute later and little Papias had flown shouting into her arms, been picked up by her, and flung his arms around her neck, as though he would never more be parted from her; but she hugged and kissed him, feeling her eyes wet with tears of joy. In a trice the melancholy, afflicted maiden was again our sprightly Dada.

The man who had conducted the boy hither, was immediately besieged by a thousand questions, and from his friendly answers it appeared that he had found the boy crying at a street corner, that he had taken him home with him, and with some trouble, discovered that he belonged to people who had found lodgings on a ship beside a dock. In spite of the troublous times, he had brought the boy back, because he could imagine how great the anxiety of his relations must be.

Dada thanked the friendly artisan with all warmth, and when he saw how happy the maiden and child were, in being together again, he rejoiced in the sight, and cheerfully withdrew.

Medius had been a silent spectator of this scene, and looked upon the pretty boy with an eye of satisfaction. If the earth should survive, he could make fine use of him; and when the girl cheerfully besought him to find a little nook in his house for the boy, he objected on the score of his scanty income, and the narrow accommodations furnished by his dwelling, but hesitatingly consented, after Dada had offered him her gold bracelets to defray the cost.

On their further way, she continued to gaze rapturously upon the boy. She did love him so dearly, and he presented himself to her in the light of a bridge, a connecting link between herself and her friends.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE wife and daughter of Medius had, in conjunction with their neighbors, sacrificed a black lamb to Zeus, as at other times in case of earthquakes and terrible tempests; but this had been done in all secrecy, for the edicts, which forbade the offering of bloody sacrifices to the gods, had been immediately put in force. The more individual members of the singer's family mingled with other citizens, the deeper-rooted became their conviction that the end of all things was at hand.

When darkness fell, the old man buried his money, for no matter if everything did go to rack and ruin, he thought that maybe it might be allowed him to escape the general doom, although why or wherefore, he did not know. Great and small sought their rest during that warm night in the open air, that they might not be crushed beneath the bursting roofs and falling walls. The following morning was a very hot one, and one crouched behind the other in the meager shade of a palm and fig tree, the only things of large growth in the singer's garden.

In spite of the broiling heat of the sun's rays, Medius was in perpetual motion. He ran into the city, only to return each time with speed to his own family, and augment their tribulations by imparting to them the horrible things that he had learned outside. Their hunger was stilled with bread, cheese, and fruits, for the two female slaves had refused to cook any longer on the hearth inside the house.

Sometimes the singer deported himself gently and tenderly toward his family, then again like a madman, and his wife outdid him in every particular. At times she would have him and the children freshly anoint the house-altar and pray; soon afterward she was reproaching the gods with their tricks and cruelty. When the tidings came that the Imperialists had engirdled the Serapeum, she reviled and spat upon the pretty figures of the Penates, and, a few minutes afterward, was vowing a sacrifice to the Olympic gods. The confusion was abominable, and as the glowing orb of day mounted higher and higher, so augmented the inner and outward distress of great and small.

Dada looked upon all this with disgust, and shook her head if one of the women declared that she felt the shock of an earthquake or the roll of distant thunder. She could not herself explain why she, who was usually so timid, could not partake in the universal alarm, at the same time that she felt compassion for the poor agonized women and children.

Not one of these concerned themselves about her, and so time dragged on most wearily and clipped the wings of her joyous spirit. In addition the burning rays of an African sun poured down upon her, for the first time to-day. When at last the afternoon had come, she found it unbearable in the glare of the parched-up garden, and looked out for Papias. He was sitting on top of the wall, looking at the people, who were pouring into St. Mark's church.

Dada followed his example, and from the open door of the house

of God came the sounds of many voices united in song; she listened to the music, from which she had been long debarred, wiped the perspiration from the boy's brow with his *peplos*, and said, pointing to the church:

"It must be cool there, inside."

"To be sure it must," answered the boy. "It is never hot in church."

"Do you know, we'll go over."

This was a good thought; for, thought she, it must be better and more endurable everywhere than here; and, moreover, it charmed her to have a peep at one of Agnes' churches, and either to sing again herself, or hear others sing.

"Come!" called she to the boy, slipping with him into the forsaken house, in order to steal through the little vestibule into the open street.

Medius noted her movements well, but he did not restrain her, for he was sunken in perfect indifference.

An hour ago, he had settled up the accounts of his life, and to the pitiful sum of his good deeds added his hospitable reception of Dada and her little charge; but immediately afterward he had set about calculating how much he could make out of the girl and boy, if, after all, things went well. Now it seemed all one to him, whether evil overtook his own people and Dada in-doors or in the garden.

Dada and the child had soon reached St. Mark's church, the oldest place of Christian worship in the city. It consisted of an area, the *narthex*, and the church proper, a very long hall, with flat roof, that was wainscoted with dark wood, and rested upon two rows of small pillars. A trellised railing divided this hall into two parts. In the extreme rear of this the floor was raised by a *podium*, and upon this stood a table, around which a semi-circle of chairs was arranged. The one furthest back, and at the same time the middlemost, was distinguished by its height and fine workmanship. They were all unoccupied, but around about them a few deacons moved to and fro, clad in surplices of bright brocade.

In the middle of the anteroom many penitents had collected around a little fountain, and these, with their lacerated backs, and their deep contrition, presented a yet more pitiable spectacle than the frightened crowd which Dada had seen in the morning at the Isis temple.

She would have gladly turned around again here, but Papias drew her forward, and when she had found admittance to the body of the building, through the lofty middle door of entrance, she drew a deep breath of relief, and such a pleasant feeling came over her as she had rarely experienced before; for in the only half-filled, tar-reaching hall, with its lofty pitch the subdued light prevailing there really did her eyes good.

The faint odor of the incense that filled the church, and the soft singing of the assembled multitudes were soothing to her senses, and after she had taken her place on one of the seats, she felt well hidden from observation.

What a snug, peaceful place of refuge was this church; in all

Alexandria, thought she, there were few places where one could rest in such tranquillity as here.

For a long while, resting in body and soul, she enjoyed the coolness, the peace, the perfume, and the music, but soon her attention was attracted to two women in the seat directly in front of her.

One who held a child in her arms whispered to the other:

"You here, among the unbaptized, Hannah?— How are your family?"

"I can not stay long," ran the answer; "it is all the same where one sits, and when I go, I do not like to disturb others. My heart is so heavy, my child is badly off. The doctor says he can not last through the day, and that was what brought me to church."

"Right, right! You just stay here. I'll run straight across to your house. My husband helps me to nurse gladly."

"Thanks for your friendly offer; but Catherine is attending to the boy, and he is hidden there."

"Then, at least, I can pray with you for the dear child."

Dada had not lost a single word of this dialogue. The woman who had left her suffering child, in order to intercede for him here, had a peculiarly sweet countenance; and as the maiden watched the two women, and saw how, with folded hands, they bowed their heads and looked down, she thought: "Now they are praying for the sick boy," and involuntarily she bowed her own curly head, and murmured softly:

"Ye gods, or Thou, Christ God, or howsoever Thou mayest be called, who hast power over life and death, make this poor mother's little son well. If I get to my own people again, I will sacrifice to thee a cake, or a cock; a lamb is so dear!"

And now she had a sense of having been heard by an invisible spirit, and it gave her a peculiar gratification to go over again this informal petition.

Meanwhile, a miserable little blind man crouched down on a seat near her, and by his side stood the old dog, who led him about. He held him by a string, and his faithful comrade was willingly put up with in this holy place. The old man joined loudly and reverentially in the psalm, which had been begun by the rest; his voice had lost its quality, but his singing was faultlessly correct. This did Dada good, and although she only half understood the words of the psalm that they were chanting, yet she quickly caught the simple melody, and at first began timidly and almost inaudibly to follow little Papias' example, and sing with them; but soon more courageously, and finally, with the full power of her voice.

In all this it was to her as though she had come to land after a stormy and adverse sea-voyage, and found a welcome among friendly people; and as she looked around upon the singers, to see if the news of the approaching end of the world had not penetrated here too, she could not come to any satisfactory conclusion, for, indeed, upon many a countenance were depicted deep anguish of spirit, contrition, and vehement longing after help perhaps, maybe something quite different; but loud lamentation such as she had heard at the Isis temple was nowhere audible, and most of the men and women assembled here sung or prayed with devout composure.

Of those wild monks, who had struck her with such fears, at the

Xenodochium of Maria, and in the street, not a single one was to be seen; in these days of unrest they had placed their small strength and great enthusiasm at the disposal of the church militant. The service of God in St. Mark's church had been announced by Eusebius, the deacon of that diocese, to take place at this unusual hour, because he wished to tranquilize the hearts of those who had been made anxious by the recent disturbances.

Dada saw how the old man mounted to an elevated desk, on the other side of the railing, which separated the baptized from the unbaptized, and Eusebius' silver-white head of hair and beard, with his cheerful countenance, thoughtful brow, and mild, benevolent eye, pleased her particularly.

She had always thought of Plato as young, him of whom Karnis delighted to talk, and from whose teachings even she retained some ideas; but he must have looked just so at an advanced age. Yes; it would have beautifully become that old man up there to die at a glad wedding feast, like the great Athenian.

The old priest would certainly hold a discourse, but, however much he might please, this drove her to make a start for leaving, because, although she could listen motionless to music for hours, nothing was more irksome to her than to listen long to spoken words, when she herself must keep silence.

She got up then to go, but Papias again detained her, imploring her, with his great child-eyes, not to spoil his pleasure but stay, so she yielded. Nevertheless, the opportunity to withdraw unobserved had been favorable, for the woman in front of her was just preparing to leave, and shaking hands with her neighbor, on bidding her farewell. She had already risen from her seat, when a half-grown girl stepped up to her from behind, and said:

"Come, come, mother; the doctor says the danger is past. He has opened his eyes and asked for you."

Then the mother whispered to her neighbor quickly and rapturously:

"It all proves for the best!" and hurriedly retired with her daughter.

The one left behind lifted her eyes and hands, as though in gratitude, and across Dada's lips too flitted a smile.

"Had the Christ God heard her prayer, too?"

Meanwhile, the priest had brought his short prayer to a close, and begun to explain to his congregation that he had summoned them to church in order to guard them against foolish fears, and to lead them to reflect how a true Christian should deport himself in the subsequent days of trial and unrest. He would like to show his brothers and sisters what is to be dreaded from the idol, and its fall, what they have to thank the heathen for, and what he expects from his fellow-believers, after the new and splendid triumph to be anticipated for the church militant.

"Let us take a glance backward, beloved," continued he, after this introduction. "You have all heard of Alexander the Great, to whom this noble city owes her existence and her name. He has been an excellent tool of the Most High, for he carried the language and science of the Greeks into every land, so that, in the fullness of time, the doctrine which was to proceed from the only begotten

Son of God might be understood by all nations and find entrance into all hearts. So many nations dwelt upon the earth at that time, there were so many hundreds of idols, and in so many different tongues and modes did men address their prayers to that higher power, which makes itself manifest wherever are mortal creatures.

“ Here, on the Nile, after Alexander's death, reigned the Ptolemaic Kings, and in Alexandria the Egyptian citizens addressed their prayers to other idols than the Greek ones, and the two could unite in no common sacrifice. Then Philadelphus, the second Ptolemy, a wise man, gave them a common god. In consequence of a vision, he had him brought here from Sinope on the Pontus. Serapis was the name of the idol which, not Heaven, but the wise expedient of a man, placed here on the throne of deity: a costly temple was built for him, which ranks even now as one of the wonders of the world, and they erected an image of him, than which mortal man never fashioned a more beautiful one. You are acquainted with both of them, and you know, too, how, before the proclamation of the Gospel, all Alexandria, with the exception of the Jews, crowded to the Serapeum.

“ A slight suspicion of the lofty doctrine of Him, through whom God redeemed the world, had already dawned upon the minds of the best among the heathen, the hearts of those wise men, not yet partakers of grace, though, who sought and wrestled after truth, after inner enlightenment, and a knowledge of the Most High. The Lord had called them to prepare the soul of humanity for the glad message, and make it ready to accept it when the star should rise and stand still over Bethlehem.

“ Many a one of these men linked beautiful teachings with the service of Serapis, before the hour of salvation had come. They commanded the worshippers of idols to consider the welfare of the soul more earnestly than that of the body, for they had recognized the imperishable duration of the spiritual, divine part of us earth-born creatures, we who are called into existence through sin and through love, and we who must therefore die in our guilty love and may rise again through the power of eternal love. Like the Egyptian wise men before them in the time of Pharaoh, these Hellenists suspected and proclaimed that the soul is made accountable beyond the grave for all that is done or left undone in its fleshly tabernacle. According to that eternal law which is written in the heart of the heathen likewise, so that, by nature, they might do the works of the law, they well distinguished between virtue and vice; yes, there arose among them far seeing minds, that did not indeed know God, but none the less, in the name of Serapis, required the erling to repent, and declared it to be salutary to cut loose from the illusory joys and vain delights of earth, and to renounce the evils of thought and action that the senses bring upon us. They summoned their pupils to gather themselves together for the thoughtful investigation of the truth and deity, and, in the spacious halls of the Serapeum, opened cells and cloisters for women doing penance, where also many pardoned men, dead to the world of sense, and devoted to the consideration of only such things as they deemed highest, made their preparations to meet death.

“ But, beloved, that grace, which we enjoy—not for any merit

or worthiness of our own—had not yet been poured out on the lost children of a benighted age. And in all these noble, yea, most admirable upward strivings there mingled, at the same time, here, coarse superstition with its bloody sacrifices and foolish reverence for fragile images and irrational beasts; there, the deceptions and pernicious art of sorcery and magic. The idea, too, of true salvation was distorted and dimmed by the conceits of a vain and fickle philosophy, while to-morrow saw already refuted what to-day she had thought firmly established. By and by, then, the temple of the Sinopian idol had come to be a place of cheating, blood-shedding, the vilest superstition, lust, and abominations. True, learning was still fostered in the halls of the Serapeum, but, grown hard of heart, their young men turned away from the truth, which had come into the world through the grace of God, and became priests of error. Falsified and degraded through wretched folly the doctrines that the wise had connected with the idea of Serapis, lost their height and dignity, and ever since the great apostle, after whom this church is named, brought the gospel to Alexandria, the throne of the idol has been tottering, and the doctrine of salvation has undermined and nearly overthrown it in spite of the persecution of believers, in spite of edicts made by Julian the Apostate, in spite of the desperate efforts of philosophers, sophists, and heathen, for Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master, has transformed the fleeting shadow of a dimly suspected truth, embodied in the Serapis belief, into a living reality. Instead of the confused nebula Serapis has emerged the purely radiant, warm star of Christian love, and, as the moon pales before the victorious orb of day, so will the worship of Serapis die a natural death in a thousand places where the Gospel has found reception. Here, too, in Alexandria, its flames will only be meagerly fed in future; and if the power of our pious Christian emperor suppresses it to-morrow or the day after, then, beloved, will it fall smoking to the ground, and no earthly power can rekindle the flame. Not your, our grandchildren, no, but our sons will ask: 'Who was Serapis?' The one, so soon to be brought low, is no more a mighty god, but an idol robbed of prestige and dignity. There is no question here of a battle of power against power; there is nothing left now but to give the *coup de grace* to one already vanquished. The thoroughly rotten tree will hurt nobody by its fall, but everything against which it strikes in its crash helps to reduce it to powder and rubbish. This prince has long outlived himself, and when his cracked scepter escapes from his hand only a few will lament him, for the new King has already ascended his throne, and he is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen!"

Dada had listened to the deacon's discourse without especial sympathy, but something in this last sentence had struck her notwithstanding. The old gentleman up there looked good and just, and Father Karnis was assuredly a fair-minded man, and moreover one always accustomed to look on the bright side of a subject. How came it, then, that the preacher up yonder drew so pitiable a picture of the same God whose greatness her foster-father had been vaunting only the day before?

How could one think so very differently from the other? The

priest seemed to her more prudent than the singer; the young Christian Marcus certainly had a good heart; a better, more patient creature than Agnes never existed under the sun, and so it might well be that Christianity was, in reality, something quite different from what her foster-parents loved to represent it. She was now perfectly satisfied as to the direful consequences involved in the overthrow of the Serapis temple, and so she listened more attentively as the old priest continued:

“Let us rejoice, my beloved! The days of the great idol, Serapis, are numbered! Would you know to what he may have been likened in our midst? Among the thousand ships and galleys crowding a large harbor appears a splendidly built and richly pennoned trireme, whereon the plague rages. Woe to those who approach her, woe to the imprudent ones who allow themselves to be enticed by the rich ornaments with which she is adorned, to step on board. How easily they fall a prey to the pestilence themselves, and heedlessly convey it from ship to ship, from the ships to the land, until the contagion has infected both harbor and city. Thanks also to those who thrust this glittering vessel from our roadstead either to sink or burn it up. Our Father in Heaven give courage to their hearts, strength to their hands, and bless their deed! When it is said: ‘The great Serapis lies level with the ground, he is no more, the world and we are freed from him,’ then shall they, in this state and everywhere, where Christians dwell and pray, solemnize a glorious festival.

“But then, then let us be just, then must we all remind one another of the great and good gifts, which the trireme once brought our fathers, while yet she plowed the main, with a sound crew on board. If we do this, then shall we behold the proud galley sink, with quiet compassion, and comprehend the grief of those whom she once bore through the ebb and flow of the tide, and who felt bound to her by many a cherished association. Then shall our joy be twofold, inasmuch as we ourselves possess a strong vessel, with stout planks and masts, and a steady pilot, and can cordially invite those others to come aboard with us, so soon as they are cured of the plague with whose contagion they had been infected.

“I think you have understood this similitude. When Serapis shall have fallen, then will there be much sorrow and tribulation among the heathen, but we—if we are true Christians—are not to pass by on the other side, but endeavor to heal the afflicted and sore at heart. When Serapis falls ye are to be physicians, physicians for the soul, like your Master; and since it should delight us to heal, the first thing for us to do will be to ascertain in what consist the sufferings of those to whom we would gladly show ourselves helpful, for the selection of the medicine must be determined by the nature of the sickness.

“I mean, only he can administer consolation who can heartily enter into the feelings of the one in need of comfort, the one who feels another’s burden as though it were his own. And this art, dear hearers, together with faith, is the quality of the Christian best pleasing to the Most High.

“Before my spiritual eyes I already see the magnificent Serapeum brought to nought, the masterpiece of Bryaxis destroyed, and thou-

sands upon thousands of lamenting heathen. As the Jews by the rivers of Babylon hung their harps upon the willows and wept, when they remembered Zion, so I see them bewailing its past glory. To be sure, what they mourn they themselves have spoiled and desecrated, and when something higher took its place they hardened their hearts, and instead of leaving the dead to bury their dead, and throwing themselves hopefully into the arms of the new life, they would cleave to the putrefying corpse! They have been fools, but their folly was sincere, and if we win them for our holy faith then will they be true unto death to Jesus, and the crown of life, even as they have been to their old gods. 'There will be more joy in Heaven over one sinner that repents than over ninety and nine just men.' You know that; and whoever of you loves the Saviour can prepare for himself high joy by showing these sorrowing heathen the way to his heavenly kingdom.

"But, you ask, is not the suffering of the heathen vain, and what is this that they bewail? In order to comprehend this, come with me and let us picture to ourselves what they fancy they lose, and you will find it, indeed, to be no small thing, including much, for which we, and, with us, all humanity owe them gratitude!

"We call ourselves Christians, and do so with pride, but we also call ourselves Greeks, and rejoice in this name, too. Under the protection of those old gods whose downfall is now imminent, the Greek nation has performed astonishing deeds, has improved like a skillful gardener the glorious endowments given it from on high, and brought them to marvelous perfection. In the realm of thought Greece has been mistress of nations, and to perishable materials lent a form, exalting them to the height of the imperishable and inspired. No other nation, before or since, has been created fairer than Greece. But, here, you will ask why the Saviour did not appear to the fathers in those great days? Because what they did, and now call beautiful, only refers to the perishable form, to the exterior merely; and because a generation, which devoted its whole feeling and thought with so much inspired and devotional warmth to the beautiful—that is, the seeming—bore no affection toward the being, the true being, that has come down to us with the only begotten Son of God. But for all that the beautiful is beautiful; and should a time come in which the seeming is wedded with the being, in which the eternal truth will clothe itself in perfected form, then, yes, not till then, will be realized through the Saviour's grace what the fathers strove after in their great days.

"And this seeming or outward appearance that was so fondly nurtured by them, renders us glorious service, if we see well to it that we are not thus blinded and drawn away from the one thing needful. To whom but the heathenish Hellenists do the great teachers of the faith owe, next to God, the noble art of arranging their lofty thoughts and noble sentiments, and casting them into molds, which are comprehensible to Christians, and at the same time elevate, instruct and edify? In a heathen school of rhetoric has each one of your teachers, even I the poorest of them, gained the ability to communicate to you, my hearers, in flowing speech, that which the Spirit gives me to say. And if some day Christian schools arise in which our sons can acquire the like ability, then

many laws must remain in force there, discovered by the heathen. If we possess the means to erect churches in honor of the Most High, the Virgin, and the holy saints, which are worthy of their exalted greatness, then shall we have to thank for these the noble master-builders in heathen Hellas. For a thousand things of daily necessity, and innumerable others that adorn existence, are we indebted to heathenish arts. Yes, beloved, when we review all that they have done justice will not withhold from them two things, viz., thanks and admiration. And to God himself have the best among them been well pleasing, for he has let them behold from afar off what he has brought right near to us, and poured into our hearts through divine revelation. You are all familiar with the name of Plato. He, to whom salvation was a sealed book, with the seer's eye, has foreshadowed what stands revealed in clear, pure light before the eyes of us, the redeemed. He recognized the fact, that earthly beauty is related to heavenly truth. It is the great feeling of love that sustains and unites us all, and he, he has already named that enthusiastic drawing to the imperishable divine Eros, that is, godly love. At the head of the great staircase of ideas, which he erected, he placed the good, and for him goodness is the highest idea and the last attainable; goodness, whose reality he demonstrated with all the resources of his powerful and clear intellect. This heathen would have been worthy of the grace that blesses us. Practice justice toward the blinded, justice according to Plato's definition, who calls the virtue of reason wisdom, the virtue of courage valor, the control of the sensual moderation. Where these three rule together in harmony, there he finds what we call justice. Well, then, well! So, try all things, and hold fast that which is best; that is to say, weigh wisely whatever is valuable in the works or inventions of the heathen, that it be prized and kept; on the contrary, trample courageously under foot idolatry, which brings degradation into our midst, and threatens peril both to body and soul, yea, all that makes life precious; but, beloved, at the same time forget not what we owe to the heathen, and exercise moderation, keep within bounds; for then only will you, will we, be just. 'Not to hate, but to love are we here.' This sentence was spoken by no Christian, but by Sophocles, a great heathen, and it appeals to us!"

The old man drew a deep breath.

Dada had followed him attentively; but it delighted her to hear praised in this place, too, those whom she had been brought up to honor. Not until since Eusebius had begun to talk of Plato had she been disturbed; for, before her sat a haggard man with a long peaked head, and another smaller one of agreeable appearance. The first one had continually rocked himself to and fro, had pulled at the other's sleeve, and more than once made a gesture, as though he would jump up and interrupt the preacher in his sermon. Evidently this behavior was displeasing to the Christians around him, as was manifested by nods and soft whispers; but he heeded them not and kept on hawking aloud, and even shuffled with his feet while the deacon continued:

"And now, beloved, how are we to deport ourselves during the critical days of trouble just ahead? Like Christians—like Christians, on the model of our Master, conformably to the doctrine that

our Lord has communicated to us through his twelve apostles. Let them speak for me. They call to you:

"There are two ways, one of life, the other of death; but there is a great difference between the two ways. The way of life now is this: in the first place, you are to love God, your Creator; in the second, your neighbor as yourself. 'Whatever you would that men should do unto you, do you also to them.' But the doctrine contained in these words is: 'Bless those that curse you, and pray for your enemies, and bless those who persecute you, for what thank have ye, if ye love them that love you? Do not even the heathen the same?' But you are to love them that hate you, and you will have no enemy.

"These words of the twelve apostles I urge upon you to-day. Take heed of mocking and persecuting those who have been your enemies. To honor a conquered foe was also a duty beautifully performed by the noble among the heathen; for you, Christians, let it be a law. It is not so hard either to forgive an enemy when we see in him a future friend; and in loving him, too, the Christian succeeds when he reflects that every brother man is a neighbor, and is loved too by our Saviour, who is dearer to us than life.

"The heathen, the idolater, is the hereditary foe of the Christian; but soon he will lie chained at our feet, and then, then pray for him, be'oved; and since the Most High, who is without spot and namelessly great, forgives the sinner, surely we can forgive him, we who are small and full of sin. Fishers of men ye are to be; prove yourselves such! Draw your enemy to you through friendliness and love, show him by your example the beauty of the Christian life, let him recognize the benefit of salvation, lead those from whom we have taken our idols into our churches, and if we have rightly overcome, through faith, love, and prayer, those blinded ones over whom the sword triumphed, and they rejoice with us over redemption through Christ Jesus, then will there be one shepherd and one flock, and joy and peace take up their abode in this distracted city—"

Here the preacher was interrupted, for in the narthex* a wild hubbub arose, and to the loud shouts of battling men was joined the bellowing of an ox.

The congregation started from their seats in alarm, and now the door was burst open, and into the church rushed a band of heathen young men who had been set upon by double their number, and chased into the house of God. There they began anew to make desperate resistance. Crowns stripped of their leaves, and tattered garlands of flowers fluttered around the brows and shoulders of the worsted party.

In the neighborhood of St. Mark's church they had been attacked by monks, while they, in defiance of the new edicts, were driving a gayly decorated heifer to the temple of Apollo, and, in the confusion, the animal to be sacrificed had thrown himself with them into the narthex.

The struggle in the church did not last long. The idolaters were soon overcome; but Eusebius threw himself between them and the

* Anteroom for penitents in the old Christian basilica.

monks, and tried to rescue the vanquished from the hands of the raging victors.

The women had pressed to the door in their terror, but they ventured not to force their way into the narthex, for there the destined victim ran furiously around, pushing down whatever opposed him in his mad career.

At last the sword of a policeman struck him on the neck, and he fell bleeding to the ground.

Now all hurried past the prostrate heifer, and rushed frantically into the open square.

Dada found herself in the midst of the fugitives. She drew the boy along after her, although he resisted with all his might, and beside himself, dinned into her ear that Agnes was in the church and he wanted to go back to her. But the girl would not hear him, and in deadly anguish dragged him along at her side.

In front of Medius' house she paused for breath, and when the boy persisted in declaring that he had seen his sister in the house of God she turned to go back there with him. In the church no one any longer obstructed their progress, but she got no further than to the partition which separated the seats of the baptized from those of the unbaptized; for there lay many corpses with frightfully mangled limbs.

How they ever got back to Medius' house she did not know herself.

The cruel seriousness of life had come before her for the first time, and when the singer sought her in her own room that evening he was amazed to see the alteration in her appearance, for a shadow seemed to have fallen upon her bright countenance, and her eyes swam in tears. How bitterly she had wept Medius could not indeed suspect. He ascribed the change which had come over her to the peril impending, and was glad to be able to assure her in good faith that the danger was as good as over. The magician, Posidonius, had been with him, and completely assuaged his anxiety. This man, for whom he had often acted second part in illusory apparitions, exercised a great influence over him, since he had thrown him into a trance by mysterious means, and forced him to subject his own will to his *in toto*. And this wizard had now recovered his old assurance, and with his wonted assumption of infallibility, asseverated that the fall of Serapis would involve no further ill results than the crashing of an old, broken column. Since this Medius had smiled at his own anxiety: yes he had again become one of the "strong-minded," and when the magician had offered him three tickets of admission to the hippodrome, he had caught at them with both hands.

The races were to take place in spite of the panic which had seized upon the citizens, and upon his inviting Dada to share this rare pleasure with himself and daughter she quickly dried her eyes and thanked him joyfully.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GRAVE as was the outlook in the city of Alexandria, the races were nevertheless to be held next day. So it had been determined

a few hours before in the palace of Bishop Theophilus, and criers were already hurrying through the streets and public squares, in order to invite the citizens to that desirable spectacle.

In the office of "The Ephemeris"* very early in the morning would be given out, as had been dictated to half a thousand slaves of ready penmanship, what citizens were to let their horses run, what charioteers were to manage the coursers, and what prizes were to be distributed to the victors. They were to be bestowed upon Christians or heathen, indifferently.

The sultry air in the great assembly hall was oppressive, and oppressed in spirit, too, were the presbyters there present, for they purposed, this time, not to submit blindly to the mandates of their chief, and they knew that Theophilus could dart thunder-bolts, when contradicted.

Besides the spiritual lords there had assembled also the imperial envoy Cynegius, the city prefect Evagrius, and the commandant of the troops and Comes of Egypt, Romanus; the imperial officers, Roman statesmen, who knew Alexandria and its citizens, and had often felt the spiritual superiority of that prince of the church, held to him. The legate Cynegius wavered, but the presbyters, who could not rid themselves from the same apprehensions which had taken hold of the entire city, ventured to declare themselves as opposed to a too rash procedure, and to call the holding of games on days of such serious danger a presumptuous undertaking; yes, a criminal tempting of Providence.

To Theophilus' mocking query as to what the danger consisted in, if—the Comes will stand surely for that—the Serapeum falls on the morrow, one of the presbyters made answer in the name of his brethren. This man had earlier worked wonders as an exorcist, and was in all orthodoxy the head of a Gnostic sect, and passionately devoted to the study of magic. Long since grown gray, with the zeal and force of conviction, in an earnest discourse he represented that Serapis was the most to be dreaded of all heathenish demons, and that all the oracles of former times, the prediction of the prophets, as well as all the conclusions of the magicians and astrologers must deceive, if his downfall (which he and his brethren would, of course, regard as a great boon from on high) did not draw after it fatal convulsions of nature.

Now Theophilus gave the reins to his wrath, tore down the little crucifix from the wall where it hung over his bishop's seat, and broke it to pieces. At the same time he cried out with a deep voice, quivering from excitement:

"Whom do you esteem great, the only begotten Son of God, or yon silly idol?"

He flung the fragments of the venerated object which he had destroyed upon the table before the presbyters, who encircled it. Then, as though shocked at his own bold act, he cast himself upon his knees, uplifted hands and eyes beseechingly to heaven, and finally seized the splinters of the crucifix in order to kiss it.

The effect of his rash deed was powerful.

* The newspapers of the ancients, which, as in Rome, so, also in the other greatest capitals of the world, used to appear, and communicate to the citizens the most noteworthy news.

Horror and breathless suspense were depicted upon the features of those present, and not a hand, not a lip stirred, when Theophilus again rose up, proudly and defiantly measuring every individual with his stern eyes.

For a long time he kept silence, as though he expected a rejoinder; yet the repellent bearing of his majestic form said plainly that he held himself ready to crush opponents.

But none of the presbyters did gainsay him, and if among the imperial officers Evagrius looked on with a dubious shake of his prudent head, on the other hand the emperor's legate nodded at him approvingly. But this prince of the church seemed to trouble himself neither about the approbation nor displeasure of others, and certain of his cause, represented in brief, incisive sentences how wood and stone had nothing to do with deity, even though they bore the form of what is most sacred and worthy of veneration, or by the hand of man are superlatively decorated with the devil's bait of perishable beauty. The stronger is the demoniacal power ascribed by superstition to rude matter, whatever be the shape it bears, so much the more hateful should it be to the Christian. He who ascribes power to the will of a demon, though it be only to turn one breath of the Almighty according to its pleasure, let him beware of idolatry, for its satanic claws have already fast hold of his garment.

Upon this accusation, pale grew the cheek of many a presbyter, and not an objection was made, when the bishop desired them, if the strong temple of Serapis should fall into the hands of the Roman soldiery on the morrow, to destroy it without postponement and long reflection, and not to desist from the work of destruction until that proclamation of their city's shame shall have vanished from the earth.

"If the world breaks in pieces on that account," cried he, "well, then, the heathen are right, and we are wrong; and then to perish were delight; but so surely as I sit upon this throne, through the grace of God, just so surely is Serapis a vain figment of blind folly's brain, and there is no god save the God whom I serve."

"Hlis is the kingdom for ever and ever, amen!" chanted the eldest of the presbyters after him, and Cynegius declared that he would lay no obstruction in the way of war to the death against the idol.

The Comes now stood up to speak in defense of the order issued by the bishop, to let the racing take place the next morning.

He sketched a telling picture of the light, fickle-minded disposition of the Alexandrians, passionately addicted as they were to pleasure. The military over whom he had control was a small body in comparison with the number of heathen citizens, and it concerned him much to keep a great proportion of Serapis adorers at a distance from the threatened sanctuary at the decisive moment. Gladiatorial spectacles were interdicted, they had grown accustomed to fights between animals, but a race, in which heathen and Christians entered the lists against one another, must, just at this time of the hard contest between the two religions, exercise a mighty drawing power, and lure thousands of the most dangerous idolaters to the hippodrome. All this he had already weighed with the bishop and Cynegius; yes, this passionate destroyer of heathen temples had come

to Alexandria with a written permit from the emperor to destroy the temple of Serapis; but, as a cautious statesman, he had first ascertained whether the time and conjunction of circumstances were favorable for beginning the work of annihilation. What he had seen and heard here, had only strengthened his conviction, and after he had removed some scruples and exhorted to mildness, in the spirit of his commander, he gave orders, in the emperor's name, for the temple of Serapis to be taken by force of arms and destroyed; he also appointed the races for the morning of the next day.

The assembly bowed low in acquiescence, and after Theophilus had closed the session with a prayer, he withdrew to his tasteless study, humbly, with bowed head; not as though he had won a hard battle, but like one who had sustained a defeat.

The sentence of the great heathen idol had been sealed, but within the vast area of the Serapeum nobody thought of despair and speedy surrender.

The mighty sub-structure upon which rested this greatest of all the temples in the Hellenic world, faced its assailants with smooth, lightly escarped surface of indestructible firmness. A carriage was led across a richly adorned landing, and at the middle part of the beautiful bow that this described, arose a lofty double staircase, conducting to the three portals in the main front of this mammoth building.

The heathen had taken care to block up these approaches with all speed, and images of noble workmanship, statues and busts of kings and heroes, Mercuries, columns, monumental stones, sacrificial altars, seats and benches of skillfully chiseled bronze, had been hurled upon the road and steps that had been torn up and broken by a thousand hands.

The quadratic flagstones and the granite steps of the staircase had been heaped together for protecting walls, and these kept increasing long after the besiegers had approached the temple; for the heathen tore up paving-stones, little pillars, gutters, and long stone balcony-railings, from the crown of the roof, and cast them upon the rampart, and wherever it was possible upon the attacking troops, who, for the present, would not be tempted to do serious battle.

The leaders of the imperial legions had miscalculated the strength of the temple's defenders. They had supposed only a few hundred to have been thrown into it; but on the roof alone more than a thousand showed themselves, and with every hour the Serapeum seemed to fill more threateningly with heathen men and women.

The Romans supposed that these increasing numbers had been concealed, since the arrival of Cynegius, in the secret halls and chambers of the Serapeum, and did not suspect that they were continually gaining accessions.

Karnis, too, with Herse and his son, had come from Porphyrius' lumber-yard, through the dry canal, into the sanctuary, and a long, seldom broken stream of adherents to Serapis and the old worship had both preceded them and followed upon their track; while old Eusebins, in St. Mark's church, had been exhorting his congregation to exercise Christian love toward the besieged idolaters, heathen,

resolute for defense, had collected in the halls of the Serapeum to the number of four thousand.

A goodly host, but this edifice was of such gigantic proportions, the mass of those present and streaming hither filled only very scatteringly the roof, halls, and subterranean chambers and corridors. Nowhere was there any crowd, and least of all in the apartments of the temple proper; yes, in the grand rotunda, over which a cupola proudly arched, where comers were received, in the broad anteroom following, and in the unparalleled *hypostyle*, on the rear wall of which opened the semi-circular, tower-like niche containing the renowned image of Serapis, only isolated groups of men were to be seen: and even those appeared dwarfishly small, as measured by the eye, through the immensely long rows of pillars.

Only in the rotunda, with its four columns, exceeding all human measurement, shone the full light of day, coming in, as it did, through the window in the tympan upon which the cupola rested. In the vestibule reigned dim twilight, in the *hypostyle* a half darkness crossed by wondrous gleams of light, producing a mystical effect.

The shadows of the giant pillars in the vestibule, and of the double rows of those lining the colonnades on both sides of the *hypostyle*, lay like long strips of black crape upon the many-colored pavement, mosaic circles and eclipses edged and adorned the smooth surface of this faultlessly polished floor, and in it were mirrored the gorgeously painted astrological devices on the stone roofs, the processions of the gods and mythological groups, that decorated the walls, in skillfully executed, brilliantly-colored *alto-relievo*, as well as the statues and Mercuries between the pillars.

A superabundance of fine forms and coloring here met the eye in overwhelming confusion, the breath felt oppressed by the sweet streams of incense, pervading these halls, and the magical, mystical, original signs, figures and shapes were so many, that the unsatisfied mind, thirsting after explanation and the signification of the unknowable and mysterious, delayed nearer approach to any one thing.

Like a thick cloud which conceals some mountain summit, flowed down to the ground, in front of the niche where was the image of Serapis, a heavy curtain, which giants seemed to have woven at a loom of superhuman size. It fell in beautiful folds from the top of the hypostyle to the floor, and, while it hid the god from profane looks, it fastened the gaze upon the world of mysteriously beautiful and strange figures, with which it was inwoven and embroidered.

The gold and silver plate and the precious stones, which this drapery concealed, had higher value than the treasury of a mighty monarch. And all this seemed so overpoweringly great that, beside it, man shudderingly felt his own insignificance, that the spirit sought after new standards of measurement, in order to fit itself to such unusual circumstances.

The infinite and immeasurable seemed here to border upon the finite; and he who, with head bent back, looked up to the tops of the pillars, and the unattainable height of the roofs, felt the powers of his healthy vision fail before he had succeeded in taking in or apprehending even a small portion of the teeming images and figures thereon inscribed.

And yet here, where Greek beauty was combined with the gorgeousness and grandeur of the East, the tiniest thing could bear scrutiny; for there was no architectural form, no work of the sculptor, painter, worker in brass, mosaicist or weaver, which did not bear the stamp of genuine merit and high perfection. The brownish-red, mottled porphyry, the white, yellow and red marble profusely bestowed here, were the finest and purest which Greek hands had ever fashioned. Each one of the thousand pieces of sculpture to be found here was the masterpiece of a great artist; and whoever devoted himself lovingly to examination of the mosaics on the dazzlingly polished floors, or whoever scrutinized closely the ornamental slabs, which framed the *alto-relievos* and partitioned the wall into sections, must have been smitten with wonder and admiration at the magical beauty, the elegance and copiousness of invention, which lent even to these small works grandeur, charm and significance.

Hundreds of courts, halls, corridors and chambers were annexed to these immense apartments dedicated to culture, or spread themselves out in divers stories underneath.

There were long rows of chambers, holding more than a hundred thousand volumes, which constituted the famous library of the Serapeum. With these were connecting reading and writing rooms; here were dining, waiting, and assembly rooms for the superintendents of the temple; for teachers and scholars, there pungent odors issued from laboratories, and appetizing ones from the kitchens and bakeries. Within the strong walls of the basement lay the forsaken cells of the penitents, and the dwellings of the lower employés and slaves of the temple, who were reckoned by the hundred; in the subterranean regions opened that mysterious world of halls, grottoes, passages and caverns appointed for initiation into the mysteries and practice of the same; and upon the roof of the sanctuary were erected observatories, and here still rose up the great watch-tower whence an Eratosthenes and Claudius Ptolemy had studied the stars. Astronomers, astrologers, tellers of the hours and magicians there passed their nights; deep under them, in the temple courts, about which stables and magazines ranged themselves, flowed the blood of victims, and were inspected the entrails of the heifers and sheep slaughtered.

Yes, the abode of Serapis was a world on a small scale, and the centuries had superabundantly supplied it with beauty and the noblest gifts of art and science. Magic and sorcery wove about it a mysterious, mystic charm, and philosophy had linked deep and manifest speculations with the nature of Serapis. Assuredly, this sanctuary was the heart of Hellenic life in Alexander's city! What wonder, if the heathen fancied that at the fall of Serapis and his abode, the whole earth must perish with it!

With timidly beating hearts had they poured into the Serapeum expecting to go to ruin with their god; and yet full of enthusiastic desire to prevent his fall.

What a marvelous mixture of men and women had this day found themselves together within these hallowed precincts!

Grave scholars, philosophers, grammarians, mathematicians, physicists, surgeons, adhered to Olympius and silently followed him. Rhetoricians with smooth faces, magicians and sorcerers,

whose long beards flowed over robes embroidered with singular devices; students clad like their predecessors in the palmy days of Athens; men of every age, who called themselves artists, and yet who only knew how to imitate what greater times had created—unfortunates, who, at this epoch of the annihilation of the beautiful, found nobody to cherish their abilities, and stimulate them to embody in actuality their higher ideals.

Play-actors from the theaters which had been put down; breadless tragedians whose theaters had been closed by emperor and bishop; singers and flute-players, hungry priests and temple-servants, who had been expelled from heathen sanctuaries; advocates, scribes, sea-captains, handicraftsmen, and few merchants besides; for Christianity had ceased to be the religion of the poor, and property-holders attached themselves to the faith favored by the authorities.

His female favorite had followed one of the students, and seeing this, forthwith others of his fellows had gone back to the city and returned with their sweethearts and their friends. So, then, mixed up with the men, was a great number of wreathed and bedizened women, servant-maids thrust forth from the temples, and priestesses of better reputation, who remained true to the old gods or were addicted to magic.

In striking contrast with these women showed a tall and dignified matron in black mourning garb. It was Berenice, the mother of the young heathen who had been ridden down and wounded upon the Prefecture Place, and whose eyes had been closed by Eusebius. She had come into the Serapeum to aid in avenging her son's death, and to perish with the gods for whom he had imperiled his life. The wild commotion around distressed her, and wholly absorbed in woe, and deeply veiled, for long hours she kept her place at the foot of the bronze statue of Justice,* silently looking on the ground.

Olympius had intrusted the superintendence of the men capable of bearing arms to the hoary-headed legate Memnon, an experienced general, who had lost his left arm in battle with the Goths, and was sometimes troubled with reducing this heterogeneous little army to obedience to the veteran; sometimes he had to compose differences, to untangle wild disorder and regulate excesses, again to issue orders which had reference to the maintenance of his forces, and the great sacrifice in which he wanted to unite all those loyal to Serapis.

Karnis kept close by his side, lending him a helping hand wherever such a thing was possible. Orpheus had been ordered to the roof along with other young men, and there had a hard time in the burning sunshine, upon hot copper plates, and beside the square stones and columns of the glowing cupola which they expected next morning to hurl upon the assailants.

Dame Herse nursed the sick and wounded; for some few, who had rashly exposed their persons at the blocking up of the approaches, had been reached by the arrows and lances of troopers, inactive though they were; and a far greater number of heathen youth had come to grief while at work upon the roof through sun-stroke or ailments of that sort.

* Punishing and rewarding, according to the Egyptian conception of her character.

In the spacious halls of the temple it was cooler than in the glowing streets of the city, and time passed swiftly with the besieged.

Many of them had to work with their hands or keep guard, others exchanged opinions, disputed, or went off into dissertations upon that which should and must be. Many cowered upon the ground overcome by anguish, or religious awe, praying, muttering adjurations, and weeping. Magicians and astrologers with their followers had withdrawn into side-rooms and compared tables, in order to calculate, to prognosticate, to seek for new formulas, and to defend them against attacks. Between them and the library was an unbroken stream of comers and goers, and the tables were covered with rolls and tablets which contained old prophecies, horoscopes, and effective conjurations. Messenger after messenger, on behalf of repose, went from them into the great halls, where hundreds of young men with their girls were dancing, kissing, and wildly careering to the sound of shrill pipes and the twanging of stringed instruments, shaking in their hands the clashing tambourine, that they might make merry use of the few hours yet allotted them, ere they must take that leap into nothingness, or be swallowed up by the uncertain shadow of death.

Thus the sun drew near its setting, and now suddenly resounded through the vast area of the temple the thundering, shattering, deafening roar of its mighty gong.

Like surging waves of a sonorous sea, rolled back the echoes of that mighty brazen voice from the hard walls of the sanctuary. How it rushed and roared through every corner of that gigantic building, from the highest chamber on the astronomers' watch-tower to the lowest depths of the darkest dungeon, and called all together who had found their way into the house of Serapis.

The sacred rooms filled up from the rotunda, an ever-increasing stream forced its way into the vestibule, and soon the *hypostyle*, too, was crowded with men and women.

Without distinction of age or sex, without respect to the usual forms, and the higher or lower degree of consecration which each one had received, the worshipers of Serapis pressed toward the venerated niche, until their progress was stayed by a chain which *neokoren** had stretched across at a certain distance, from the unapproachable semi-circle. Shoulder to shoulder in breathless silence the parishioners of the king of gods awaited what was to come in the body of the *hypostyle*, and its adjoining corridors.

Soon was heard a low chant as sung by male voices.

It lasted only a few minutes, when there burst forth a thundering salute to the god, accompanied by flutes, cymbals, lutes and the beating of kettle-drums.

Each one had lifted up eyes and hands, gazing upon the curtain in feverish suspense.

Deep twilight veiled the images and signs upon the immense tapestry; but now, now came life into the rigid folds, now they stirred, now began to run like streams, brooks, water-veins, that flow after having been long dammed up; now the curtain was lowered, and now, now it fell suddenly, and so quickly that the eye

* Temple-servants.

could hardly follow its movement. And now rang from a thousand lips, as from a single mouth, a cry of admiration, astonishment and rapture, for Serapis had revealed himself to his own.

In full dignity sat the majestic form of the god upon his golden throne, which was studded with precious stones. Thoughtfully and seriously looked down upon his worshipers that handsome, benignant countenance. The rich masses of curls that framed his wise brow, and the *kalathos*,* which rested upon the crown of his head were of virgin gold. At his feet lay the Cerberus, stretching forth his triple head whence flashed rubies with fire-like gleam. The noble body and garments of the god were of gold and ivory—a model of power in repose.

Perfectly harmonious, faultlessly beautiful in entirety as in the smallest of its parts, was this image of superhuman power and divine majesty. If this prince rose from his seat, why of course the earth must tremble and the heavens quake.

Before such a king even the strong bowed with joy, for no mortal man ever rejoiced in such exalted beauty. This ruler of the universe triumphed over every adversary, even death, the monster, which crouched in impotent fury at his feet.

With bated breath, thrilled by pious awe, enraptured and yet dumb from reverential fear, looked up those thousands at the wondrous form of their god, as seen through the veil of gathering twilight. And now—oh moment without parallel!—an envoy from the sinking sun, a bright sunbeam broke through the blue vault of the niche that was strewn with golden stars, as though it would kiss the lips of the god, its father, and its sovereign.

Then, like the roaring of thunder, and the dashing of the surf against a rocky cliff, rang forth so overpowering a shout of joy from the breast of the assembled multitude, that the statues and brazen altars in the vast hall shook, the curtains trembled, the tools for sacrificing clattered, the hanging lamps and chandeliers began to oscillate, and its echo bounded back from the wall, like a rushing torrent in a flood, and broken into a hundred streams, waved from pillar to pillar.

Behold the great orb of day acknowledged its master, Serapis was still enthroned with unbroken omnipotence; it was not he who was found lacking in ability to protect himself, his world and his own!

After sundown darkness quickly fell upon the temple, when, lo! suddenly there was a flickering of light in the vault arching over the god. The stars were in commotion, touched by invisible hands, and from many hundreds of five-rayed points flashed variegated flames in gorgeous splendor. In a flood of bright-hued, magical light, the god once more showed himself to his people, and now for the first time in his full, noble, individual beauty.

Again the temple resounded with the jubilant shouts of enthusiastic heathen, and now appeared Olympius in floating robe, with the fillet and insignia of the high-priest before the pedestal of his god's image. He poured out a drink-offering before the heavenly one from a golden chalice, scattered costly incense, and in eloquent speech challenged the liege men of Serapis to battle for their god

* *Kalathos* or *modius*, viz., the measure of grain upon the head of Serapis.

and conquer, or, if it must be so, to perish for him, and with him. Then, with far-reaching voice, he uttered a fervent prayer that came from the depth of his heart and found its way to the hearts of all present.

Now the curtain rose again amid the solemn chanting of a choral hymn, and while thousands followed its ascent in silent devotion, temple-servants moved to and fro, lighting the lamps on the roofs, walls, and pillars.

Karnis had let go his hold of his dear ones, for he needed his hand in order to wipe away the tears that had flowed over his old cheeks, in this great hour of consecration; the mother was held in close embrace by her son, and Porphyrius, who had fallen in with kindred spirits, nodded to the singers, with a glance full of meaning.

CHAPTER XIX.

ONE hour after sundown the sacrifice of oxen in the great court of the Serapeum was over. The god (so announced the augurs) had accepted it—the inspection of the entrails had resulted more auspiciously than on yesterday.

The flesh of the slaughtered bees went immediately to the kitchens, and if the odor of roast meat was as pleasant to Serapis as to his worshipers, then might they reckon upon a favorable issue to their resistance.

In the upper rooms of the temple a cheerful feeling soon spread itself among the besieged; for Olympius had supplied them bountifully with grape-juice from the stores of the sanctuary, and as a consequence of the salutation to Serapis and the sacrifice turning out so auspiciously, new confidence and festal joy now became their portion.

Since couches were lacking, the question was how to turn night into day; and, inasmuch as life among the most of them was staked upon the enjoyment of the moment, and the new and strange ever appeared charming to them, they were soon roistering in madly merry mood.

Of cushions there were none, such as they had been accustomed to recline upon when eating and drinking, and so now they picked up the most wonderful utensils, and changed them into impromptu seats. Where beakers were lacking they let pitchers circulate, or sacrificial chalices and similar ware pass from mouth to mouth. The head of many a young man rested upon the lap of his sweetheart, many a girl leaned against the back of an old man; and as flowers were wanting, messengers were sent out to fetch blossoms, green branches, and vine leaves from the city.

Such were easily procured, and those returning messengers brought the news that the races would take place in the morning.

This intelligence was of great importance to many; and when Nikarch, the son of rich Hippokleides, and the tapestry weaver Zenodotus, whose span of four-in-hand had already come off victors once before, and with which he hoped to win the wreath this time, too, rapidly withdrew, in order to make the necessary arrangements in the stables, Hippias, the fine charioteer, followed, who had been accustomed to drive in the arena the steeds of great merchants,

These three drew after them horse-lovers, friends of the charioteers, flower-dealers, renters of seats, in short, many who promised themselves at the hippodrome especial gain or enjoyment. Each individual thought that defense was not his sole concern; and since the god is favorably inclined, he is well able to take care of his own sanctuary until after the races were over. Then they would return, to conquer or die with the rest.

Many thought, too, of wife and child, and the good bed at home, and so were thinned the ranks of the carousers. Nevertheless, far the larger half of those gathered here remained, to the number of more than three thousand men and women.

These gladly took possession of the half-emptied wine-jugs of their vanished comrades; merry music was provided, and they drank, sang, and danced, with bright garlands on their heads and shoulders, until far into the night. Their rejoicing soon became a mad revel, while loud shouts and roistering outcries again disturbed the magicians, who had grown absorbed anew in calculating, reading, and contending over their tablets and parchment-rolls.

The mother of the slaughtered youth cowered still beneath the statue of Justice, and patiently endured having her heart wrung by their shouts of drunken merriment. Each peal of laughter, each outbreak of mad excess over there cut her to the quick, and yet it would have sounded lovely in her ears, if only one more had been added to those thousand voices.

When Olympius, with head on high, still in the rich dress of his office, traversed the temple halls at the head of the other priests, he too remarked her, whom he had known as a proud, happy mother, and begged her to follow him to the friends whom he had invited to his table; but she shrunk from social intercourse with men whom she knew, and kept her station beneath the statue of the goddess.

Wherever the high-priest showed himself he was greeted with enthusiasm. Brightly and cheerfully he called to the revelers, "Make merry, friends!" enlivening them with witty, kindling words, and reminding them of Pharaoh Mykerinus. An oracle had foretold that he had only six more years to live; and thereupon to prove this to be a lying prophecy he had spent all his nights in reveling, and thus made a whole dozen out of the six years granted him.

"Imitate him!" cried he, lifting up a goblet, "yes, compress into the few hours allotted to us the enjoyment of a year! From each glass that you carry to your lips, pour out to the gods as I do here!"

Uproarious applause followed this lively challenge; flutes and cymbals unbidden added their quota in full, copper beakers clanked merrily together, and many a little fist beat upon the tambourine, so that the calfskin groaned, and the little bells on the rim rang out joyously.

Olympius thanked them, and with kindly greetings passed on his way through groups of his own people.

Seldom had his heart beat as high. Perhaps his end was not far distant, but it should be one worthy of him!

He knew how the sunbeams had been deflected, that had kissed the mouth of Serapis. For centuries this surprising spectacle and

sudden illumination of the ceiling over the god's head had been played off at high festivals as had been the case to-day; but those were only lures for the multitude, whose dull minds must be impressed by the wonder-working power of the god, which the elect recognized everywhere in the magical combinations of all the forces and phenomena in nature and in human life. As for himself, he believed firmly in the might of Serapis, and the predictions and calculations from which it had been ascertained, that his fall would occasion the return into chaos of the world as it is.

Many winds blew over the world, all driving the ship of life deathward: whether she gets there to-day or to-morrow, what of it? The approaching end of all things did not frighten Olympius. Only one thing filled his vanity with regret; there would be no generations to follow after who should extol his heroic exploits, and sacrifice of life, for the sake of the gods!

But all was not lost yet; and his sunny nature saw in the flush of the sunset sky the promise of the glorious dawn of a coming morning. If the expected succor appeared, the good cause in Alexandria here would conquer, and the exaltation of all the heathen Greek world be complete; then would father and mother have rightly called him Olympius, for then would he exchange with none of the Olympian gods, then should the fame of his name be more enduring than marble or brass, continuing to shine with the luster of a sun so long as a Greek heart honors the old gods and loves its country.

This night—perhaps his last one—should be a rarely glorious festal occasion; and so he had summoned his friends and intimate associates, the leaders of intellectual life in Alexandria, to a symposium in the sense of the great sages and philosophers of ancient Athens, to take place in the assembly-room of the Serapis priests.

How very differently did it look here from the council-room in the bishop's house!

The Christians assembled around a wretched table, encompassed by naked walls, and occupying wooden chairs. The vast apartment, to which Olympius had invited his friends, was a regal hall magnificently furnished with costly wainscoting, embossed metal, crimson hangings, and rich in treasures of art.

Luxurious cushions covered with lions' and panthers' skins invited to repose; and when the much-honored man joined his guests, after making a progress through the temple, all the couches were closely occupied.

Helladius, the renowned grammarian and high-priest of Zeus, lay upon his right hand. Porphyrius, the benefactor of the Serapeum, upon his left; Karnis, too, had found a place among the guests of his old friend, and how he did enjoy the delicious wine that circulated here, as well as the witty and lively conversation, of which he had been so long deprived. Olympius had been unanimously elected symposiarch, and had challenged his friends to occupy themselves, in the first place, with the old question as to what is the highest good.

They all, said he, stood, as it were, upon the threshold, and like travelers who have forsaken a dear old home, in order to seek for a new, uncertain one in the distance, once more ask each other what

has been best and most thankworthy of what they have enjoyed under the protection of their old household gods; so it became them, in this hour, to picture what had been the highest good of their existence upon earth. Yes, they stood, perhaps, on the eve of a glorious victory; but, perhaps, too, on the bridge which unites the shore of life with the boat of Charon.

Such stuff was familiar to each one, and, in a trice, an animated discussion was in progress. Assuredly the talk here was more flowery and showy than in ancient Athens, but the conversation did not lead to the fathoming and elucidation of the old question. The disputants only brought forward what had been earlier thought and called the highest good; and when Helladius called upon them, in the first place, to pronounce clearly upon the nature of human beings, there ensued a brilliant argument upon the question: "Is man the best or the worst of living creatures?"

At the same time, there was much to be heard of the mystic connection between the spiritual and material worlds, and startling was the power of imagination with which these wonderful thinkers had peopled with demons and spirits all the steps of the staircase, which linked the incomprehensible, self-existent One with that manifestation of divine form, Man.

They understood now, why many an Alexandrian feared to throw a stone, because he feared to strike one of the good spirits with which the air was teeming.

The more obscure were the propositions, the more victoriously image and metaphor trod down simple words, and yet the speakers rejoiced in the brilliancy of their rhetoric, and the fullness of their ideas. They supposed themselves to have grasped the supernatural by dint of mind and imagination, and in their idle speculations, to have advanced far above the ancients.

Karnis was enraptured; and Porphyrius wished that Gorgo was by his side, for, like all fathers, he would have preferred his child's experiencing what he deemed high intellectual joy, to enjoying it himself.

In his house, meanwhile, it looked sultry and miserable. In spite of the dreadful heat, old Damia had not descended from her observatory on the roof, where were to be found scrolls, instruments, and whatever else was needed by the astrologer and magician.

A priest of Saturn, who had won for himself a name by his proficiency in these arts, and for years past had come to her aid when she wished to apply to occult science in any emergency, was today, too, found in place. He handed her the astrological tables, drew circles and ellipses, inscribed triangles and other figures at her dictation, reminded her of the mystical significance of numbers and characters, which sometimes escaped her failing memory, calculated for her, applied tests to her and his own products, and read aloud to her the conjurations which she judged efficacious in a given case. Often, too, he showed her new ways, and proposed novel formulas which might compass her end.

According to the prescription, she had fasted from early morning, and as the heat of the day increased, was often overpowered by sleep in the midst of her work. If she started up, then, and her assistant had meanwhile arrived at conclusions which contradicted

her preconceptions, she reprimanded him sharply and compelled him to go over again the finished reckoning.

Gorgo frequently went up to her, but although she brought her refreshments with her own hands and offered them, she could not move the old lady even so much as to moisten her lips with fruit juice; for to break her fast would have been to call in question the result of her work.

While she seemed to sleep, the maiden sprinkled the room with strong essences, poured some of them upon her grandmother's gown, carefully wiped the beads of perspiration from her brow, and fanned her into coolness.

The old lady submitted to all this; and although she had only closed her weary eyes and assumed the appearance of one asleep, in order to feast upon the tender solicitude of her darling.

Toward noon she sent the magician away, in order to gain strength through a short nap, and after she awoke, she collected all her faculties, and with grave assiduity resumed her labors.

When she had reached the conclusion, she knew that nothing could avert the frightful calamity predicted by the old oracles. The fall of Serapis and the end of the world were surely just ahead.

The magician hid his head, when he overlooked the processes by which she had come to this conclusion, and groaned in undisguised horror; but she dismissed him with calmness, handing him the purse, which she had newly filled that morning, saying with a bitter smile: "For the hours between now and the end."

Then—the sun had long since crossed its zenith—she leaned back exhausted, and directed Gorgo not to allow any one to disturb her, nor to return herself until she should call her.

No sooner was she left alone, than she looked for a long while into a shining mirror, at the same time repeating the five vowels without cessation, and then she gazed expectantly upward.

This singular proceeding was to lead to a certain result. Her aim was to die to the whole world of the senses, viz.: to make herself blind, deaf, and insensible to everything corporeal, that was parting, with its contaminating burden, her spiritual, godly nature from its heavenly source.

Freed from its earthly shackles, her soul was to look upon the god whence she sprung.

After long fasting and struggling, she had, already several times, nearly attained this aim, and had never forgotten the intoxicating delight of those hours, in which it had been with her as though she were floating in immeasurable space airily as a zephyr surrounded by light indescribably glorious.

The faintings, which she had already long felt, came to further her purpose, for soon she felt a slight tremor, cold sweat oozed from her pores, her limbs seemed to give way, she saw and heard nothing more; she felt as though not the lungs only, but every part of her body inhaled cooling breath, and before her eyes coursed confusedly light circles, in red and dark violet blue. Did they receive their strange splendor from the eternal light that she sought? Did not a mysterious power already hit her upward, to meet her highest aim? Had the soul freed itself from the body's chains! Had she

already become one with the Godhead? Had the search after God produced Identity with God?

No! For the arms, which she had spread out like wings, now sunk down, and all had been in vain! A slight pain in those old feet had again remanded her to the wretched world of the senses, above which she sought to soar.

Again and again she snatched at her mirror, looked into it, and then gazed skyward, but just so often as the bodily sensations ceased to assert themselves, and the freed soul began to flap her unfettered wings, there came a sound, a quivering muscle, a fly, that touched her hand, a drop of perspiration seeking to make its way from the forehead to the cheek, all to aid the senses in maintaining their rights.

How hard it was to rid one's self of adhering clay!

The sculptor who chisels the superfluous off of a block of marble, in order to retain the image of a god, was her model, but the superfluous was more easily removed from the stone than from the soul knitted so long closely with the corporeal.

And yet she did not cease to wrestle tenaciously after the attainment that others had made before her, but it came no nearer to her, rather, it retreated to an ever remoter distance; for between her and what she strove after, projected itself a series of pictured memories and strange visions, that would not be exorcised. The chisel slipped, was turned aside, lost its sharpness, before the divine image emerged from its encasing stone.

One illusion of the senses after another crowded upon her.

First she saw her Gorgo, the idol of her heart. Pale and beautiful she lay upon a foaming wave that bore her aloft upon its briny back, and then hurled her into the yawning abyss, that opened beneath her.

She too, young, hardly mature as she was, was voted to the common destruction; she, too, was to be broken by the same dreadful hand, that dared to fell the highest of the gods.

Indomitable hatred drove her far away from the goal she sought, and now the phantasmagoria changed, and she saw a wildly fluttering flock of coal-black ravens, describing silent circles in the mist, at an unattainable height above her; but suddenly they vanished, and now from the gray fog plainly emerged the monument of Porphyrius' deceased wife, Gorgo's mother.

How often had she approached it with emotion, but now she did not want to see it, not now, and it disappeared at her desire too; but in its stead appeared the image of her son's lovely wife, the same who rested within that costly monument, and to do battle with that face broke her will-power. And, nevertheless, it showed her the deceased, taking that last most fatal walk of her life.

A solemn procession moved from the lofty door of her house out upon the street, in festal array. At its head were flute-players and singing-girls, then came a white ox, its mighty neck twined about with a bright red wreath of pomegranate flowers, the blossoms of the tree, which, with its kernelly fruit, was a symbol of fruitfulness. Its horns were gilded, and at its side walked slaves with white baskets full of bread, cake and flowers, in gay confusion. Others followed after, with light blue cages, in which perched geese and

doves. The ox, the flour cakes, the flowers and birds were destined for the sanctuary of Ilithyia, to be brought in offering to that friendly goddess, who stood by lying-in women.

Behind the ox stepped Gorgo's mother, beautifully crowned with flowers, her gait that of a woman near confinement. How modestly and piously were her eyes cast down! She evidently thought upon the coming hour of trial, and accompanied the sacrifice with silent prayer.

Damia herself followed her with lady friends of the family, clients, their wives and her own waiting-maids. All carried pomegranates in the right hand, and in the left gay garlands of flowers, which she had freely and kindly woven.

Thus they proceeded until they got to Clement's dock; but there they encountered some wild monks from the Nitrian cloisters, and when these beheld the victim, they were loud in their censures and reviled the heathen. The slaves indignantly repelled them. Then the hollow-cheeked wearers of sheep-skin rushed with thongs upon the innocent animal to be slaughtered, that was an abomination to them, and the steer lifted up his powerful head, turned, bellowing to the right and left, stiffened his tail, broke away from the gayly decked boys, whom hitherto he had patiently followed, slung one of the monks high into the air upon his branching horns, turned and ran raging upon the women who followed him.

They scattered, like a flock of doves, upon which a hawk has pounced. Some had been forced into the lake, others against the inclosure of the dock, and she too, who was living through all this for the second time, midway to union with the divine nature, she was dashed to the ground with the pregnant woman, to whom she extended her hands.

Gorgo owed her life to this torturing hour, while her mother reaped death for her sake. On the following morning there was a funeral in Alexandria, grand, solemn, and pompous, as if a victorious general were being borne to the grave. As for the monk gored by the steer, the bishop had made proclamation, that for his resistance to the abomination of bloody sacrifices to idols he had won an everlasting crown in paradise.

The ravens, those black ravens began again to flap their wings before Damia's eyes, and a glorious young Greek hero cheerily drove them away with his Thyrsian staff.

His powerful, supple limbs still shone from their anointing for the Timagetian ring, the theater of his victory in all the exercises of youth. He bore the features, he had the ringleted hair of her son Apelles; and now he was transformed, and his form had the emaciated aspect of a penitent, and his knees bent beneath the burden of a heavy cross: Maria, his widow, had stamped him the favorite of the gods, with the cognomen of martyr for the cause of the crucified Jew, making a false assumption for him, in the presence of his own son and all men.

Damia doubled up her trembling fingers, and now again appeared the ravens, circling above the prostrate penitent with a wild flapping of their wings.

Then came forward her own husband to meet her composedly, without paying any heed to these birds of ill omen. Thus had he

come to her, many, many years ago, saying laughingly: "The best bargain of my life! For a cup of water I am to furnish Thessalonica and Constantinople with corn; a hundred golden *solidi* for every drop!"

Fortunate merchant! The earnings of that day had been tenfold, and water, simple water from the Nile—"baptismal water," the priest called it—had filled the coffers of his son likewise, and from the original hide of land expanded into vast estates; but this water, this simple water silently demanded a return for its gifts, and this both father and son had declined to give. Through its power, whatever they touched was transmuted into gold, but upon the happiness and peace of the house it had fallen like mildew.

One branch that had grown out of its old Macedonian stock was severed from the other; between it and the parent trunk in Canopian Street surged like a deep sea, salted with corroding hatred, that great falsehood of her deceased husband.

That falsehood had poisoned a thousand hours for her son, forcing the proud man to resign the dignity of the free and noble-thinking. At heart with the old gods, he had, every year more than once, to humble himself and bow the knee, in a Christian church before the crucified One, and publicly confess him, in company with the hated professors of a different faith. That water, that horrible gold-dispensing water, it was attached more firmly to him than the brand upon the arm of a marked slave. It could not be wiped off, nor rubbed off, for if the false Christian and enthusiastic friend of the Olympian gods openly acknowledged this, and abjured that despised new faith, then the gifts of that wonder-working water, yes all the possessions of that ancient house fell to church and state, while Porphyrius' children, the grandchildren of the rich Damia, were beggared.

And all this, all on account of the crucified Jew!

Praise and thanks be to the gods! The end of this misery was close at hand.

A shiver of delight thrilled her as she reflected, that with her and hers all that was called Christian would be crushed to powder, annihilated. She would have laughed aloud if her throat had not been parched up, and her tongue so dry; but her features expressed triumphant scorn, and in the midst of the ravens, who circled closer and closer about her, she saw Marcus, the son of Maria, driving the singer-girl Dada through Canopian Street, while her hated daughter-in-law looked after them and beat her breast in woe.

Seized with intoxicating delight, she rocked to and fro upon her arm-chair; but not for long, because those black birds seemed to fill the whole apartment, and described an ever-contracting circle about her with rapid, endless strokes. She heard them not, but could see them, and the eddying current in their wake whirred past her, and she had to follow it with her head, until she was seized with vertigo, and forced to catch hold of something for a firm support.

Cowering, her hands clutching convulsively the arms of her chair, there sat the old lady, like a rider who is dragged around the avenue in a ring by a runaway horse, until her senses forsook her,

and galled by overexertion and fatigue she sunk to the floor, rigid and as it were lifeless.

CHAPTER XX.

Gorgo had enjoyed no repose after being dismissed by her grandmother. The noble tranquillity of her deportment had changed to fitfulness that appeared unnatural in her, since from an impetuous child she had grown into a maidenly young woman.

The attempt to rid herself of the anxiety which oppressed her breathing, and the pain at her heart which stung like a wound, by singing and playing on the lute had only augmented her restlessness. The remedy which had hitherto always availed to restore its lost equilibrium to her soul had become inefficacious, and Sappho's love-song, which she had begun to sing, had intensified, as it were, the emotions of her own heart, and stirred them into renewed activity. She had become conscious that every fiber, every nerve of her being was consecrated to the one man whom she loved. She would have thrown away life as a thing of nought for one hour's sweet intercourse with the object of this devotion. Belief in the old gods, the heathen world containing the ideals of her young heart, her opposition to Christianity, her noble art, in short all that constituted the charm of her life, was thrown into the shade compared with this one affection that was absorbing her soul. All, all drove her to give herself up unreservedly to her beloved, and nevertheless, not an instant did she hesitate as to which side she should take in the approaching collision between the powers governing the world.

These past hours had changed to confidence her belief that the end of all things was at hand. The destruction of the world drew on; she purposed to perish united with Constantine, and that appeared to her a precious boon from the gods.

While Damia had exhausted her strength in endeavoring to break her soul loose from its bonds terrestrial, Gorgo went sometimes to the distressed slaves, in order to raise their spirits, and save them, through occupation, from blank despair; sometimes she mounted to the roof to find out if indeed her grandmother were not needing her yet.

When darkness fell she had remarked that several servant-maids, and with them, a few men, had run off. They had earlier shown partiality for the new faith, and now made their escape to Christian associates, or had taken refuge in some church, in order to place themselves under the protection of the crucified God, whose great power could perhaps stay the coming ruin.

Porphyrius had sent one messenger who should inform his mother and herself that he was well, that the Serapeum had found a goodly number of defenders, and that he would spend the night in the sanctuary. There was an evident hesitation on the part of the Romans, and if the heathen should succeed next morning in repelling their first attack, succor might yet arrive in time.

This hope Gorgo did not share; for a client of her father's had brought the news that the Biamites, who had come to Naucratis, had been there dispersed by a few imperial maniples. Destiny went on her way, and no power could divert her from her course.

The evening brought no coolness, and when night had fully come, and still her grandmother did not call, Gorgo could not restrain her growing anxiety, and after knocking in vain at the door, entered the observatory.

Her nurse had preceded her with a lamp: both women paused upon the threshold, petrified with horror, for before them lay the gray-haired old lady on the floor. The back of her head leaned against the seat of the chair, from which she had slid down, and her pale countenance, ghastly and bereft of animation, looked toward them, with half-closed eyes and wide-open mouth.

Wine, water, cordials were at hand; the couch, ordinarily destined to rest the star-gazer, received the unconscious form; and, after some minutes, the women succeeded in restoring the old lady to life.

With wandering glance she looked into the face of Gorgo, who was kneeling at her side, and murmured softly to herself: "The ravens! Where are the ravens?"

Then she let her eyes rove over the tablets and rolls which had been pushed off of the couch and table in order to make room for her, the lamp and medicaments.

They lay around upon the pavement, and this glance called forth in her a healthy and rousing indignation, so that she found strength, although hoarsely, and in hardly intelligible, broken sentences, to scold at such disregard of those sacred writings, and the disorder into which they had fallen.

While the nurse picked up the writings, Damia again fell into a swoon.

Gorgo rubbed her forehead, and tried to introduce a little wine between her lips; but the old lady only closed them tighter, until the nurse came to her young mistress' assistance. Then they succeeded in giving her a few drops of the refreshing liquors; and immediately the old lady opened her eyes, moved her tongue quickly, as if the taste had gratefully touched her palate, then seized the goblet herself, drew it to her mouth, and although the glass swayed so violently to and fro that half its contents were spilled, she swallowed and swallowed, until it was completely emptied. Then she cried out with the avidity of the starving: "More, more; I must drink!"

Gorgo handed her a second glassful and immediately afterward a third, and Damia emptied this too with equal eagerness.

Then she drew a long breath of satisfaction, directed a look of revived intelligence upon her grandchild, and said:

"Thanks, child! Now it goes again for a bit. The world of the senses and all appertaining thereto are intrusive, and fasten themselves to us like burrs. We would like to be rid of them, but they will cleave to us. Whoever can be satisfied with wretched human existence, let him enjoy them. They laugh over the poetess Praxilla, you know, because she lets the dying Adonis lament. How was it? At the moment of death she lets him regret the loss of apples and pears. But is not that fine? Right, right, a hundred times right, was Praxilla. There they are fasting, torturing themselves—I know something about it—in order to attain the godlike. They faint, and consume themselves in so doing, while they might have been so comfortable if they had allowed themselves the en-

joyment of apples and pears. Greatness never yet made any man happy. Let him who would feel pleasantly never cease to be small. Such are children, and therefore they are so happy. Apples and pears! For me they too will soon be gone. If the great originator of the universe spares himself, then will still remain the idea, apples and pears, and perchance he may be pleased, after the great catastrophe, to let a new world succeed ours. If then he again embodies the ideas: man—and apples and pears, it would be to plagiarize from himself. If he is beneficent, then he will give up incorporating for the second time that wite idea 'man,' but, if not, then he will leave the poor wight apples and pears. I mean that little enjoyment; for in all great pleasures, as they are called, lurk pain and misery. Another glass! I relish it. After to-morrow, no more of this either. I might grieve over this good gift of Dionysus; there is something superior in it to apples and pears. Then comes what Cupid gives to mortals. That is going to its end, too. But that is something no longer analogous to apples and pears. That is greater, greater enjoyment; and therefore is, at the same time, so full of cruel pain. Rapture and agony, who knows their limits? Laughter and tears: they belong to both. Are you weeping? Yes, yes, yes. Poor child! come here, I want to kiss you."

Herewith, Damia drew the head of the kneeling maiden tenderly to her breast, and again and again pressed her lips upon her forehead.

Finally she let her go, surveyed the room with uneasy glances, and said: "How you have disarranged those tablets and scrolls. If I could only explain to you how they all tally and agree! We know now, too, how it comes. Day after to-morrow there will be no longer a heaven and earth; but—listen, child!—but if Serapis falls, and all things do not cave in like a tumble-down hut, then there is nothing in magic; then has the course of the stars nothing to do with the destiny of the earth and its inhabitants; then are the planets nothing but lamps, then is the sun only a shining oven, then are the old gods will-o'-the-wtspes, emanations from the marsh of human cogitation. Such is the great Serapis—yet wherefore be wrathful against him? Here there is no if or but. This *diptychum* here! I shall show you our conclusion. There!—here! It flickers so before my eyes. I can arrange it no more—and, let it go so: what was decided up on high, who could alter it down here? Let me sleep now. Early to-morrow morning I'll explain it all to you. Poor child! How we have tormented you with learning! How diligent you always were! And now, to what end? I ask, to what end? The great abyss swallows that up with the rest."

"Let it be so," interposed Gorgo. "Provided that nothing dear to me on earth precedes me to destruction."

"And the same blow strikes the enemy, too!" cried Damia, her eye flashing with exultation. "Only whither are we going? whither? The soul is of divine substance, and therefore never to be destroyed. She returns—am I right or wrong?—she returns to her original source, for like attracts like; and so the godlike resolves itself into the essence of deity."

"I believe it, I know it!" responded Gorgo, decidedly.

"You know it, do you?" asked the old lady. "Not so I. For

our best knowledge is but a presentiment, if not founded upon calculation. There is nothing so unbounded but that we may attain to it by reckoning; but that, that stands firmer than rocks by the sea, and therefore I believe in the conclusion that we reached upon these tablets with proof and counter-proof. But the future fate of the soul, who can reckon it? Yes, if the old order of things remain standing, and what is below keeps below, and what is above maintains its position on high, then, then, indeed your learning will not have been in vain; for then would your soul, fixed upon the intellectual, the pure, the exalted, be drawn to God, as a kindred spirit, to be united and swallowed up in him, as the drop that has fallen out of the moist cloud again ascends on high and dissolves into moisture once more. Then would—there might be such a thing as the transmigration of souls—then would your songful heart awake to find itself a young nightingale—”

Here the old lady became silent; absently as it were, she looked up, and after a pause of long continuance went on, with an altered expression of countenance: “Then would Maria, my son Apelles’ widow, glide into a serpent’s egg, and, as a creeping adder— Eternal God!—those ravens! What do those ravens want? There they are, back again! Air, air! A glass. I can not—I am choking! Away, away with that drink! To-morrow, to-day—everything sinks, sinks—do you not feel it? Black—black—and now red, and now black—everything is sinking! Hold me! It gives way beneath my body. Where is Porphyrius? Where is my son? My feet! Rub my feet! Cold, cold! Water! It comes higher! Now it is at my knees! I am falling—help!—I am falling!”

In fearful anguish the dying woman fought the air with her arms, as in drowning, her cry for help grew lower and lower, her head sunk upon her laboring chest, and soon she breathed out her much-tortured and restless spirit upon her grandchild’s bosom.

Gorgo had never seen any mortal die, nor looked upon the face of the dead. She could not take in the thought that this heart, which had throbbed so warmly for others and beaten with such tender love toward herself, was forever stilled; that this spirit, which, even in sleep, had been in perpetual motion, was quiet at last.

The nurse had quickly come in between her and the deceased, had closed her eyes and mouth, and done everything to save her darling from the horrifying spectacle presented by her grandmother after death. But Gorgo could not be drawn from her side, and while she called for everything that might resuscitate the lifeless body, the annihilating power of death had come too close, and made itself shockingly manifest. She felt the beloved body stiffening and growing cold beneath her hands, but her spirit still returned to the thought that all, all was over now between herself and her mother’s faithful representative.

Every restorative of which she had ever heard she would see applied, and she forced the nurse, in spite of her confident assertions, that no human aid could avail here, to send for a physician and to have the priest of Saturn brought; for powerful conjurations—that she had learned from the deceased herself—had compelled many a departed soul to return to the body which it had deserted.

When she was alone, and looked into the rigid face of the corpse,

a deep awe came over her, and yet she mastered it sufficiently to draw gratefully and mournfully to her lips the thin hand, whose caresses she had so often accepted quite as a matter of course.

How cold and hard it was! Shuddering she let it drop, and the large rings upon the fingers struck rattling against the wood of the couch.

That extinguished hope, and now she knew that her motherly friend was gone, dead, and forever silent.

A sharp, cutting pain overcame her, and at the same time a sense of utter desolation—that humiliating consciousness of impotence against a brutal force that tramples down human resistance as the warrior does grass and flowers upon a meadow.

Shaken by violent sobs, she threw herself on the floor beside the corpse, and wept like a passionate child, from whom some strong hand has taken what he loved. She wept from rage at her own weakness freely, when she pictured to herself her own loneliness, and the great grief impending over her father.

That kindly remembrance of a past, common bliss, which mingles an element of sweetness even in the bitterest cup, stood aloof from her heart in this cruel hour. Only one thought seemed to her consoling, viz., that the gulf which had swallowed up this beloved one would soon, soon open to receive herself and all living.

There upon the table lay the guarantee for the approaching end of things, and longing for this culmination gradually obtained the mastery, in her spirit, over every other feeling.

Under this influence she rose up, and ceased to weep.

As soon as her nurse should return she desired to leave the house, for here she could abide no longer; duty and the impulses of her heart drew her away, and pointed out to her the place where she should find the last thing that she desired of life.

From no friend, but through herself should her father learn what had befallen them both, and she knew that he tarried in the Serapeum, the same place where to-morrow she hoped to find Constantine. It was the duty of her lover to open there the door for destruction, and she wanted to go through it with him and at his side.

Waiting seemed long to her, but at last, at last a noise was heard on the steps.

That was her nurse's step, but she did not come alone.

Did she bring the physician and conjurer?

Now the door opened.

The steward crossed the threshold with a branching candlestick in his hand, then appeared she for whom she waited, and then—her heart stood still—then Constantine, and with him his mother.

Pale and speechless Gorgo greeted her unexpected guests.

The nurse had not found the physician, whose help, at any rate, would have come too late; but inasmuch as the stewardess, with other Christian slaves, had stolen off and the faithful creature had said to herself that her dear child needed the comfort of some sympathizing female friend at hand, she had gone to neighbor Clement's, and asked his wife to follow her to the deceased, and her disconsolate young mistress. Constantine had come home a short time previously, and had silently attended the two women.

There now stood mother and son, and while the latter looked

without resentment into the pale face of the old lady to whom he was still a debtor for many a kindly act, and then fastened his eye upon Gorgo, who stood there with looks cast down, struggling for composure, Mariamne tried to administer to her friendly consolation.

She praised eagerly whatever did not seem to her utterly sinful and godless in the departed, and brought into view all those grounds for comfort, with which a good Christian tries to uphold the hearts of those who have lost some dear one; but this well-meant exordium fell upon Gorgo's ear as if it had been addressed to her in some unknown tongue, and not until Mariamne drew nearer, and, with motherly kindness drew her up to kiss her, and invite her to go home with her, did she feel at all touched, recognizing that she meant well, and had ever been good to her.

But the Christian matron's last words had reminded her of a duty that she felt to be obligatory upon her, and so, collecting her faculties, she thanked her kindly, and begged her to assist her in removing the corpse to the *thalamos*, and then to take charge of its key.

It devolved upon herself, she said, to seek her father, because no other than herself should inform him of what had happened.

Mariamne's urgent entreaty that she should swerve from this resolution, and pass the night with her, she positively rejected.

Constantine had so far remained silent in the background. Not until Gorgo approached the corpse and gave orders for its removal did he approach her and hold out to her his right hand, simply and cordially.

She looked him full in the face, placed her hand in his and said softly: "I had done you injustice, Constantine, and hurt your feelings; I was really sorry, even before you left. You bear me no grudge, I know, for you have felt for me in my desolation, and come to me. There is nothing, nothing more between us two, is there?"

"Nothing, nothing!" responded he, warmly, and in the excess of his feeling he grasped her other hand, too.

It seemed now as though every drop of blood mounted to her heart with a sudden rush, as though he were a part of her being that had been forcibly torn away from her, and must, must be restored to her, though it cost him and her fortune and life.

And she obeyed this impulse and withdrew her hands from his clasp, in order to fling them about his neck and cuddle up to him fondly as a sick child to its mother.

She knew not how it happened, how it was possible that it could have happened, and yet happen it did, that without heeding Mariamne—who beheld with silent horror how her son's lips sought and found both the brow and mouth of the fair idolatress—that she wept upon his neck and felt a thousand roses blossom in her soul and, at the same time, a thousand thorns lacerating her heart.

What had happened here was obliged to have happened; it was her betrothal with the one whom she loved, and at the same time her farewell to him. The destiny of her life was fulfilled at that moment. What was left for both was to perish together at the

same time with all things living, and she looked forward to it as the sleepless man does to morning.

Marianne had stepped aside, for she had the dim feeling that some great event was passing before her, that something irrevocable had been enacted against which no interference would avail.

When Gorgo had freed herself then from Constantine's arms there was something solemn, unapproachable in her demeanor. She was like a grave enigma to that simple woman that she knew not how to solve, but it did her good when Gorgo came forward and pressed her lips upon her hand. Her mouth was sealed, as it were, for she felt that whatever she might have said would not have been the right thing, and afforded her great relief, that she could soon show herself helpful in the removal of the corpse.

Gorgo had carefully covered up the still face, and when the deceased had been carried into the lower story and laid out upon the broad nuptial couch in the *thalamos*, she decorated this with flowers.

The priest of Saturn meanwhile had entered, and asserted that no power in the world could have restored life to this inanimate body. Damia's unexpected end and the young girl's grief touched the true man deeply, and he immediately gave consent, when Gorgo, in a low tone, asked him to wait for her at the garden gate, and thence conduct her to her father.

As soon as he had retired she handed over the keys of the trunks and presses of the deceased, then entered the adjoining room, where Constantine had waited while the bier was being decorated, and gave him a serious and apparently composed farewell.

He extended his arm, in order to embrace her again, but she would not suffer it, and when he implored her to follow him she answered sadly, "No, dear one, I may not. I have other duties now."

Then he exclaimed urgently: "Mine call me too, but you have given yourself to me. You are my own. You no longer belong to yourself alone, and I, I desire, I demand, that you grant my first request. Go with my mother, or stay here with the departed. Wherever your father may be is not, can not be the right place for my betrothed bride. I suspect where he tarries. Be warned, Gorgo. The fate of the old gods is sealed. We are the stronger, and so soon as to-morrow—by yourself, by all that I hold dearest and most sacred—to-morrow Serapis falls."

"I know it!" answered she, firmly. "You have orders to lay hands on the god?"

"I have, and shall obey them."

She nodded at him approvingly, and said resignedly and without resentment: "You are performing your duty and can not do otherwise! But however it may eventuate, we are one, Constantine, one. Nothing can part us. Whatever happens we belong to each other, and stand together, I by you, you by me, even to the end."

So saying she held out her hand to him and gave him one long look that was full of love. Then she once more threw herself upon his mother's bosom, and kissed her fervently.

"Come, come with me, my child!" implored Marianne, but she extricated herself from her embrace and cried out. "Go, if you love me, and leave me alone!"

So saying she returned to the *thalamos*, where rested the departed, and before the others followed her had opened one of the doors concealed by the tapestry on the wall, and made haste until she was out in the open air.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE night was dark and sultry. Dark masses of cloud were heaped together in the north, and above Lake Mœris, upon whose ashen-gray surface crisp little waves were dashing up foam, hovered a whitish mist like vapor over a hot bath.

The moon looked pale and blindly, as it were, out of a brownish circle of fog; a spectral gloom overshadowed the roads and the heat-radiating houses of the city.

In the west, over the desert, a smutty brimstone yellow tinged the black clouds in the sky, and at intervals blinding flashes of distant lightning came from the north, quivering through the hot and murky atmosphere.

A warm wind from the south-west drove clear sand into the streets, across the lake. These fine molecules of dust stung and burned the cheeks of the passers-by who walked further, with downcast eyes and closed lips.

Nature, like man, seemed to have been overtaken by some deep trouble. The air that came in fittful gusts, the coming and going of torquet lightning, the queer form and coloring of those portentous clouds, all gave to this night an unwonted sickly and distressing aspect. It was as though heavens, water, air, and earth were making ready for something of unheard-of awfulness.

Gorgo had thrown on a mantle, and covered her head with a veil, and followed the priest of Saturn with glowing brow and strongly beating heart.

When she heard steps behind her she started, for it might be Constantine following her; when a fresh gust of wind peppered her face with prickly particles of sand, or the lightning gave to the clouds a more lurid tint, her blood stopped flowing, for did not these signs betoken the first act of the final tragedy so soon to be enacted?

She was familiar with the road that she had traversed, but its length seemed to have become tenfold on this occasion.

At last, however, she reached its limit.

At one of the entrances to her father's lumber-yard she gave the watchword and sign designated.

Soon she had left behind her the beams and piles of wood which hid the entrance to the canal; a slave whom she knew, preceded her with a torch, and now began the walk through the underground passage.

It was hot and musty enough in here, and bats, which had been scared up by the torch of the guide, flew around flapping their soft, phantom-like wings, and filling her with fear and disgust; nevertheless she felt less timid here than in the open air, and as she pursued her way, meditating upon the venerated temple of Serapis, and pictured to herself its wondrous beauty and solemnly exalted grand-

eur, there came over her a longing to get to that supremely glorious goal that banished all anxiety.

To submit to death there, to perish there with her beloved, did not seem hard to her; yes, it was a proud privilege to be permitted to await one's last hour in the most illustrious abode ever erected by mortal man in honor of a god.

Let destiny be accomplished here; the highest boon that she had asked of life had been granted her, and where was there on earth a prouder monument than the sanctuary of the ruler of the world, whose supremacy the other gods too tremblingly acknowledged? She had known the sacred halls of that gigantic building from a child up, and she fancied them crowded with thousands of noble souls whom the same lofty sentiment linked together as brothers in this momentous hour.

In spirit she heard the pious song streaming from the overflowing hearts of inspired youths and men, who were ready to lose life for the god of their fathers; she breathed the smoke of burnt-offerings and the odor of incense; she saw choirs of young men led by priests, in grave, measured movements, encircling garlanded altars with the mazes of a graceful, solemn dance.

Among the old men who had crowded around Olympius gravely discussing the latest phenomena and the inner kernel of the mysteries among the adepts,* who from the observations of the Serapeum followed in rapt suspense the significant course of the stars, the drifting of the clouds, and the flight of birds, she would surely find her father too; and the fresh wound in her heart began to bleed anew as she represented to herself how deeply he must be shocked and pained by the news of which she was the bearer.

However, she would surely find him in grave and solemn mood, filled with pain at the destined destruction of the world, but prepared to meet the heaviest calamity with dignified composure, and so she should bring her tidings of woe to a well-prepared heart.

She was not afraid of encountering the throng of men assembled in the Serapeum. Her father and Olympius were there to protect her, and in Dame Herse too she should find a reserve; but even without these three she durst mingle unsolicitously with those thousands, on this serious night, perhaps the last of all nights, because she was convinced that every sincere friend of the gods was expecting his own end and the falling of the sky, with only less apprehension perhaps than herself, a feeble girl.

Such was the tenor of her thoughts until, with her guide, she arrived at a strong gate.

After this had also been opened to her, they trod the subterranean vaults which were dedicated to the solemnization of the mysteries of the god, and wherein adepts have to submit to severe tests before they were deemed worthy of sharing the higher duties of the esoterics.

The halls, chambers and passages now trod by her for the first time were dimly lighted by lamps and torches, and what met her view during this progress filled her with pious awe, and worked mightily upon the power of her imagination.

* Those who had been initiated into the mysteries.

All that she saw, every room, column and statue, deviated from the ordinary and natural in its forms, relations and appurtenances.

To a pyramidal chamber, whose triangular inclined sides met together in a point, followed a hall shaped like a many-sided prism.

A road flanked by sphinxes led through a long, wide passage, and here she had to cling to her escort, for close behind the mixed shapes to her right yawned a dismal abyss. On another side rushing water dashed over her and plunged with wild commotion into the depths below. Immediately afterward she came to a spacious grotto hewn out of the living rock, and out of this grinned at her a row of gilded crocodile heads. Here the smell of smoke grown cold and pungent resin oppressed her breathing, and the path led her over gridirons and marvelously shaped ovens. From the walls looked at her hideously painted figures of condemned criminals, Tantalus, Ixion and Sisyphus rolling his stone. At her side were caverns with iron doors, as closely locked as though behind them were secured countless treasures or unapproachable secrets, and her dress grazed many a statue and tool that was closely shrouded in tapestry or curtaining.

If she looked sideways she saw horrible monstrosities and mysterious figures and emblems; if she looked up, her eyes met here the human and bestial figures of the zodiac, that, in Egyptian style, sail in ships and boats over the back of a woman stretched out at full length; there pictures from the master hand of some Greek artist; the Pleiades, the twin knights Castor and Pollux, with stars upon their foreheads, and Berenice's hair studded with stars.

Confusing, harrowing was the impression made upon the pilgrim by this mysterious nether world.

What she saw in passing by was only dimly lighted, hardly distinguishable, and yet wore the spell of enchantment; what mysteries and wonders did not what she saw inclose?

It seemed to her as though that end of earthly existence for which she waited had begun, and she were already living as a guest in gloomy Hades.

Gradually the path ascended, and finally a winding staircase led her up to the main body of the temple. Sometimes she had been met by men, but a solemn repose had prevailed throughout those subterranean regions. The deep stillness had only become more perceptible through the hollow sound of approaching and retreating footsteps.

It must be so, she had expected to find it so here. This repose reminded her of nature's deep silence before the bursting forth of a raging tempest.

While Gorgo was going upstairs she removed the covering from her head, arranged the folds of her robe, and straightened herself up into that dignified priestly bearing assumed by noble virgins, who drew near to the altar of deity. But the higher she came the louder grew the babel of sounds that greeted her ears. Flute-playing and the beating of drums were specially noticeable. She thought that the religious circular dance had begun.

Now she stood in one of the apartments at the side of the *hypostyle*. Her attendant opened a tall door adorned with gilded bronze and silver, while Gorgo, stepping solemnly with high head and down-

cast eyes, followed him into the consecrated precincts, where, in unclouded glory, sat enthroned the sacred image of the god.

Without pause she traversed the colonnade at the side of the *hypostyle*, and descended the two steps which led into the broad body of the greatest and noblest of all the rooms in the temple.

The wild alarm which she had heard through the door when it opened, had surprised and bewildered her, and now when in blank amazement she opened her eyes and looked about her, such a horror and dread seized upon her as the traveler in the dark experiences, when, having believed himself treading a flowery mead, he discovers that the mire of a bottomless marsh is dragging him below.

Reeling, she supported herself on the statue of the nearest god, and while she asked herself whether she were awake or dreaming, she looked around, shuddered, and listened more intently.

What was going on there she did not want to see and hear; it struck her as repulsive, abominable and loathsome; but it was too patent to be overlooked and ignored, and it was as real as it was common and disgusting.

For a long time eye and ear were spell-bound and her limbs paralyzed, but soon deeply wounded, she clapped her hands before her face, and wounded maidenly modesty, cruel disenchantment and holy indignation at the wanton desecration of what she deemed hallowed and irreproachable, rushed in torrents over her deeply aggrieved soul, and she could but weep—weep bitterly, as she had never done before since she was born.

Sobbing, she threw her veil over her face, and muffled herself up as though she were guarding herself against cold and frost.

Nobody paid any heed to her. Her escort had forsaken her, too, in order to look for her father. She must await his return, and sought for a hiding-place. Then she caught sight of a woman in mourning garb, who cowered low beneath the statue of the goddess of justice. She recognized the widow of Asclepiodor, and with a sigh of relief she drew nearer to her and said, weeping: "Let me sit here; we are both mourners."

"Yes, yes!" responded the other, and without knowing what had befallen Gorgo, and only controlled by the mysterious fascination of meeting with one who, like ourselves, is tasting of bitter grief, she drew her up close to herself, and at her side found once more ability to shed soothing tears.

So sat those mourners silently together, and before them tossed and raved unbridled pleasure.

A knot of men and women waltzed with loud uproar through the halls of the temple.

Without time or measure the flutes shrieked, the cymbals clashed, and drum-skins groaned over the mad revelers.

Intoxicated *pastophori* had opened the chambers where were stored the priests' robes and temple utensils, and drunken men had dragged out the panther skins, such as the priests wore when officiating, brass carriages, wooden biers, upon which the images of the gods were borne in solemn processions, and other things.

In the hall at the side of those pillaged rooms, numerous students and young girls had stayed behind and were there preparing some-

thing grand, in which service much time and grape-juice were expended.

Most of the plunderers had immediately repaired to the *hypostyle* with their booty, and there treated to wonderful things.

A fat vineyard-dresser must needs represent Father Dionysus, and was enthroned upon a four-wheeled sacrificing cart of heavy beaten brass, with gay garlands of flowers twined around his naked limbs. A pitcher of alabaster stood between his monstrous legs, and his greasy paunch shook from laughter, while a hallooing crowd drew him through the sacred hall in wild career.

In mad excitement, unmanned by the frenzy of intoxication, the drunkards had cast off their clothes, and these lay around in a motley heap between the pillars and in red pools of wine. Around the flushed faces of the girls floated disheveled hair, in which hung confusedly withering leaves and brilliant flowers. Youths, men, old people, leaped as if possessed, with Thyrsian staves and the rude symbols of the fruit-dispensing god at their side.

A few priests and philosophers did their best to quell the tumult and exhort to moderation, but a drunken flute-player planted himself in front of them, threw back his head and shoulders, blowing so lustily into the double flute which now pointed skyward that it were enough to rouse the dead, and his female companion hurled her tambourine upon the impertinent establisher of peace. Clattering; it bounded against the shaft of a column, fell upon the bald head of an augur, and by him was cast further. Other timbrels followed the first, and soon one tambourine after the other clove the air, aimed at the heads of the drunken.

Everybody wanted to snatch one of the timbrels, so they jumped after them, wrestled for them, and with the calf-skin beat upon their neighbors' heads.

Intoxicated girls had swung themselves into the idol-chariots, and screeched aloud excited by mingled pain and pleasure, while reeling bearers dragged them in a rapid course through the hall. In so doing one of the wenches lost her balance, when she was picked up amid wild shrieks of laughter and forced to resume her place upon her perilous throne.

The car holding the vine-dresser also came to grief by means, to be sure, of the body of some stupidly drunken creature; but nobody set the vehicle to rights, and while the unhappy man was struggling in vain with lamentable howls to extricate himself from the box in which he was held fast, thirty young men who had harnessed themselves to the car dragged it further and past Gorgo, who beheld with speechless indignation how the hard brass of the creaking axle-trees crunched remorselessly right through the exquisite mosaic figure, the center-piece of the hall pavement. At last his own weight gave freedom to the unconscious Bacchanal, and now his mad train called him back to life by turning him over and dipping his wild-looking, bleeding head into a tremendous vase of mixed liquors. Around the rescued Dionysus then twirled hundreds in the mazes of a licentious dance; and because every tambourine was broken, and the flute-players out of breath, drunken fellows beat tunes on the pillars with their Thyrsian staves, and three students,

like mad, blew brazen trumpets which they had found among the temple utensils.

But much opposition was raised to this uproar.

Next approached a pious band that, with veiled heads in the neighborhood of the image of Serapis, mimicked the conjurations of a magician, and howled piteously; then these gave place to orators, who had somehow managed to attract some auditors; and lastly play-actors and singers, who had collected in the vestibule in order to act a play of satyrs, which, indeed, was so wanton and senseless that the trumpet-blowers had but little the advantage of them.

As opposition helped the acting none, the players rushed from the vestibule into the hypostyle and tried to silence the restorers of peace by dint of force.

A fierce battle ensued; but the combatants were soon parted, and now the actors and their opponents fell into each other's arms, and an Homeric poet, who had put together an elegy for this evening on "The Gods Oppressed by the Hosts of Superstition," made up of verses extracted from the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," seized this favorable opportunity and began reading aloud to drown the noise, when the very successful fruit of the work before alluded to in the store-room, outbidding everything else, entered the basilica.

A storm of admiration and delight was raised. Even the most drunken articulated a word of rapture, and in this there was indeed offered to their intoxicated gaze a beautiful and gorgeously colored picture.

Upon the lofty pedestal, destined to bear a smaller image of Serapis, and the holy symbols of the god at great festivals; stood Glycera, the most beautiful courtesan in the city, and she was rolled in triumph through the hall by jubilant young men.

She lay in a great wooden trough, meant to represent a shell, upon the summit of the scaffolding, and on its lower steps sat everywhere graceful girls, who made pretty but improper gestures, sometimes directed to her, sometimes to her male attendants, who tried to pick up the flowers that they were scattering, and fought over them with lover-like ardor. In the beautiful courtesan every one had recognized Aphrodite, born of the foam, and with one month, as it were, she was proclaimed and honored as queen of the world.

Speedily men rushed up to pour out libations to her and encircle her, hand in hand, with loud singing, and in the giddy whirl of a wildly exciting dance.

"To Serapis with her! Let us marry her to the god!" shrieked a drunken student.

"Heavenly Love is his bride!"

"To Serapis!" shrieked others echoing him. "Glycera solemnizes her marriage with the god this very night!"

And now moved the motley besotted crowd toward the image behind the mammoth curtain, and with them the towering pedestal surmounted by that beautiful, laughing woman.

The lightning and rolling of distant thunder had hitherto remained unheeded, but now a blinding light flashed through the hall, and at the same time came a rattling, crashing, and growling clap of thunder that shook the desecrated abode of deity. Sulphurous vapor penetrated through the open windows under the roof, and

a second flash of lightning quickly followed the first, and this seemed to have rent the heavens asunder, for there followed it a shattering, deafening roar, so hideous and appalling a din, as though the key-stone to the firmament had given way and the heavens were to be precipitated upon the earth, Alexandria and the Serapeum.

With uncontrollable impatience the monstrous power of an African tempest discharged itself; and the roisterers hushed suddenly, the goblet fell untasted from the guzzler's trembling lips; glowing cheeks turned pale, the dancers broke their chain, and uplifted their hands in prayer, while lips, awhile ago bawling and blaspheming, opened now in cries for mercy. The nymphs in the retinue of Venus sprung tremblingly from their perch, and the foam-born Aphrodite in the shell sought to free herself from the veils and garlands of flowers which had been wrapped about her, and not being able to reach the lower step of the scaffolding, uttered a loud shriek of distress. Other voices mingled with hers, howling, cursing, and bewailing their fate; for through the uncurtained windows dashed and splashed chilling moisture from the rain-spout into the halls and upon the heated limbs of the drunken revelers.

The storm howled through the vast circumference of the Serapeum, thunder and lightning raved on in unbroken power, and like ants whose hill has been disturbed, the horrified, half-sobered convivialists huddled together uneasily, almost beside themselves.

And into the midst of this confusion rushed Orpheus, the son of Karnis, who had, up to this time, kept watch upon the roof, and shrieked: "The world goes under; the heavens have opened! My father, oh, where is my father?"

And everybody believed him, pulled off their wreaths, tore their hair, and gave themselves up to wild despair.

Whimpering and wailing, raging and loss of composure ran from one to another; and without hope of a morrow, or even another hour, each one thought only of himself, his own clothes, and how he could bide his naked, shivering body, and save it from perishing through cold.

To that wild scuffling after clothes that had been thrown aside, were added loud groans, piteous wails of despair, the harrowing cries of women and children, and the sobs of those unhappy ones who had been smitten by panic.

It was a pitiable scene, calling forth pity and abhorrence. Gorgo beheld it, and ground her teeth for shame and indignation, wishing that an end might be put to herself and the world as a riddance.

These lunatics, these wretches, these cowardly wights, these animals in the shape of men and women deserved nothing better than destruction; but was it to be imagined that God would reduce to nothingness His wisely, beautifully ordered universe for the sake of this abominable rabble?

The thunder and lightning roared and flashed about her afterward as before; but she believed no more in the end of things, believed no more in the greatness, majesty, and purity of the god there behind that curtain.

With glowing cheeks, red for shame, she felt as if it were a disgrace to be reckoned among his adherents; and as the howlings of the despairing multitude pierced her ear in ever louder and piteous

sounds, Constantine's earnest, fearless form presented itself before her soul in all its beauty and power.

She was his, wholly and forever his, and in future, pillowed upon his breast, she would share with him everything: his love, his house, his dignity, and also his God.

CHAPTER XXII.

THROUGH those heavy clouds that emptied themselves upon the Serapeum glimmered the faint light of coming dawn; but this the agonized heathen did not note. No leader, no establisher of peace, no comforter restored to them courage and composure, for Olympius and his guests, the leaders of intellectual life in Alexander's city, also the protectors of this sanctuary, kept those beneath them long in waiting.

The lightning, which had struck the brass cupola, and darting off had followed a flag-staff, had terrified the free-thinkers and philosophers, too, and the symposium was brought to a conclusion only a trifle less undignified than the orgies in the temple halls.

Among the friends of the high-priest only a few, to be sure, had been carried out of themselves so far as to show their deadly fear undisguisedly; but instead of it, at the table of Olympius no sooner did the crisis seem imminent, than declaiming and acting became more pronounced, and Gorgo's respect for her fellow-believers would not have been specially increased if she could have heard the renowned grammarian and biography-writer Helladius with trembling knees and bloodless lips, reciting some verses from the chained Prometheus while the thunder rolled; and how the grammarian Ammonius, who had written a famous book on "Expressions Like and Unlike," tore open his robe and bared his breast as a target for the lightning, with a glance around, challenging the admiration of those present. Alas! his heroic demeanor was observed only by a few, for most of them, including the new Platonic philosopher, historiographer, and fierce foe to the Christians, Eunapius, had covered their heads with their mantles and awaited the final catastrophe in dull resignation. Some had fallen on their knees to pray with uplifted hands or to murmur adjurations; and a poet who had won crowns by his didactic poem, "Man, the Lord and Master of the Gods," had fallen down in a fainting fit, his laurel decorating the dish of oysters beside his couch.

Olympius had left his seat as symposiarch, and leaned with composure against the door-post, awaiting death with manly courage.

Father Karnis, too, who had applied too freely to the wine-bottle, but had been restored to sobriety upon the outbreak of the storm, jumped up and hurried out past the high-priest. He knew that his wife and son were not far off, and wished to die in their proximity.

Porphyrius, as well as his neighbor, the great surgeon Apuleius, belonged to the number of those who had covered their heads with their mantles. More peacefully than many another could he face coming ruin; for, like a provident man and far-seeing merchant, he had cared for everything.

Did the world remain standing despite the victory of the Chris-

tians, and did that law stand in force against him which declared the last will of an apostate invalid, then a princely estate, that neither church nor state could touch, was held in readiness for his family by a rich and reliable friend. On the contrary, should heaven and earth indeed be destroyed, he was secured against a tedious and torturing death, by an unfailing medicine that he carried about his person.

While thunder and lightning were venting their fury, he, with Olympius' other guests, had spent many long and anxious moments; suddenly in rushed Karnis' son, Orpheus, shouting just as passionately and despairingly as he had done a few minutes before in the great hall of the temple: "The end! the end! The world is coming to pieces! Fire is falling from heaven! Flames! Fire is consuming the earth already. Here, with my own eyes, have I seen it! I come from the roof. Father! Where is my father?"

At this outcry, Olympius' guests started up with fresh horror, and the mathematician Pappus shrieked: "The burning of the world has begun! Consuming fire bursts from the skies!"

"Lost, lost!" wailed Eunapius; but the merchant Porphyrius quickly thrust his hand within the folds of his purple festal robe, and drew forth a small crystal vial, and with pale but composed features stepped up to the high-priest, and laying his hand upon the arm of him to whom he had been all his life-time devoted with tenderness and admiration, he gazed fondly upon him, and whispered in his ear: "Farewell, friend! How often have we argued over Cato and his end: you against, I for him. Now I imitate him. See, here is enough for us both!"

So saying, he quickly put the vial to his mouth, and a portion of its contents had wet his lips before Olympius had recovered from his surprise, and caught him in his arms.

The effect of the deadly poison showed itself instantaneously. But hardly had the merchant lost consciousness before the physician Apuleius hurried to his assistance.

This excellent man had allowed himself to partake of the universal dismay, and was awaiting the end of all things in silent resignation. No sooner, however, had the call for medical aid resounded through the hall, than he had freed his head from its covering and hurried to the merchant's side in order to counteract the effect of the poison with as much promptness and acumen as he had ever shown in his best days by the sick-bed or in the lecture-room.

When the soul seems given over to despair, then is a sense of duty the last and only principle that can nerve and once more bring it into action, and it shows what a high instinctive regard men really have for this life against which they are accustomed to inveigh so loudly, that they will exert themselves as earnestly and tenderly for its preservation just before it terminates as when it was in the flush of youth and strength.

The merchant's desperate deed had been accomplished close before the eyes of Orpheus, and this new horror had cast the former one so far into the shade, that he volunteered aid to the surgeon, and helped to place the unconscious form upon the nearest sofa. Then, he again hurried to the door, continuing his search after his parents.

But Olympius, who in the face of his friend's weakness felt

anew how much depended in these hours upon his manly presence of mind, detained him, and with sternness demanded a clear statement of what had actually occurred upon the roof.

The young singer obeyed, and what he had to communicate sounded disquieting enough. A ball of fire had fallen upon the cupola with frightful resonance, and had combined with a stream of flames which seemed to issue from the ground. Then had the sky again opened, with blinding glare, and at the same time Orpheus' own eyes had beheld a huge monster, maybe a moving mountain, that slowly and with terrific din had approached the rear of the sanctuary. Not rain, but streams—perfect torrents of water had rushed down upon him and his comrades.

“Neptune,” cried Orpheus, “leads on the floods of the ocean against the temple, and the neighing of his four chariot horses I have heard—it could not have been any illusion—I have heard with my own ears!”

“The neighing of Neptune's horses! The emperor's horses you mean!”

And now with the agility of a young man he flew to the window, pulled back the curtain, and looked into the open air toward the east.

The storm had passed away as suddenly as it had appeared. Day was dawning.

Over Aurora's crimson robe like a full overskirt hung heavy folds of gray and black cloud, while the edges were bordered by bands of glittering gold. Far to the north gleamed occasionally pale lightning, and the thunder of the retreating storm was hardly audible any longer; but the studs, the neighing of which had so terrified Orpheus and the guards, had come nearer to the sanctuary, and stopped close beneath the southern wall of the temple, where there were neither doors nor any other mode of access.

What did the Imperialists want at this strong, inaccessible place? Yet there was no time now for long reflections, and like a warning now thundered through the temple that gong which was meant to collect all the defenders of the Serapeum together.

But Olympius needed no more encouragement.

With the fiery passion of a fanatical partisan leader, of the champion for a great, sorely imperiled cause, he turned to his guests and bade them remember their manhood, and with him resist even unto death.

In this brief, pithy call to arms his voice sounded hoarse from excitement, and it had powerful effect, for the very reason that the celebrated orator had forborne to influence the highly cultured audience around him by modulation of the voice, and studied choice of diction.

Infected with the warmth of the enthusiastic old man, they collected all their energies and hurried after him to the apartment where arms stood ready for them.

A coat of mail on the breast and a sword to brandish in his hand made a soldier out of each of these sages and powerfully re-enforced the courage of all. Among these heroes but little was said about “the great word.” The time for grave action was upon them.

Olympius had requested the surgeon Apulcius to have the

poisoned merchant conveyed to his own private chamber by the *hypostyle*, seeing that so far no antidote had taken effect. Temple-servants bore Porphyrius down a side staircase, while the high-priest led his panoplied friends quickly and silently down the main stairs into the great halls.

There the company armed for the fray encountered surprises and disillusionments more appalling than they could have imagined. Olympus himself felt utterly at a loss in the beginning; for out of his genial companions had been made in one night poltroons and mutineers, while within the precincts of this holy temple were all the tokens of a lost battle.

Implements broken and cast aside, battered instruments, furniture torn and wetted through and through, flowers and garlands withered and stripped of their leaves, were lying around on all sides. Red wine like pools of human gore swam over the cracked beauties of the mosaic floor; here and there, at the foot of some column, lay the body of a man—whether dead or in a fit of drunken stupor, who should say?—and the disagreeable exhalations from a hundred smoking lamp-wicks offended the senses, for in this confusion they might burn or go out as it happened.

And what a lamentable spectacle was that presented by men and women who had been up all night, and were now sobered and miserable!

The wretched sensation of having insulted God and challenged his wrath was stirring in every soul. A speedy end would have been welcome to many a one, and a richly endowed disciple of Helladius had actually adventured that plunge from being into not being, which, according to his conviction; began beyond the grave, by striking his head against the hard marble, and there he lay with fractured skull at the foot of a column.

With confused brain, aching head, and agonized heart, had these unfortunates come to curse the present, and whoever of them dared to think of the future, it seemed like a horrible abyss to which the flying hours were driving them imperceptibly and yet with irresistible force.

And time moved on and on; everybody saw, everybody felt it: the night had vanished and day began to dawn; the tempest had retreated, but instead of the implacable power of nature now advanced a new horror in the shape of the no less inexorable power of the emperor's military.

In a struggle between man and the gods there was only one possible issue for him, viz., defeat. In the contest between man and man, it was allowable, although the issue might not be victorious, to think of escape.

The one armed veteran Memnon, during those orgies within the temple, had kept watch on the roof and had made preparations to hold the assaulting enemy at bay, until the storm broke out and attacked his men with thunder and lightning. Then had the majority of the garrison on the roof taken refuge in the lower rooms of the temple. Only the old captain had stuck to his post despite hurricane and water-spout.

With the one arm left to him, he had clung to a statue on the parapet of the roof, in order not to be swept and washed away.

From thence he had issued orders, but the roaring of the hurricane had drowned his voice, and of the few left behind none had heard his words of command.

The neighing of horses, and the walking mountain which had put Orpheus to flight, had not escaped his observation either. What approached was Roman enginery for siege-laying, and faithful as was the veteran to the cause, the leadership of which he had undertaken, yet an emotion resembling joy thrilled his warlike old soul when he recognized that true and genuine soldiers still followed the Imperial ensigns, under which he had shed his heart's blood more than once.

His old brothers in arms had not forgotten how to defy the elements, and their general had been well advised when he directed the first attack to be made on apparently the strongest part of the temple.

It was plain that he had here to do with a real warrior, and with a grim curse and mocking smile he thought upon the heterogeneous rabble over which he had command.

Yesterday he had sought to moderate Olympius' vaulting hopes, and said to him: "Not by enthusiasm, but the art of war one beats his enemy!"

Now he had to cope with an adversary who was his match; and how he was to be supported by the death-despising enthusiasm of youth, which he had undertaken to lead, and from which, in secret, he still expected great things, he was only to learn too soon.

The point was to make impassable that breach in the rear wall of the sanctuary until the arrival of the expected Libyan succors, and also to defend the front of the sanctuary from the roof. For every one who could lift a stone and brandish a sword there was use in this struggle, and when he counted over the number of his men he thought that the sanctuary might hold out successfully for a long while. But his reckoning was false; for he did not know what a power of attraction the races exercised over his "inspired youth," and what an alteration had come over their mood.

As soon as the storm had lulled sufficiently for him to withdraw his hand from its support, he called together the remnant left behind, and had the brass gong beaten which was to summon the combatants to the roof; and its metallic clangor rang through the gloom with mighty vibrations. A deaf man must have heard it in the deepest cellar of the sanctuary, and nevertheless minute succeeded minute, and three quarters of an hour had elapsed and not one man had made his appearance on the roof.

The impatience of the old man changed to astonishment, astonishment to sullen rage. The messengers whom he had dispatched returned no more, and the protecting roof of the Romans pressed up nearer and nearer to the southern wall of the temple, effectually shielding their pioneers from the scattering shower of stones, with which at his command they should have been molested by his men.

The enemy purposed to find a secure resting-place for their battering-machine, whose brazen ram's-head was to lay bare a breach in the temple wall. Every second of delay on the side of the defenders abetted powerfully the aim of the foe. A hundred,

two hundred hands more on the roof, and his undertaking would have become futile!

Disappointment and a bitter feeling of his own impotence forced tears of rage into the old man's eyes, and when at last a messenger came back and reported that the men and women below were going on like distracted people, and that, to a man, all refused to mount to the roof, he uttered a fierce oath, and dashed down-stairs.

Furiously he rushed among the wailing throng, and when he saw with his own eyes what this fatal night had made of his warriors, he thundered against them imperiously, in a few clear words represented to them what was at stake, ordered without being obeyed, yelled at the most refractory, pushed individuals angrily before him, and when he noticed that many, with females at their sides, were fleeing toward the gate leading into the secret passage, he opposed himself to their progress, sword in hand, and threatened to hew down every one who should attempt to make his escape.

During this proceeding Olympius with his followers had entered the great hall, and when at the place where was the loudest uproar, he saw the general struggling with mutinous fugitives, who sought to wrest his sword from him, he hurried to his aid, with his guests, and supported by them, held back the hundreds forcing their way to the door of exit.

It grieved the old man to use the arms which he and his had grasped in pious exaltation of spirit against his own refractory fellows, but it had to be done, and while his men, to whom Karnis and Orpheus had also joined themselves with their lances and shields, held back the pushing mob from the subterranean rooms, he took counsel with the old men skilled in war, and they quickly came to the determination to drive the women forth from the temple, and to divide the men into two companies, of which one should be sent up to the roof, and the other to the rear wall of the temple, where the Roman battering-ram must soon begin to play.

Olympius courageously threw himself between his followers and the men and women bent upon flight, exhorting them with powerful thundering appeals to remember their duty.

Quietly and respectfully they listened to him, but when he announced the resolve to exclude women from the temple these latter raised a loud outcry. Many clung to their lovers, while others instigated the men to flee in defiance of orders.

Several women, the beautiful Glycera at their head, who had a few hours ago, as Aphrodite, smiled upon her worshipers in full assurance of victory, now did their best to escape from this scene of horror, and set forth with all speed to seek admittance to the underground passage. They remembered that they did not lack for admirers in the city either.

But they did not get far, for a temple-servant rushed to meet them with advice to turn back, for the Imperialists had discovered the entrance to the canal, and held possession of the lumber-yard.

Now they followed the watchman with loud lamentations, and hardly had they set foot upon the great hall again before a new shock was given them, for the brazen battering-ram with its iron mouth bounded against the rear wall of the temple for the first time.

The Imperialists held possession of the secret passage, and had

begun the assault. That was much, but all was not yet lost, and in this momentous hour Olympius and Memnon proved what they were.

The first ordered the great portcullis to be lowered and the bridges to be broken off that spanned the abyss in those subterranean regions destined for the celebration of the mysteries, and this task could be performed in good time, for the troops had not yet ventured to penetrate into that mysterious passage, where snares and ambushes might well be expected, but Memnon hurried to the spot, where the ram was making its second thrust, and shouted to the multitude: "Whoever is not a wretched coward let him follow!"

Then the friends of Olympius trooped about him, Karnis and Orpheus of course being of the number, and he ordered everything that was movable in the sacred halls to be heaped up as a wall of protection before the imperiled spot, and to spare neither the noblest and holiest images, nor the marble and brass columns and altars of sacrifice.

If a breach should be effected from behind this wall it was meant to stay the further advance of the enemy by launching arrows and darts, of which they had plenty.

The old man was pleased that at all events the way of deserters was blocked up, and as soon as he saw statues torn down from their pedestals, altars dragged from consecrated spots, where they had stood for half a century, benches and alabaster vases overturned together, and the stone wall of defense thus growing, he drew off a small detachment for work upon the roof.

There was no more running away, and many a one, who, a short while before, had hoped to flee, now climbed to the top of the temple with quaking knees, because he fancied himself safer from the enemy there than at the breach.

Olympius shared out weapons, went encouragingly from one to the other, and in so doing came upon Gorgo, who still tarried with the widow of Asclepiodor beneath the statue of justice.

He informed her that her father had been taken sick, and had her directed to his private room that she might aid the physician in taking care of him.

The mourning matron was not to be induced to forsake her place. She longed for the end, and knew that it could not be far off. With ear intent she listened to the blows of the battering-ram. Each one seemed to her a thrust at the joints which held the universe together. One more, and then another, when surely the rotten walls would give way, and the same gulf which had swallowed up her son, and long years ago her husband, would open to receive her and her sorrow. Shivering, she drew her mantle over her face in order to hide from the sunshine, which began to stream through the windows. The light pained her. She had hoped that there would be no more day.

The women, and with them a few dastards, had withdrawn to the rotunda, and soon ribald words and peals of laughter made the place to resound.

From the roof, meanwhile, blocks of stone and statues were being hurled at the assailants.

It vexed those who toiled in the lower halls to see others idle, so

that the refractory, too, were compelled to bestir themselves, and the wall destined to defend the inner wall of the temple grew apace.

No wall before had ever been constructed of nobler materials, each one was a choice work of art, had been regarded as sacred for a hundred years, or in beautiful script preserved the record of worthy deeds. This wall should protect the highest of the gods, and Karnis, with his son and wife, was among the defenders who speedily mounted it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Gorgo sat at the head of the couch where lay her apparently lifeless father. She looked lovingly upon his pale, waxen features, and watched for the exhalations of breath, which stirred his nostrils, now slightly, then painfully and convulsively.

His cold, moist right hand was clasped in hers, and she stroked it, and whenever the lashes over his closed eyes quivered would press it to her lips with child-like tenderness.

Olympius' chamber lay at the side of the hypostyle, in the rear of the lofty colonnade, to the right, and obliquely opposite to the great veiled statue of Serapis.

The noise made in building the wall of defense, and the crash of the blows from the battering-ram were in close proximity to this apartment, and whenever the ram's head butted against the wall the patient started, and an expression of keen pain flitted across his countenance.

Truly was Gorgo grieved to behold her father's suffering, truly she told herself the sanctuary must soon fall into the hands of the Christians, but she had a grateful sense of security and privacy here in her friend's half-darkened, comfortable room, apart from those wretches on whom she thought with horror and aversion.

Her body was, indeed, greatly exhausted by her sleepless night, but the deep exercise of mind through which she had passed were still actively at work within, so that her spirit could not have found repose though she had been resting upon the soft couch in her own quiet chamber at home. Restlessly her thoughts worked on, and here she found time to think over her own experiences in these last hours, and what had befallen her grandmother and father.

So far she had exchanged only a few words with the surgeon, who was devoting himself unweariedly to the restoration of the sick man, and had assured her that he hoped soon to restore him to consciousness.

Now she gave him a questioning glance, and said gravely, and sadly: "You spoke of antidotes, Apuleius. My father wanted to evade ruin and so sought to take his own life. This is so, is it not?"

The physician measured her with a scrutinizing glance, and after he had assented to her question, and communicated to her the circumstances under which the fatal deed was done, he continued moodily, in a subdued voice:

"The terrible storm deprived him of composure, as it did me, yes, all of us, and yet we have only witnessed the prelude to the great tragedy, wherein shall be enacted the overthrow of the world

and mankind. It draws near; we hear its approach. There the stones are crashing! The brass battering-ram of the Christians is opening a way for itself through."

The last words of the physician were portentous, and had in them the ring of despair, accompanied as they were by the fall of heavy stones, that this time had been dislodged from the joints of the wall by the battering-ram. His prophetic speech seemed on the point of fulfillment.

Gorgo turned pale; yet what frightened her was not the doctor's prediction, but the trembling of the walls about her.

But the Serapeum had been founded for eternity, and although the ram might batter down one wall it did not bring the building to totter, much less fall.

Louder and louder now arose the uproar of the battle on the outside, and overtaken by a fresh anxiety the physician planted himself at the door in the attitude of a listener.

Gorgo observed that his hands trembled. He, the man, was afraid, while she felt no other solicitude save about her suffering father. The breach brought Constantine into the temple, and where he commanded she was safe. In the destruction of the world she believed no longer.

When the physician turned around again and noted how quietly and composedly she wiped the perspiration from the sick man's brow, he said in hollow tones, "What avails it for the ostrich to hide her eyes? They are wrestling there for the decision. Let us make ready for extremities. If they dare to lay audacious hands upon that god—and dare it they will—then all is lost both to conqueror and conquered."

Hereupon Gorgo shook her head, and exclaimed, with eager confidence: "No, no, Apuleius; for, if Serapis is the one whom we take him to be, why does he suffer his enemies to annihilate his image and his sanctuary? Why, then, does he not infuse courage into the hearts of his faithful ones at this trying hour? I have seen the boys and women who herded here to do battle for him. Cowards are they and bad women; and if the master is like his servant, then will he be served right if he does fall, and every lament over him were a crime."

"Speaks Porphyrius' daughter thus?" retorted the physician, with cutting reproach.

"Yes, Apuleius, yes! Thus must I speak after what I have lived through, seen, and experienced during the past night. Shameful, vile, horrid has it been; yes, the mere thought of being counted among those belonging to such a degenerate set is enough to infuriate me. Whoever names me in the same breath insults me! A god served as this one is shall not be my god; and you, you who have learned to think, you wise scholars, how can you believe that the Christian's God, after having conquered and paralyzed yours, will suffer Serapis to annihilate his world, and the creatures with whom He has inhabited it?"

Here the physician started up and asked her sternly and harshly:

"Do you belong to the Christians?"

Gorgo did not answer him at once, and only blushed deeply. But Apuleius would not be pacified, and again asked:

“Are you, indeed, then a Christian?”

Then she looked him full in the face, and firmly answered:

“No, but I would like to become one!”

The physician shrugged his shoulders, and turned away; but Gorgo drew a deep breath of relief, and it seemed to her as if this answer had lifted a heavy burden from her soul. She herself hardly knew how that bold enfranchising speech had passed her lips, but she felt that it had been the correct answer to the physician's question.

Henceforth there was no further conversation between the two, and it was a relief to her to be allowed to preserve silence; for that speech had unlocked to her a new world of thoughts and feelings.

Henceforth her beloved was no longer an adversary, and when the noise of the battle at the breach touched her ear she durst think joyfully of him and his victorious arms.

She felt that his cause was the purer, nobler, worthier, and she rejoiced in that love of which he had said that it should support and protect their future common life like a strong tower and a safe and friendly covert.

Compared with that love, all that she used to deem the indispensable adornment of life appeared to her vain and jejune, and as she looked upon her father's face, and pictured to herself how he had lived and how much he had suffered, she referred to him the words of Paul, that Constantine had addressed to her upon his return home, and her heart overflowed with love for the unhappy man.

The deep seams of suffering about the mouth and eyes of her father, she well knew how to account for; for Porphyrius had made no secret of the pain felt by him every time that he saw himself forced to confess a faith that in his heart he abjured.

This great untruth, this acting of a double part, this attempt to go in two directions, had poisoned existence for this veraciously disposed man, and Gorgo knew for whose sake, and through what motives he had undergone this misery, this martyrdom of spirit. He lay stretched there as a warning for her, and his suffering face admonished her to make a whole-hearted offering of herself to the cause that she was about to espouse. She would profess Christianity out of love, yes! For at this hour she saw in the faith which was soon to be hers, and which Constantine had often so enthusiastically described, one thing above all, viz., eternal love.

So peaceful, so well equipped for everything good and lovely, she had never before felt, and yet without the battle grew louder and louder, the imperial trumpet already mingling in the battle-cry of the heathen. Nearer and nearer to her drew the oncoming tide of conflict.

The battering-ram had already made a wide opening in the rear wall of the temple, into which the heavy-armed soldiers of the twenty-second legion were pressing, holding their shields before them; but many a veteran had paid for his boldness with his life, for a shower of spears and arrows had rained upon them from the hastily reared bulwark. But their great shields had caught many a missile; many an arrow, too, had bounded back harmlessly from brass helmets and steel coats of mail, and those who were spared

pressed forward; and over the bodies of the fallen a continually renewed stream of assailants found their way into the temple.

Well protected by complete suits of armor, veteran soldiers approached the bulwark on their knees, while others sent spears and arrows against the garrison over their heads. A few wounded heathens sunk smitten to the floor, and the gushing streams of their red gore worked powerfully upon their comrades. Rage stirred in the breast of even the most timid, fear vanished before desire to avenge the murder of their comrades, so that out of cowards grew brave men, while scholars and artists thirsted for blood. Peaceful bookworms were suddenly aglow with patriotism, and smitten with the grand passion of slaughtering and exterminating the foe, stood shoulder to shoulder, and recklessly staked their lives.

Karnis, that old, genial friend of the Muses, stood at the very top of the bulwark, with his son at his side, roaring out detached sentences from a war-song of Tyrtæus, as he sent lance after lance against the enemy. At the same time sweat ran in streams from his bald forehead, and his eye gleamed with warlike ardor.

At his side Orpheus shot arrow after arrow from a tremendous bow. The abundant tresses of his Apollo-like head were fluttering loosely, while his cheeks glowed as with living fire.

When he struck one of the Romans the old man shouted to him: "Bravo, my son!" and then would draw himself up and hurl his lance, with a line of hexameter, or anapest verse upon his lips.

Half hidden by an altar, which happened to lie on top of the hurriedly built wall of defense, Dame Herse cowered and handed the men the weapons of which they stood in need. Her gown was torn and bloody, her gray hair had freed itself from the crescent and ribbons which had held it up, and fell wildly over her face. The careful housewife was transformed into a Megara, and shrieked to the men: "Kill the dogs! Stand firm! Spare not one Christian!"

But the men stood in no need of these exhortations. The hot enthusiasm which animated them had coupled itself to a fierce thirst after battle and redoubled their strength.

Orpheus' arrow had just transixed a bold centurion who had already set foot upon the lowest step, piercing his neck above his coat of mail, when Karnis let fall the lance that he held uplifted ready to hurl, and sunk without a word. A Roman dart had struck him, and there he lay, with the spear in his breast, like a cliff in the surf, upon which a little tree has taken root beside a red spring, bubbling with warm water.

Orpheus saw the out-gush of his father's blood, and threw himself on his knees at his side; but the old man pointed to the bow which his son had flung aside, and murmured to him eagerly: "Leave me! What matters it about me? For the Gods! Do you hear? For the Gods we are fighting here! On! Aim well! On!"

But the son would not be repulsed by the dying man, and as he saw how deeply the spear had penetrated into the breast of the old man, he sobbed aloud and threw up his arms with a passionate cry of grief.

Just then an arrow struck him, too, in the shoulder, another pierced his neck, and he fell gasping for breath.

Karnis saw him fall, and with a mighty effort sought to rise and

go to his assistance, but it was all in vain, and then he clinched his fist in impotent rage, and pronounced Electra's curse upon her enemies as loud as he could, half speaking, half singing:

“What I ask, do not spurn!
From these murderers turn
Into woe, their delight!
Into darkness their sight!”

But those heavy-armed soldiers did not hear or heed the old man's curse, as they rushed impetuously forward through the breach in the wall. Sense failed him to return for the first time when Herse (who had first lifted up her son and leaned him against a pedestal) came up to him, tying his handkerchief around the shaft of the lance, and endeavoring to stanch the blood that was flowing in a ceaseless stream, and moistening his brow with wine.

When he felt her warm tears upon his cheeks, and looked into those kind eyes overflowing with pity and keen agony of woe, his heart melted within him. The best hours which they had enjoyed together during their long married life passed in review before him, and he looked tenderly and gratefully up at her, feebly stretching out his hand to her. The matron drew it tearfully to her lips, but he smiled and kept nodding at her, while he softly repeated to her over and over again Lucian's: “Be comforted, soon wilt thou go too!”

“Yes, yes, yes! Soon shall I go too. Without you, without you both, and without the gods, what should I do here?”

So saying, she turned to her son, who, with full consciousness, had followed every movement of his parents and now tried to speak. But the arrow in his throat deprived him of breath, and to talk pained him so that he could stammer forth nothing like “father” and “mother.” Yet his poor efforts at utterance expressed volumes of love and gratitude, Karnis and Herse understanding all that he would so gladly have said.

Tears closed the matron's lips, so neither of the three could speak, but their heads were close together, and they exchanged mute signs of love. Thus amid the alarm of trumpet-calls and commingling of blood, a few peaceful moments flew by; but Herse's handkerchief grew redder and redder from her husband's blood, and the old man's eyes began slowly to revolve, as though they would once more take in a complete picture of this world, in which he had ever sought after whatever adorns life. Suddenly, however, they stood still, and fastened themselves upon the head of an Apollo that had been cast upon the heap thrown up for defense, and the longer the singer's glance remained fixed upon the beautiful features of the god the brighter and clearer was the splendor in which it shone.

Once more he found strength to raise his feeble hand, and it pointed to the sunny head of that immortal youth; but his lips murmured softly: “He, he—of all that was beautiful in life—Orpheus, Herse—we have to thank him for the best. Our end is also to be his. Those, those people there, are conquering thee and us! They dream of a Paradise beyond death; but where thou reignest, Oh Phœbus, there is bliss already upon earth. They boast of loving death and hating life, and now that they conquer, music has received her death-blow too, and, if it goes on, they will destroy

beauty, and put out the sun. Dark, dark, dismal, silent, and hateful, now is the glad, bright earth. Thy kingdom, oh, Phœbus, how sunny and full of delight!"

Here breath failed him; yet soon he rallied, and cried out with glowing eyes: "We, we need light, and the tuneful sound of flute and harp, bright flowers around careless brows, we—hold me, Herse—thou, thou—hear me, Phœbus Apollo—Hail to thee! Thanks to thee, who hast taken much from me, and given me everything! Come, oh come! Orpheus, Herse! Do you see him come?"

Quickly and imperatively he pointed with his hand into the distance, and his wide-open eye followed the direction of his guiding finger. With a mighty exertion of his last powers he raised up a little; but the next instant he had already fallen back, his head sunk slowly upon the breast of his companion, and a hot stream of blood gushed from his quivering lips.

The hilarious friend of the Muses was a corpse, and the next minute his son, too, lost consciousness.

The temple shook and groaned with the tumult of battle and the blare of trumpets.

The conflict had changed to a hand-to-hand fight. The heavy-armed soldiers had scaled the opposing wall, and wrestled with the heathen, breast to breast.

Herse saw them coming, pulled the spear from her husband's breast, and with daring, raving, and yet impotent thrusts, attacked the besiegers, and glowing with hatred and fierce thirst for revenge, cursed them wildly as they came.

Then she obtained her vehement desire: a lance thrust her through, and lifeless she sunk down between her husband and son. Her death-struggle did not last long; but in death she still found strength to stretch out her arms in order to touch with her head both of her beloved ones.

The battle raged above the fallen, the Imperialists forcing the defenders of the bulwark into the halls of the temple, and the plan of attack, which had been devised at the council of war in the palace of the *Comes*, was punctiliously carried out with cool courage and iron resolution.

A few maniples pursued the fugitives to the great entrance, helped them to burst the doors open, and drove them across the landings and stairs, and the masses of stone there heaped up, into the arms of the troops stationed in front of the temple. These quickly girded them about and clutched at them, as the hunter falls to upon the game that has been seared up for him by dogs and whippers-in.

In advance of all hurried forward the abandoned women assembled in the rotunda, who received the soldiers with a cry of delight.

Only whoever had weapons was struck down. Bernice, the widow of Asclepiodor, had found a sword on the ground, and with it cut open her veins. Beneath the statue of Justice was found her corpse, she having bled to death.

A few maniples had immediately hastened to the storming of the breastworks on the roof, and had forced its defenders either to yield or rush over its brink.

Old Memnon, who had in this case fought against his emperor's general, and could count upon no mercy, swung himself over the

parapet of the roof into the abyss below, and others followed his example; for was not the end of all things coming nearer and nearer, and to the more noble a voluntary death in battle, for the sake of the great Serapis, seemed finer and more praiseworthy than to languish life out in the chains of the foe.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE terrible storm of the past night had filled the whole city with horror. They knew what threatened Serapis, what stood before them if he fell, and everybody had supposed that the destruction of the world was at hand. But the tempest was over, the sun's rays had scattered vapors and cloud, the sky and sea were radiant in limpid blue, while tree and shrub were glorious in their renewed freshness. And yet the Roman had not ventured to lay hands on the patron of the city, that highest of the gods. Serapis had perhaps only sent thunder, lightning, and torrents of rain as messengers to warn his enemies. Let them take heed of pushing him to extremity, let them abstain from the crime of touching his likeness.

Not only thought the heathen thus, Christians and Jews as well shuddered in prospect of the fall of Serapis and his temple.

It was the pride, the emblem of Alexander's city; to it were attached institutions and schools benefiting thousands, and under its protection was science, of which the Alexandrian was proud; to the Serapeum belonged the ever-cherished medical faculty which up to that time enjoyed the unchallenged reputation of being the first in the world; in its observatory astronomers regulated the course of the year and thence sent forth the annual calendar. An hour of sleep in its halls brought dreams full of import, and the future remained a sealed book if Serapis fell; for the God revealed to his priests not only through the course and position of the heavenly bodies, but also through many other channels, what must and should come, and it was so delightful from the commonplace present to peer into the mysterious morrow and day after to-morrow.

Even Christian prophets answered the questions of their brethren in a manner that admitted of the worst interpretation, and as one does not willingly cut down a tree planted by one's ancestors, even though it shuts out light from the house, so many a baptized person could not bear to think of his native city without the Serapeum and Serapis.

The temple might be closed, it might be prohibited to bring bloody sacrifices to the god; but his image—the very noblest work of Bryaxis by the way—to touch or destroy that was a rash momentous act, a crime imperiling the city and the world.

So thought the citizens, so thought the soldiers too, who, by discipline, were forced to draw the sword against the god in whom many of them believed.

No sooner had the report spread that early in the morning the troops had undertaken an attack upon the Serapeum, than thousands upon thousands flocked together in front of it, awaiting in anxious suspense the issue of the conflict going on within the temple.

The sky was still as clear and blue as upon other pleasant days,

but in the north, over the sea, a light cloud was apparent, perhaps the forerunner of that terrible army of clouds which the god meant to bring into the field against his foes.

The defenders of the sanctuary were led forth. It had been determined in the council of war to exercise mildness toward them, and Cynegius had full power to pardon, *in toto*, every prisoner who would swear in future to offer no more sacrifices and to give up frequenting the temple.

Of the hundreds who had fallen into the hands of the Romans not one refused to take this oath, and they soon dispersed with pent-up feelings of sullen rage, and many of them joined the expectant multitude in order to await here the further proceedings of the Imperialists and perhaps the end of things.

The gates of the temple were wide open, here the servants of the Serapeum were cleaning, there many hundreds of soldiers clearing the steps and landings of the blocks of stone and statuary with which the heathen had rendered them inaccessible, and as soon as this work had come to a conclusion they were seen bearing forth the bodies of the dead and wounded. Among the latter was Orpheus, the son of Karnis.

Those defenders of the sanctuary who had happily escaped and joined the crowd were besieged with questions, and all confirmed the statement that so far Serapis had remained untouched.

The citizens breathed more freely, but soon they were seized by new excitement, for an *ala** of panoplied horsemen appeared, clearing the track for an immeasurably long procession, whose psalm-singing drowned the shouts and murmurings of the multitude, the rattling of armor, and the stamping of horses' hoofs.

Now it was clear where the monks had stayed. Nowhere else had they ever been missing when a blow was to be struck at the heathen, but until now only individual ones had shown themselves before the Serapeum.

There now they approached, a song of rejoicing upon their lips, and a wilder, more relentless light in their eyes than ever.

Beneath a lofty canopy moved the bishop in great state. His tall majestic form was proudly erect, his lips firmly closed. He looked like a stern judge who steps upon the tribunal to pronounce sentence, with all severity, in some case of shameful crime.

The multitude trembled.

The bishop and monks in the Serapeum portended the fall, death, and destruction of the most exalted of all idols. The cheeks of even the more courageous turned pale, many who had left wife and children behind fled homeward in order to perish with them, it perish they must; others stood still, watching the imperiled temple amid execrations and prayers; but the most part—men and women—pushed forward to the sanctuary, risking their lives to witness the monstrous event impending there that promised to be a spectacle of spectacles.

At the foot of the grand approach the *Comes* rode forward to meet the bishop, leaped from his horse and greeted him reverentially. The imperial legate had not appeared; he had preferred in the first

* A hundred men.

place to remain at the Prefecture, and purposed later being present at the races from their commencement as representative of his emperor, at the side of the city-prefect, Evagrius, who likewise held himself aloof from the attacks upon Serapis.

Romanus nodded to Constantine the leader of the cavalry after a brief interview. The whole body set off, and headed by their prefect ascended the inclined plane, which led to the lofty front gates of the Serapeum.

The *Comes* followed them with his staff, after him came with pale faces and hesitating footsteps a few officers of rank and Christian members of the City Senate, and lastly—he had suffered the others to take precedence of him—the bishop with the priests and chanting monks.

Heavy armed infantry closed up the procession, and after these pushed on the crowd without being hindered by the troops who kept their station in front of the temple, and did not lose sight of them.

The great halls of the temple had been cleaned as well as was possible in such haste.

Of all those who had streamed hither to defend the god and his abode, no one was left behind but the sick Porphyrius and his nurses.

After silence had prevailed outside for a long while and a series of torturing moments had elapsed, coarse fists had knocked at the door of that apartment. Gorgo had hurried forward to unbolt it, but the physician had held her back, and now the door was forcibly burst open, lifted off its hinges and hurled into the corridor upon which it opened.

Immediately afterward soldiers had entered the room and were making an inspection of the same.

The physician was pale as death, and incapable of speech had sunk down upon a chair beside his patient's couch; but with quiet dignity Gorgo had turned to the centurion in command of the intruders and explained to him who she was, and that she was here to aid the physician in attendance upon her ill father. Then she had requested to speak with the prefect of cavalry, Constantine, or the *Comes*, Romanus, who were acquaintances of her own and her father.

It was nothing strange that a sick man should be brought to the Serapeum, and the calm, unembarrassed dignity with which Gorgo spoke, as well as the high rank of the men to whom she appealed, caused the centurion to meet her most respectfully; but he had received orders to put forth from the temple every one who was not a Roman soldier, and so he desired her to wait, and speedily returned with the commander of his legion, the legate Volcatius. This knightly patrician, like all connoisseurs in horse-flesh, knew the owner of the finest animals in Alexandria, and gave Gorgo, it is true, permission to stay by the sick man; yet he bade them consider that grave occurrences were at hand, and upon Gorgo's insisting on remaining with her father he detailed a guard for her protection.

The soldiers had their hands full, so merely thrust aside the door that they had burst open instead of replacing it upon its hinges; but Gorgo pushed back the curtain—inasmuch as this did not affect her father's comfort—which now was the only thing separating her from

the corridor to the right of the *hypostyle*, and looked out above the heads of a double row of foot soldiers.

They had been placed at the side of the lowest step which led to the corridors on both sides of the *hypostyle*.

Already from the distance Gorgo perceived that a great multitude of men were approaching, moving slowly forward with long interruptions. In the vestibule they made a long halt, and ere they entered the basilica twenty priests took the precedence, with singular movements and wonderful incantations. These were exorcists, who were to banish by pious exercises the evil spirits and demons who had made their home in this favorite spot for idolatry and its abominations.

They held crosses before them, moving them like weapons, with which they were fighting foes invisible. They touched with them the pillars, the floor and the statuary left standing, cast themselves upon their knees, with their left hands making the sign of the cross, and finally planted themselves like soldiers in three files before the niche containing the god's effigy, pointed to it with their crosses, and recited in a loud voice that sounded stern, imperious, and wrathful, those strong sentences and powerful formulas which were appointed for exorcising the worst, vilest, most stiff-necked of all the heathen demons.

A crowd of acolytes who had followed them swung censers before the pestiferous nest of the king of idols, and the exorcists dipped rods in the caldron which was borne in their train and sprinkled with them the idolatrous figures upon the curtain and the mosaics traced on the floor.

These carryings on consumed many minutes. Then—and now Gorgo's heart began to beat quicker and quicker—then appeared Constantine in a rich suit of armor, and behind him an *ala* of a hundred picked men, bearded veterans were they, with scarred faces.

Instead of swords they carried axes in their hands, and behind the last member of this imposing company came soldier boys with tall ladders, which they leaned, by Constantine's order, against the niche.

The foot-soldiers who formed a hedge on the side of the colonnade started when they caught sight of those ladders, and Gorgo felt by the trembling of the curtain, where stood the doctor at her side, how great his agitation must be. It was as though the executioner's ax had been held up before a people with which their king was about to be executed.

Now appeared the bishop and dignitaries, singing priests and monks spread themselves out in the vast room, and made incessantly the sign of the cross, the crowd streamed into the *hypostyle* and pressed as far forward as was allowed by the chain which the soldiers had stretched across between them, the bishop and other dignitaries. The people, heathen and Christian, in lively mixture, filled also the colonnades; the chain, however, kept them back from that end of it into which the chamber of the sick Porphyrius opened, and so they did not obstruct Gorgo's view of the niche, hidden by the curtain.

The psalm-singing thundered through the spacious temple halls,

drowning the groans and murmurs of the raving multitude, filled with anguish, and prepared for all that was horrible and sacrilegious.

Every one knew what crime was meditated here, and yet but few could believe that they would actually dare to perpetrate it.

Wherever Gorgo looked she saw pale faces distorted by passionate and painful excitement.

Even the priests and soldiers were infected by the same apprehensions. With teeth clinched, many kept their eyes fixed stolidly on the ground, others, in order to mask their anguish of spirit, cast indignant and defiant glances at the murmuring people, who were trying to put down the psalm-singing with their loud threats and curses, while the echo redoubled the many-tongued clamor in those vast halls.

An uneasiness, an agitation without parallel pervaded this densely packed assemblage.

The heathen quivered from rage, their fingers fumbling for amulets and magical charms, or shaking their fists; the Christians trembled from timidity or pious expectancy, and moved their hands, making the sign of the cross; or, with outstretched middle finger, protecting themselves against the trickish attack of demons. That something dreadful, overpoweringly horrib'e was impending, could be read upon all features, gathered from every movement, and was betrayed by the loudness of the oaths and the songs of the pious.

It was with Gorgo as though she stood upon the brink of a crater, earth and air quaking about her, as though she could see the hot ashes and lava mounting upward, to return to earth and spread ruin and desolation far and wide.

The commotion among the heathen grew louder and louder; single stones and bits of wood flew toward the spot where tarried the bishop and dignitaries, but all at once the noise ceased, and, as if by a miracle, it grew still, quite still throughout the broad domains of the temple.

It was as though the nod of Almighty God had suddenly changed the ocean, lashed into fury by the tempest, to a calm and peaceful lake. Upon a nod from the bishop acolytes had drawn near the niche containing the statue of Serapis, and the curtain which had hitherto withdrawn him from the vulgar gaze slowly fell.

There sat Serapis on his throne, thence he looked down upon the multitude in majestic dignity, unapproachable, with cool pride, as though he were highly exalted above the puny carryings-on of the worms of the dust at his feet, and to-day the sight of him produced the same impression as on yesterday.

How beautiful, how marvelously noble and precious was this work of human skill! It forced from Christians, even, a low, long-drawn out exclamation of surprise, admiration and astonishment.

The heathen were silent at first, overpowered by pious awe and blissful rapture, but then they broke forth into a loud, enthusiastic shout of joy, and their "Hail to Serapis!" "Last forever, Serapis!" rang from column to column, and floated upward into the starry world of the stone roof.

Gorgo held her hands crossed over her breast, when she caught sight of the god in his exalted beauty. Faultlessly and spotlessly pure, wholly and entirely perfect, stood this noble work before her,

perhaps only a brittle idol, but god-like, as the immortal work of a friend to deity, inspired by all heavenly manifestations.

Her eye, as if spell-bound, clung to that form which was human, and yet transcending the human as far as eternity does time, or sunlight the far-reaching light-house on Pharos; and she said to herself that it were impossible to lay hands on that noble, glorious statue, sanctified by the nobility of imperishable beauty.

She saw how the bishop took one step back after the curtain had fallen, and half opened his lips, perhaps in order to give expression to his admiration by some exclamation like the rest; but she saw, too, how he closed them only the more tightly, how fiercely his eye flashed when the glad shouts of the heathen rang forth, how the veins upon his high forehead swelled when that "Hail to Serapis!" was heard. Then she saw how the *Comes* whispered a few soothing words to the church-prince, perhaps to induce him to spare the idol, not as a god, but as a work of art; and how then—her heart stood still and she had to cling fast to the curtain—the *Comes* turned away from the bishop, shrugging his shoulders, and with a movement of his hand directed toward the image, conveyed an order to Constantine.

He bowed with military gravity, and then gave a command to his troopers, which was drowned by the wild cries of the heathen, but the import of which she shudderingly guessed.

Those weather-beaten warriors were stirred. An inferior officer, after he had handed the *vexillum** to the man next him, and taken his ax from his hand, walked toward the statue, looked up at it, and then stepping slowly and hesitatingly backward, returned to his comrades, who stood loitering, looking at one another dejectedly, questioningly, and defiantly.

Again Constantine gave the word of command, and this time, in a tone louder and more imperious than before, but the troopers did not budge; and when the inferior officer threw down his ax others followed his example, pointing to the god with violent gestures, and addressing words to the prefect, which must have contained a refusal to obey his order; for he stepped up closer to that mutinous inferior officer, a gray-haired veteran, laid his hand upon his shoulder, shook him violently, and threatened both him and the rest.

In those brave soldiers the habit of obedience to orders and love of their valiant superiors, contended with awe of the god; this was seen in their agitated countenances, by their hands uplifted in entreaty; but the prefect inexorably reiterated his command, and when now, too, obedience was refused him, he turned off from the troopers, with a gesture of bitter contempt, and called to the double row of foot-soldiers lining the colonnade behind which Gorgo followed these proceedings, bidding them execute the order.

But these, too, dared to disobey.

The heathen sent up a shout of triumph, and, with loud cheers, encouraged the soldiers in their resistance.

Then once more Constantine turned to his own troopers, and finding that they persevered in their refusal, with firm step he approached the ladders, with strong arm lifted one from the wall,

* A standard for cavalry adorned with a pennon.

leaned it against the breast of the god, took up the ax which lay nearest him, mounted from one round to the other, when all at once the noise of the heathen was hushed; it grew so still in the vast hall that one link upon a soldier's shirt of mail could be heard clinking against the other, so still that one could hear his neighbor breathe, and Gorgo thought that she heard the pulsations of her own heart.

Man and god stood eye to eye, and the man whose errand there was to lay violent hands upon the god was her betrothed.

In breathless suspense she followed each of his movements, and would have liked to hurry after him, from round to round, to catch him by the arm and restrain him from the committal of such an unheard-of crime, and this, not out of any dread as to the ruin with which he threatened herself and all the world—but only because she felt that as his ax clave the ivory, so his act of violence against this never-to-be-restored marvel of human skill might shatter her love for him. She feared not for him, because in her thought he appeared as it were a thing set apart and invulnerable; but her whole soul thrilled with horror of the deed that he dared to commit. Her glance clung to him, as the distressed child to the neck of its mother, and the thousands assembled there, in those instants of torturing suspense, saw nothing, nothing but him.

Never did there reign more perfect silence in the heart of the desert than now in this hall overflowing with passionately excited men. Of all the five senses, only one was in requisition here, viz., the sight; and yet it had nothing to fasten upon but the simple object of a human hand armed with an ax.

Hearts stood still, the breath was held suspended, there was a singing and roaring in a thousand ears, and a flickering of vision to many who strove to see clearly but could not; and these thousands resembled in spirit the condemned criminal, with his head upon the block, who hears the steps of the executioner, and upon the threshold of death still hopes for a reprieve.

Gorgo could not find the answer to her question; for she too must see, only see.

And she saw how Constantine closed his eyes, as though he dreaded to see the fulfillment of destiny brought about through his hand; she saw how with his left hand he grasped the idol's flowing beard, saw how he drew back his right arm for a powerful stroke; saw, heard, felt how the ax, once and again whizzed down upon the cheek of Serapis; saw and heard how beautifully polished ivory struck upon that stone floor in large and small well-rounded bits, rebounding from elasticity, or else shivering into smaller fragments.

She hid her face with her hand, and, weeping aloud, buried her head in the curtain. Sobbing and groaning she felt and thought of nothing than that something terrible, inconceivably terrible, had happened.

An unparalleled noise, like reverberating thunder and the dashing of surf upon the beach, was roaring around her, but she heeded it not; and when at last the doctor called to her, as he drew her away from the curtain, and her eyes opened again, instead of that sublime statue in the niche, there stood facing her a shapetess wooden trunk of a body, against which leaned many ladders, and at the

foot of which, in bewildering confusion, lay heaps of ivory shavings, gold plates, and broken marble chips.

Constantine had vanished; upon the rounds of the ladder, and upon the block now stood, in motley disorder, cavalymen and monks, making a finish of the work of destruction.

As soon as the prefect had struck the first blow, and the god had received it in passive tranquillity, the men had rushed upon him, and spared their leader the prosecution of the work of destruction by him begun.

The great image in the niche was no longer a god.

No more was there a Serapis; the heaven of the heathen had lost its king.

In speechless rage, and yet with agonized souls, the worshipers of the dethroned god rushed out into the open air, and sought in vain for avenging clouds in the bright sunlight of a clear, blue, radiant sky.

Theophilus, too, and the *Comes* had withdrawn, after the bishop had committed to the monks further oversight of the work of destruction.

He knew his followers in sheepskin, and was confident that in a few days not an idol, not a representation not a sign, that reminded of the old gods, would be left intact; as for the thousand slaves, to whom the leveling with the ground of the Serapeum was to be intrusted, his impatience would indeed have to grant a twenty-fold longer respite.

The *Comes* repaired without delay, to the hippodrome; and thither preceded him hundreds, bearing with them to the assembled throng the tidings that Alexandria had lost her Serapis.

Constantine had separated himself from the destroyers, and sat down upon the steps leading to the colonnade.

Absorbed in dark and melancholy thoughts, his eyes were fixed upon the ground.

He was a soldier, and felt the responsibility of his calling. What had been done he was compelled to do; but nobody suspected how hard it had been for him to perform that frightful task.

He stood in awe of his own act, and yet he would have committed it again on the morrow, if he had been placed in the same circumstances as on to-day.

He regretted that beautiful work of art as a lost treasure, but he felt that it had been right and necessary to remove it from the world. At the same time he thought of Gorgo and how she would bear the news, who had given herself to him just on yesterday. He loved her with his whole heart, and yet he knew that the ground upon which she was averse to his faith was because she believed it to be inimical to the beautiful. And was it her lover who had lifted his arm like a rude savage against that noblest work of art, which, in his heart, he esteemed as highly as she did?

He reflected, and in so doing probed the inmost recesses of his soul, and again he had to admit that he had done no wrong, and another time would have to act similarly, even at the risk of losing her. He knew nothing nobler than Gorgo; should he dare then, to lead her to the altar with a stain upon his honor? But he did not hide it from himself that his deed had dug a deep chasm between

her and himself, and in his trouble he was reminded of the tragedy and that Destiny of the ancients which punishes her victims as guilty without their having guilt of their own.

This day, perhaps, marked the downfall of his happiness; most probably he must go forth into battle, and fight on until he met death on the battle-field.

Thus he sat pondering, and his looks grew more and more dark, his head sinking lower and lower upon his burdened bosom. Then he felt a light touch upon his shoulder, and when he turned around there stood Gorgo behind him, and she offered him her right hand; but he sprung from his seat, seized the dear hand with passionate ardor, looked sorrowfully into the young girl's eyes, and said, timidly and with deep emotion: "I should love to hold it, hold it forever; but will you let me, when I tell you what this right hand has done?"

"I know it," replied she with firmness. "And was it not hard, very hard for you to do it?"

"Unspeakably, unspeakably hard!" replied he; and he drew up his shoulders as though struck by new pain at the recollection of that dark fatality.

Then she gave him a long, fond look, and exclaimed: "And you did it because you must and will be what you are. That is right; I feel it to be so, and shall try to imitate you, and break with that half-heartedness which poisons existence and changes the firm path of life—I have experienced this—into a tottering, unsafe bridge. I will be wholly, wholly yours, and henceforth have no other God than yours, and out of love for you learn to love your God, of whom you have so often spoken to me as a God of love."

"He is so," cried Constantine, "and you will understand and know him, too, without any teaching, for whoever has a heart full of love, in him our Saviour dwells. Oh, Gorgo, Gorgo! I have shattered that beautiful idol, but I will show you that as a good Christian, too, the beautiful may be cherished and esteemed both in house and heart."

"I believe you!" cried she joyfully. "The earth still stands firm and shakes not, in spite of the fall of Serapis; but it really seems to me as though one world had been obliterated from my soul, and as though a new one had arisen that is higher, purer, and perhaps even more beautiful than the other!"

He pressed her hand to his lips; but she beckoned him to follow her, and led him to her father's couch, who, with wide-open eyes, was leaning against the physician's breast, and greeted them with a faint smile as they entered.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE great hippodrome was filled by many thousands of spectators. At first, to be sure, whole rows of seats had stood vacant, while at other times the people had begun to assemble directly after midnight, and long before the beginning of the show every seat

had been occupied. As for the upper wooden galleries of the tribunes where were free seats and standing-room, they were generally so crowded, even early in the morning, that there were often battles over them, not a few.

This time many had been kept back in the beginning, from attendance upon the entertainment to which they had been so long looking, ardently looking forward, in the first place by the storm of the past night, anxiety as to the issue of the fight over the Serapeum, and dread lest the world should actually come to an end. But when the sunny sky preserved its clearness, and it was known that the statue of Serapis had been respected during the whole duration of the fight in the sanctuary, when they saw the imperial legate Cynegius and the city prefect Evagrius enter the arena in great pomp, and that they were followed by many senators and distinguished lords and ladies from Christian, heathen, and Jewish circles, even the timid took heart, and the commencement of the races having been postponed for an hour before the first team had been led into the waiting-place near the starting-point, the seats were abundantly well occupied, although not so full as usual.

The number of teams entered for the race was not a whit behind the usual mark, for the heathen had bent their every energy toward showing their fellow citizens of a different faith and the envoy of Theodosius that, in spite of all persecutions and imperial edicts, they were still a power to be by no means despised.

The bishop's declaration that Christianity had ceased to be a religion for the poor here received striking confirmation; for a great part of the seats set aside for dignitaries, senators, and rich families of the city, were taken by confessors of his faith, and the men and women occupying them in gorgeousness of apparel and splendor of jewelry yielded in nothing to their heathen compeers.

The Christian turn-outs, too, which punctually presented themselves at a place appointed for the assembling together of the chariots entered for the race, could not fail to please the connoisseur; nevertheless, he could not help looking with greater confidence upon the heathen horses, and especially their drivers. The reason for this was plain, inasmuch as hitherto victory had fallen to their side in nine cases out of ten.

The four-in-hand with which Marcus, the son of Maria, appeared at the halting-place outside the ring had never before appeared in the hippodrome. Demetrius, the brother of the owner, had trained for him this double pair of noble coal-black Barbary steeds, and they excited attention among the judges, who were accustomed to saunter about in the so-called *oppidum* behind the *carceves*,* in order to inspect the horses, predict the fortunes of the day, to impart counsel to the charioteers, and lay down their wagers.

Perhaps these perfect animals might equal the famous chestnut stallions of the rich Iphierates, who had already won so many races; but more than the horses must the drivers or charioteers be taken into consideration, and although Marcus understood well enough how to handle the reins—this had been seen in courses made for

* Covered sheds or carriage-houses, in which the teams used to wait, before the signal had been given for the start.

exercise—yet he could hardly compare himself with the handsome Hippias.

This man, like most who entered the lists here, was a charioteer by profession. It was said of him that he had driven across a bridge not fully the width of his carriage-wheel track, and many could testify that with horse and chariot he could trace the name of his mistress in the sand of the hippodrome.

Most and highest bets were made upon him and the chestnuts of Iphicrates. A few adventured smaller sums upon Marcus' Barbary steeds, yet, when they compared the tall but slightly-built form of the Christian, the delicate features of his face, with the dreamy expression of his large blue eyes and the soft down upon his upper lip, with the Achilles-form and Mercury-head of Hippias, they began to tremble for their good gold. Yes, if his farmer brother, who was now standing by his chariot, or a professed charioteer had charge of those superb horses, it would be a pleasure to bet upon them. Marcus had been away upon a trip, and at mention of this they shrugged their shoulders; for not until the last few days had his steeds been introduced to the race-course.

Time progressed, and when the imperial envoy, who had been chosen umpire, had taken his place, Demetrius whispered to Marcus a few more words of caution, and then withdrew to the arena.

He had secured to himself a good seat on the shady side of the stone *podium*, although several seats among those allotted to his family stood empty; but he would not make use of one there, because he wished to avoid his step-mother, who had made her appearance under the escort of two kinsmen of hers, senators.

He had met her neither yesterday nor the day before, for the promise he had made old Karnis, of looking for his wife's sister's child, had left him no breathing space, for he had been truly earnest in his effort to find the maiden.

The high spirit with which she had disdained his magnificent presents, utterly poor as she was, had inspired him with respect for her, and it struck him in the light of an insult to himself or his brother when Gorgo had called her a hussy.

He thought that he had never met a more lovely being; he could not forget her, and the thought pained him that she might sink in the mire of the great city, into which she had plunged through inexperience. His brother had a prior claim to her; and with him he would not contest it. While he had not grown weary of hunting her up in every place of youthful resort, even in Carnopus Street, he had only purposed to bring her into a place of safety, as a treasure likely to be lost to his family otherwise, and which must be safely garnered in the first place before it could be proved who had the best founded claim to its possession.

All his efforts, however, had been in vain, and he had come to the hippodrome in anything but a pleasant mood.

There, the bitter animosity which had met him everywhere in his native city during this visit, appeared to stir with no less activity than out upon the street. The solemn procession in which the chariots used to repair to the race-course, this time had not dared to form; without pomp, individual equipages had driven into the *op-*

podium, and the statues of the gods which used to be placed upon the *spina** no longer dared be seen in the hippodrome.

All this vexed Demetrius, and after he had found his seat, he looked peevishly around upon the spectators.

In the place set aside for his family, and furnished with cushions and lion-skins, sat his step-mother. Her upper and lower robe showed the blue color of the Christian contestants, and consisted of deep-blue silver brocade, in which were artistically interwoven crosses, fish, and olive branches. Her black hair was smooth, and lay close to her temples, and was without wreath; but a string of large old pearls was around her head, and from this hung down upon her forehead a circlet of blue sapphires and white opals. The back of her head was veiled, and with an absent air, as if she might be praying, she looked down into her lap. Here rested her hands, and they clasped a crucifix.

Such repose of manner, such a modest, downcast glance became the Christian matron and widow. Everybody should see that this spectator had not come here to gratify a taste for worldly pleasures, but only to be present at a triumph of her own party, and especially of her son over the idolaters. Everything about her bore witness to her creed, even the pattern of her clothes and style of adornment, even the silk warp of her gloves, into which were woven a cross and an anchor, so that they cut one another and formed the figure of the Greek X, the initial standing for Christ's name.

She wanted to look plain and free from the vanity of this world, but what she wore must be costly, for she was here to do honor to the faith which she represented.

To wear wreaths of sweet, fresh flowers she would have put far from her as a heathen abomination; but for the proceeds of that string of pearls the whole arena might have been garlanded, and a hundred arms filled with flowers every day the whole year round. It seems so much easier to deceive the all-wise Creator of us all than our simple neighbors.

Just as Maria sat there in stiff, modest dignity, so the painters and sculptors of the time began to depict the Virgin Mary, and the farmer shivered as long as his eye rested upon his step-mother.

After such a glance it did him good to hear the merry laugh that rang in his ear, coming up to him from the lowest step of the *podium*. When he found the place whence it came, he would not trust the evidence of his own senses, for there sat the wearisomely sought-after Dada between an old man and younger woman, and seeming to have encountered something very enjoyable.

After Demetrius had comfortably and cheerfully stretched himself, he got up, for just behind Dada sat his attorney, and inasmuch as it seemed advisable to him not to let the game escape from his net this time, he went up to this man and asked him in a whisper to change seats with him, and the old man obliged him pleasantly, giving him a significant smile as he vacated the seat in his favor.

* The spine is a long pedestal (in the circus of Caracalla it measured about two hundred and seventy-five meters) which cut the race course into two parts, being originally constructed of wood, afterward of stone. Its height was generally nine meters. The goals were at the two ends of this—four meters away.

Dada had spent a sleepless night for the first time since she could remember. Who knows whether storm and tempest of themselves could have disturbed her slumbers; but there was enough of a varied and moving character working upon her brain to deprive her of sleep, without going further to discover its cause.

Sometimes she had thought of her family, who were doing battle for Serapis, sometimes of Agnes, and what had become of her, sometimes of the church and the good old priest's sermon, sometimes of the races at which she was to be present, and at the same time the image of the Christian Marcus haunted her soul with persistent vividness.

As a matter of course she would take the side of his horses; but what a strange conjunction: she, Karnis' niece, on the Christian side!

Yet stranger was it, meanwhile, that she could no longer believe all those bad things, which from a child up she had been hearing of the adherents of the crucified Jew. Karnis could not forgive them for having shut up his theater at Tauromenium, and perhaps had not rightly understood them.

She had often enjoyed right pleasant hours at the festivals of the old gods, and they certainly deserved to be called beautiful and bright—dreadful too, when they were angry; but for a long while her soul had felt an undefined longing that no heathen temple had ever provided material for stilling. She knew not by what name to call it, and would have found it hard to describe, but it had been quieted for the first time in that church by prayer, singing, and the sermon of the old priest; then she had felt that with all her folly and helplessness, even though she should remain separated from her foster-parents, she need no longer stand alone, but could lean upon and cling to a great, loving and helpful power. And she needed such a support, for she was so easily deceived. The girl Stephanon, a flute-player who had been with them at Rome, had gotten everything out of her that she wanted, and had passed off on her all her own misdoings. There must be something peculiarly defenseless about her; for everybody undertook to manage her as if she were a child, or attributed such things to her as made her perfectly furious.

In the hippodrome she thought only of the living present, and felt herself to be fortunate, for it was her portion to sit on the lowest row of the stone *podium*, and moreover on good chairs, in the shade that belonged to the rich Posidonius; and this was something entirely different from when, in Rome, she had once stood in the Circus Maximus, on the second wooden gallery crowded and squeezed, unnoticed by anybody, looking upon the races from a distance and down upon the heads of men and animals.

Here she had never again taken her along with her there, for on going out she had been pursued and spoken to by men young and old, and her foster-mother had afterward shielded her everywhere against danger, and never since allowed her to take ten steps in the city unattended.

Here it was much finer than up there in the circus; for here she was separated from the track only by a narrow canal, which was bridged over just in front of her, and it was nice, too, to be noticed and attract a thousand approving looks to one's self.

Even the great Cynegius, the notary and legate of the emperor who had already singled her out on the ship, often looked across at her. A short time before he had been borne across the track on a golden litter by ten gigantic blacks, preceded by twelve lictors, who bore lances wreathed in laurel, and now he sat upon a decorated throne-chair in the middle of the tribune over the point of departure—but she was not concerning herself with that bedizened old man.

She had eyes for everything, and whatever struck her she got Medius and his daughter to tell her about and explain.

Demetrius delighted in her gay spirits, and then she touched the singer and whispered to him: "Only see how those people over there stretch out their necks to look at us; but my dress is pretty! Where did your Posidonius get these expensive roses? On the waist from the shoulder to the girdle alone there are over a hundred buds; I counted them on my way here in the litter. What a pity that they fade so soon! I should like to dry the leaves and make attar of roses out of them."

Here the farmer joined in the conversation, saying across her shoulder: "There would hardly be enough for that."

This unexpected speech caused Dada to turn around, and she blushed when she recognized the brother of Marcus; but he assured her that he had long since repented of having made so free with her the day before yesterday.

Whereupon she laughed and said it had been her fault; as for the rest she might have sent him home more courteously, but she had just been put into a very ill-humor, as who would not have been if they had been treated as Herse did her, hiding her shoes, so that she was compelled to stay on the deck of a ship in the middle of the water. Then she made him acquainted with Medius, and finally asked him about Marcus and his horses, and whether he thought he might hope to win the victory.

Demetrius gladly listened to her talk, and when flower-girls passed through the rows of seats and offered for sale wreaths with flowers and ribbons red and blue, Demetrius bought the very prettiest olive crown of them all for her to throw to the victor who he hoped would be Marcus.

Medius and his daughter wore scarfs in the red color of the heathen, and like them Dada had put a similar one on her shoulder; but now the maiden got Demetrius to hand her some blue ribbons, and to the disgust of Medius, put them on instead of the red, because she was on Marcus' side.

Hereupon the farmer laughed aloud in his gruff voice, and assured her that his brother was zealous enough now, but if he should see her with those ribbons on, he would do his very best to thank her for the part which she had taken. She might know one thing, viz., that Marcus had not forgotten her.

"That pleases me!" answered she simply, adding that it was the same case with her, for she had been thinking all night about Marcus and his horses.

Medius could not forbear reminding her hereupon that Karnis and Herse would take it very ill if she wore Christian colors to-day; but she replied that she was very sorry, but blue pleased her better than red.

This answer sounded so distant and curt, that it struck Demetrius, who had usually seen her cheerful and unrestrained, that there was but little congeniality between Dada and her protectors—yes, he was certain that her position was not agreeable to her.

Music sounded from the towers on each side of the setting-off stand; but its strains were less lively and varied than usual, for flute-playing and many other heathen fashions had been discarded.

At other times the hippodrome had been a place of resort for lovers, and many a new engagement had been entered into there, but to-day the daughters of the best families had not been allowed to leave their private apartments, for evil was confidently predicted on all sides; the events going on in the Serapeum kept many heathen youths aloof from the races, and it was as though a mysterious something burdened the air and checked the merriment that had wont to be at home here.

Passionate excitement, expectation on the *qui vive*, favor and disfavor had ever been in place here, but to-day these feelings had assumed an intensified form, hatred had mingled in them and possessed herself of the whole.

Everywhere the heathen were injured in their rights, insulted and oppressed. They saw the Christians triumphing in a hundred departments of life, and hatred is a many-sided monster who rages in the fiercest, most inexorable manner when he bursts forth from the venomous cave of Envy.

But the Christians, too, hated the idolaters, who, with proud self-exaltation, bragged of their spiritual possession, the inheritance of a glorious past. The persecuted and reviled were now the ruling and powerful party; the more domineeringly, then, they met the subject faction, the greater injustice they did them; and the less possible it was for the oppressed heathen to avenge this, the more deeply began the Christians to hate those whom they despised also as superstitious idolaters.

In their care for their divine part, the soul, hitherto the Christians had slighted the nurture and physical training of the body, and so in the gymnasium and hippodrome up to this time the heathen had maintained undoubted superiority.

There, in the ring, the Christian scorned to appear, for to show himself with naked body was for him an abomination; but in the hippodrome he had begun to drive his own horses and already more than once won the crown from old victors, and so the heathen felt themselves threatened in this domain also with the loss of ancient and well-maintained claims to unapproachable superiority. This was hard to bear, this could not be brooked, and the bare thought of being surpassed here roused in the heathen, as it were, violent indignation and hatred.

They showed to which party they belonged by resplendent wreaths of scarlet poppies, pomegranate blossoms and glowing roses, while their red dresses were decked off with crimson ribbons. The white and green which they had formerly used as an extra means of distinguishing one from the other were now discarded, for their whole force was to be bent against one opponent.

Red sunshades protected their ladies, and red were even the bas-

kets in which were kept the provisions destined for the hours during which the races would last.

On the other hand, like the Widow Maria, all the Christians were decked in blue from the head-gear to the sandals that were tied around their ankles with blue ribbons, and Dada's blue favor was not at all in keeping with her rose-red robe.

The slaves from the cook-shops who handed refreshments around, offered for sale red and blue eggs with iced cakes, and liquors from vases of both colors.

Where a Christian happened to be seated beside a heathen, shoulder was obliquely turned to shoulder, and where those of opposite faith had to face one another, it was done with scowling faces.

Cynegius, as umpire, sought to postpone the beginning of the race as long as possible; for he was earnestly desirous that the *Comes* should accomplish his task in the Serapeum and allow him the disposal of the troops, at all events before the games came to a close in the hippodrome.

Time passed swiftly enough with him, for the great multitude assembled here interested him specially, frequently as he had been present at similar entertainments at Rome and Constantinople, inasmuch as it differed essentially from the spectators whom he had met at other circuses. More black and brown than white men had the free places in the upper tiers. Upon the stone *podium* of the lower gallery sat upon costly chairs and sofas of their own, between Greeks and Egyptians, thousands of richly dressed men and women, with sharply cut Semitic features, members of the great Jewish community, whose gray-haired chief, the alabarch, a dignified patriarchal-looking individual in Greek attire, sat in his vicinity beside the leaders of the Senate.

The Alexandrian was no friend to procrastination, and already the impatience of the multitude was venting itself in wild uproar when Cynegius arose, and with a white cloth, gave the signal for the races to start.

From fifty the spectators had grown to sixty and eighty thousand, while behind the *carceres* trailed six and thirty harnessed teams.

Four *missus* or races were contemplated.

Twelve chariots were to take part in the first three, and to the fourth were to be admitted only the three victors of the preceding *missus*. To him who won in this decisive struggle the olive crown and palm was to be adjudged the honors of the day; his party had beaten the other and might leave the hippodrome in triumph.

In the *oppidum* behind the *carceres* it was decided by lot whence each chariot should take its departure, and to what *missus* belong. Marcus came in first, and with him to the horror of those who had bet upon his horses, that *matador* of charioteers, Hippias, with his four chestnuts.

While heathen priests poured out libations to Neptune and Phoebus Apollo, the tutelary deities of the horse and hippodrome—for bloody sacrifices were interdicted—presbyter and exorcist, in the bishop's name, blessed the Christian steeds. A few monks had fol-

lowed them, but were driven away with bitter mockery by the heathen as unbidden intruders.

Cynegius again signaled.

Trumpet calls rent the air, and now the twelve first teams drove into the sheds appointed them, where they were to remain until the signal was to be given for the start.

After a few minutes, from an altar in front of the *carceres*, rose up an automaton eagle* with outspread wings, and instantly the teams left their sheds and placed themselves up behind the setting-out line, which was a broad chalk-mark drawn across obliquely, in order to equalize the advantage of the teams starting from the outer wings.

Only those spectators occupying the preferred places over the *carceres* had hitherto been in a position, if they turned around, to overlook the horses and their drivers; for the great mass they were now, for the first time visible, and at sight of them they broke forth into loud, far-echoing shouts of applause.

The charioteers had to exert all their might to restrain their champing steeds from rushing forward at sound of this noise, but it was only for a few minutes, for again had Cynegius given a sign, and now fell to the ground a golden dolphin which had been suspended beneath a balcony, and upon which the looks of all the charioteers were fastened; a deafening blast from the trumpets pealed forth, and forty-eight steeds dashed out upon the broad track, as though released from restraint by a single hand.

Playing, as it were, those powerful sets of four horses tore those light two-wheeled vehicles over the hard ground, which had been freed from dust by the last night's rain.

Bright sunshine glittered and sparkled and was reflected with brief, intermittent flashes in the splendid gilding of the bronze, and the silver of the crescent-shaped chariots, with their richly-carved decorations, wherein stood the charioteers.

Five blues mingled with seven reds, as had been determined by lot.

The eye delighted to follow that sinewy form whose naked foot seemed to be rooted to the carriage, whose eye to have grown to that normal point, the aim of its struggles, and yet, like the archer, who takes in all at once, arrow, bow, and target, his four horses were never out of mind.

A cap with fluttering ribbons kept in place his curly locks, a short and seamless jacket covered his body, around which broad straps were interlapped, as though for the purpose of girding up his strength.

Over the hips were the reins fastened, that the hands might be left free, partly to guide these, partly to hurl the lash and use the goad. In each girdle stuck a knife with which to cut loose from the horses if self-preservation required this.

Soon Hippias' chariot, drawn by the four chestnut stallions, took the lead of all others. Two Christian teams came next, then three reds, while behind the rest Marcus came last; but one could see that he and his chariot drew up the rear as a matter of choice, not necessity.

* So at Olympia.

The son of Maria swayed far back, his feet pressed against the silver carriage-rim in front of his knees, and with all his force he curbed the career of his snorting steeds.

Soon these chased past Dada and his brother, but Marcus heeded them not. He had been blind to his own mother, too, while professional charioteers bowed to Cynegius and nodded at their friends. He was conscious that mind and eye must be intent upon horses and goal only.

The crowd yelled, huzzaed, encouraged their favorites by loud cries, whistled and hissed, when they were disappointed in their expectations, and loudest of all when Marcus appeared behind the others, but he either did or would not hear them.

Dada's heart beat well-nigh to bursting. She could not sit quiet, jumped up quickly, fell back upon her sofa, and addressed stimulating words to Marcus, in the brief seconds when it would have been possible for him to hear them.

When he had passed her head sunk, and she said, mournfully, "Poor fellow! Have a heed, Demetrius, we have bought our wreaths in vain."

But the farmer shook his head and cried, "In that slender body the youth has nerves of steel. How he holds in those steeds! He saves up for the time of need. Seven times, seven full times, maiden, must he pass the *nyssa** and go around this vast amphitheatre. What he loses now, note well, he will make up for. Hippias, too, is already reining in his chestnuts; it is his way to show off at the start! Now he approaches the *nyssa* or *kampter*—at Rome they call it the *meta*. The sharper is the curve made in turning the greater is the advantage, but that thing is dangerous. Do you see? The course goes from right to left, and much depends upon the left-hand horse. It must almost turn upon itself. Aura there in our chariot is quivering like a panther, and I trained her myself. Look yonder! That brazen horse rearing up—they call it the *taraxippus*†—which frightens the horses, and Meggra, the third horse, is like something possessed, but she is swift as a deer. As often as Marcus gets his four-in-hand quietly past the *taraxippus* we have reason to breathe more freely. But now, open your eyes wide, now the first chariot drives around the goal. It is Hippias! Curse him! There he is around! He is a miserable braggart, but he knows his business."

One of the decisive moments for the contest had come. The shouts of the crowd had lulled; it was felt that expectation had reached its climax, and Dada's eyes hung spell-bound, as it were, upon the obelisk, and the teams that rushed up to it.

A blue followed Hippias, and, at its heels, three reds.

The Christian, who had succeeded in keeping next to the *nyssa*, drove his team shortly and boldly around the obelisk in order to gain ground and outly Hippias, but the left wheel of his chariot struck the granite base of the goal, overturning the vehicle, and the horses of the red, whose noses almost touched his chariot, could not be checked at the right time. They rushed over the Christian's

* The goal, called in Greek: *Nyssa* and *Kampter*; in Latin *Meta*.

† The *taraxippus* at Olympia had the shape of a round altar.

team that were struggling frantically on the ground, the chariot which they drew likewise overturned, and in wild entanglement eight snorting horses lay wallowing on the ground.

The racers to the next chariot shied when they had to pass by the neighing and confused mass near the *meta*, and wholly unmindful of the efforts of their unnerved driver, shot diagonally across the track to the *carceres*. The following teams had to make around the overturned chariots a wide circuit that consumed time and space, Marcus being of the number.

At sight of the confusion by the *meta* his black steeds grew almost ungovernable, and now, as they rushed past the *taraxippus*, as Demetrius had dreaded, the third horse, Megara, shied. She bounded aside, thrust her back under the shafts, hoisting up the body of the chariot, and—Dada clapped her hands before her face, but the Widow Maria, turning pale, contracted her eyebrows—and the young man lost his hold and fell. His feet touched the sand of the arena, but his hand grasped firmly the spiral at the extreme verge of the right side of the chariot.

Many a heart on the tribune stood still, many a cry of malice escaped the lips of the heathen, but before a half minute had elapsed, with strength and agility, he had swung himself upon one knee, and a minute later he stood erect in the chariot, arranging the reins with lightning-like rapidity, and then on he flew.

Meanwhile Hippias had far outstripped all the rest, and when he came by the *carceres* he paused there for an instant, as though in mockery, tore a full cup from a seller of lemonade, and swallowed down its contents, with a derisive gesture, amid the admiring shouts of the crowd, and then let his chestnuts dash forward.

A wide space separated him from Marcus and the rest on the track, stretching far, far in the distance.

When the teams approached the goal for the second time the hippodrome-slaves had long since cleared out of their way the overturned vehicles. A Christian followed Hippias, a heathen him, but Marcus had become the fourth.

In making the third circuit of the obelisk the chariot of the red preceding Marcus struck against the hard granite as it described a short curve. Together with his shattered vehicle he was dragged through the arena and was left lying in the sand a corpse.

On the fifth course round the ring the blue that had hitherto kept nearest to Hippias suffered the same fate, yet he escaped with his life, and Marcus passed second by Cynegius' stand.

Hippias had done with jibes for the present, for the space which divided the black steeds from his chestnuts diminished at every circuit of the ring, in spite of Marcus' detention at the *taraxippus*, and from this time forth the sympathy of the spectators was wholly centered upon himself and the son of Maria.

Never before had any race been so passionately, so bitterly contested on this old race course, and the throng of spectators was carried away by the zeal of the charioteers, which amounted to frenzy.

For a long while already not a creature in the upper galleries had retained a seat. Men and women were on their feet, shouting and calling into the arena with might and main.

The bands of music in the towers seemed to have ceased playing,

so completely were they overpowered by the stentorian outcries of these tens of thousands of voices. Only the matrons on the choice seats over the *carceres* retained their composure, and yet when the seventh decisive circuit began even the Widow Maria bent further forward, and her hands clasped more tightly the cross in her lap.

As often as Marcus drew near the obelisk on the *tarixippus*, Dada, leaning far forward, pressed her hand to her forehead and bit her lips; but when he had happily rushed by that frightful stone, and horrifying image, she had thrown herself back in her seat, drawing a deep breath of grateful relief.

She felt herself one with Marcus, and it seemed to her as if his defeat would be her death, and as though his victory would redound to her honor.

At the sixth circuit Hippias was still ever a good way in advance of the Christian youth, and the distance which parted him from the chestnut team seemed to have become irrevocably fixed, for it would not lessen by a single hand's-breadth.

The management of the charioteers had long since completely changed. Instead of holding them in, they urged them forward. Leaning far forward over the chariot-railing, they goaded on the horses by words and wild, hoarse yells, laying the whip, too, un-sparingly.

With smoking flanks and foaming nostrils the animals chased on in glowing, desperate haste.

From the dry, upturn and much-beaten track dust rose in clouds.

The other teams stayed further and further behind Hippias and Marcus, and, as these now approached the goal for the seventh and last time, the shouts of the crowd stopped for a second, to break forth again only the louder and fiercer, and once more stop.

It seemed as though the restrained force of worn-out lungs worked with redoubled power after suspense had locked long enough the jaws of those thousands.

Dada talked no more with her companion. Pale and breathless she fixed her eye upon the towering stone and the cloud enveloping the teams more closely the nearer they approached the goal.

A hundred paces before the *meta* she saw the red cap of Pippias emerge from the dust; but soon afterward—and now close behind it—Marcus' blue one. Then—a thrilling, deafening shout from a thousand throats cleaved the sky—then once more the blue cap was distinguishable from the gray clouds, gleaming so close by the obelisk as almost to graze it and not leave room enough for a wheel or horse to come in between the stone and driver, and this time was seen through the dust behind—behind, not before it—only as far from the goal as the length of a horse and chariot—the red cap of Hippias.

Marcus had outstripped his competitor hard by the goal, driving round the hard stone by means of a bold curve, imperiling the lives of both team and driver, but the chestnut steeds were left behind.

Demetrius saw all this as it his eye had power to scatter dust, and now, too, his composure forsook him, and, with a loud: "Dear, splendid fellow!" he threw up his arms as if in prayer, and yelled as though his brother could hear him: "The whip! The goad! On, on, though it be the death of them! Spur up those horses!"

Then Dada, who only suspected what was going on, turned to him, and asked with quivering voice: "Does he outstrip him? Is he beating? Will he win?"

But Demetrius did not answer; only pointed with his finger at the cloud in front, moving ahead with the swiftness of the wind—however, a second cloud began to mix with it more and more, and beside himself, he cried out: "Death and destruction! The other passes him again. The dog! The scamp! If the boy would only use the goad! On, on! Stand up to it, Marcus! Good boy! Good boy, only don't give up now! Great Father Neptune!—there—there—but, no! My knees tremble. He holds his own yet, and now—now!—the question is decided! Let the lightning strike me! Oh!—the dust flies together again—and now—now—may he choke! No, no—praised be the Godhead! Those front ones are my own horses, and now— Forward, forward! Glorious fellow! He has won!"

The horses stood still, the dust dispersed; Marcus, the Christian, had conquered in the first *missus*.

Cynegius handed the crown to the young man, and he received it thankfully.

Then he saluted his mother, who nodded to him with gracious composure, and finally he drove back into the *oppidum* behind the sheds.

Hippias threw down his whip in a fury, and the Christian's shout of triumph drowned the music, the blare of trumpets, the invectives and the grumbling of the defeated heathen.

Threatening fists were uplifted behind the *carceres*, the charioteers and owners of horses on the red side scolded and reproached one another; and for a little they would have torn Hippias in pieces, who, to gratify a miserable desire to brag, had cast victory in the lap of their arch-enemies, those blues, those Christians.

There was a terrible uproar, an unparalleled excitement, but Dada heard and saw nothing of all this. She only looked down in mute rapture, and bright tears coursed over her cheeks.

Demetrius saw those tears and rejoiced in them. Pointing out Maria, he informed the maiden that yonder was the mother of Marcus. At the same time he inwardly vowed that, cost what it would, he would unite his brave brother with this lovely and innocent young girl.

The second and third *missus* passed off, like the first, with many an accident, and in both cases, the reds won the crown.

At the fourth decisive race, only three contestants entered the lists: the two heathen victors and Marcus.

Demetrius followed this match with less suspense. He knew that his Barbary steeds excelled the Egyptian stallions in powers of endurance; and he was the better satisfied on this point, because they had rested longer than the others.

Indeed, this time victory fell to the son of Maria easily and completely.

Long before the race was decided Dada had looked impatiently upon her crown, and could not now expect to cast it to Marcus in his chariot. When all was over, perhaps, she might find some opportunity of speaking with him, and she delighted in the tone of

his voice, and the look out of his large, good eyes. If he were to ask her to follow him again, she would do so, let Karnis and Herse say what they would to the contrary. Go with him she would, wherever and to whomsoever he asked.

It seemed to her as though no other could rejoice over his victory as she did, as though she belonged to him, and had always belonged to him, being parted from him only by some caprice of a trickish destiny.

And now, again, loud peals of triumph sounded, and, in obedience to an old custom, the victor had to rile around the track in a walk, showing his gallant steeds to the spectators.

He came nearer and nearer, and Demetrius invited her to follow him over the canal, which separated the *podium* from the track, and not throw his brother the crown she had for him, but hand it to him herself.

At this proposition she blushed deeply, and said neither yes nor no; however, she rose up quickly with a bright but bashful smile, hung a wreath upon her arm, and gave Demetrius the other olive crown, and followed him over the little bridge to the track, on to which many Christians had already crowded, seeing that the racing was over.

The brothers greeted one another while yet far apart, but Marcus did not recognize Dada until he had stopped beside Demetrius, and she was extending an olive crown to him bashfully, but with a face radiant from joy.

He felt as if Heaven had wrought a miracle in his behalf, and never had he seen her look so beautiful as at this instant. Since he had seen her last she seemed to have grown graver and more noble; and he observed likewise the blue knot on her bosom, and the one in the wreath of roses encircling her fair head.

Happiness and surprise taking possession of him paralyzed his tongue; but he took the crown from her, seized her hand, but could only say: "Thank, thank you, Dada."

His eye rested upon hers, he forgot where he was, and asked not what it meant, when his brother suddenly turned off, and with a long bound, sprung after a man who flew past him with his head muffled up; he heeded not that many thousands, his own mother among them, were looking at him; and he repeated his "thank you," and "Dada," the only words that he could articulate, and he would have said them oftener yet, had he not been interrupted, for the *porta libitinaris* was burst open, the gate through which they had been accustomed to carry the dead and wounded into the street outside, and through this forced their way a body of excited heathen, crying to those in the hippodrome: "Serapis has fallen! They have destroyed the image of Serapis! The Christians, the Christians are destroying the sanctuaries of the gods!"

Then a great horror fell upon the assembled multitude, the redds rushed from their seats into the arena, to question, to hear, to offer resistance or seek for safety.

In a trice, the victor's chariot and horses were in a throng of men; Dada, in anguish, clutched at the chariot, but Marcus stooped and drew her in, without thinking or reflection, hardly master of himself any longer. With his steeds, he soon carved a way for himself

through the crowd, drove past the *carceres*, casting a timid glance upward, without finding his mother, however, and finally through the grand gate of exit, drove into the public street his exhausted steeds, dripping as they were with sweat and covered with white foam.

His hostlers had followed him. He threw the reins to them, after freeing himself from his confinement. Then he asked Dada, after she had jumped with him to the ground: "Will you follow me?" and her answer ran: "Whithersoever you will!"

The Widow Maria had risen from her seat with more haste than comported with her dignity upon hearing the tidings of the fall of Serapis; and then gained her litter, under the protection of the guards, who attended the legate Cynegius.

In the hippodrome disorder prevailed; reds and blues rushed upon one another like furious wild animals, on the *podium*, in the upper galleries, and on the dusty race-track. And the bloody scuffle—not a rare thing here in quieter times—lasted until the imperial soldiers parted the unarmed combatants.

The bishop was charmed with the victory which had everywhere crowned his people's efforts; and it was not unmingled with pleasure that he heard of the escape of Olympius, Helladius, Ammonius, and other intellectual leaders of the heathen.

Let them come back again, speak and declaim to their hearts' desire; their power was broken, the church need fear them no more; but for the intellectual development of her rulers, she had still use for their science and their teachings.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE great hippodrome was outside the Canopian Gate, to the north of the street leading to Eleusis, and this was to-day full of men all pressing in the same direction. The confusion produced in the *stadium* by the news that Serapis had fallen drove home the more quiet and peaceable sort of citizens, and precisely to this class belonged the wealthy, who had come in their carriages and litters. Little room, then, was left in the broad street for pedestrians; but still they pushed forward; for everything streamed into the city, and the heathen, who followed the first messengers of misfortune from the Serapeum to the hippodrome had hard work to force their way through the crowds of people hurrying toward home.

Marcus and Dada allowed themselves to be borne onward by the throng struggling to reach the town wall and Canopian Gate.

Phabis, Maria's old steward, who had been charged to assist his young master in disrobing, after the close of the races had removed his charioteer's cap from his head, thrown a cloak over his shoulders and followed him, when he moved off in company with the young singer. The old man could right well explain this episode, for it was he who had escorted Dame Herse to his mistress. She had then struck him as being a sensible and well-meaning woman, and now it was evident that she had been right when she accused Marcus of laying snares for her foster-child. At the time it had been difficult for him to believe this, for he had never yet detected his young master in treading upon forbidden paths, but then Marcus was his

father's child, and when a young fellow how many love scrapes of Apelles he had been obliged to expose. Now came the son's turn, and if he was as serious in his attachment to the graceful young girl at his side as in all things else, and should take it into his head to make the singer his wife, what battles he foresaw between him and his mother!

The old servant attempted to follow Marcus, but was not observed, for the latter had only eye and thought for his "treasure trove," and with her on his arm he struggled toward the gate in the very midst of the crowd. It seemed to him as if heaven was performing miracle upon miracle in his behalf, for it had led Dada to him, and she wore blue favors, and to his question as to what this meant, she had replied: "For your sake, and because I like your faith." He had been ready to drop from fatigue, but the moment Dada laid her arm in his he had grown fresh again, as if by magic. It is true, his swollen hands hurt him, it is true that his shoulder blades many a time contracted painfully, but just as soon as he felt the pressure of her arm upon his and met the joyful look of her countenance, as she turned to tell him how happy she felt, and listen to his: "I love you," he seemed to be in heaven, insensible to pain and discomfort. The pressure of the throng only permitted them to exchange a few brief words; but the communications that they held with one another through mouth and eye were the dearest and sweetest that either of them had ever experienced in all their lives before.

Thus they came through the gate into Canopian Street, but there Dada remarked that his lips had lost their color, and a slight trembling shook the arm in which hers rested. Then she asked him what had come over him, and upon his failure to reply, save by pressing his left hand to his brow, she drew him into the public garden which stretched out on her right hand, between the little *studium* and the Meandrian race-course. In the grounds which were beautifully laid out in grass and beds of blooming flowers, she soon found an unoccupied bench, behind which arose a semi-circular clump of tamarind shrubs, dispensing a deep and grateful shade, and here she compelled him to lie down. He did not resist her efforts, and his pallid cheeks and the glassy look of his eyes taught her that he had fallen into a fainting-fit.

How exhausted must he be after the terrible exertions of this forenoon, and after his victory he had been handed no refreshing drink, no strengthening bit of food.

It was so natural that his strength should have given way, and without being especially anxious about him, but full of compassion and the wish to help, she jumped up and hurried to the fruit-dealer whose stand she had passed between the garden and the street.

How glad she was that she still owned the four drachmas which she had begged of Karnis at the Xenodochium of Maria. She could now make purchases for her beloved to her heart's desire; and when she came back to him with oranges, apples, hard-boiled eggs, salt and bread, held in the turned-up skirt of her dress, and a small bottle of mixed wine, besides a gourd in her free hand, she again found him unconscious. After she had moistened his forehead and lips, however, he opened his eyes again and then she peeled oranges

for him so prettily as nobody else could have done, and invited him to help himself—she herself boldly eating with him, because she was hungry herself. It delighted her that he was her guest, and that he ate her modest meal with relish, and that he revived again so quickly. Indeed very soon he was penetrated with new delight and new vigor; and now as he leaned far back, gazing gladly and gratefully into Dada's eyes, an unspeakable sense of bliss stole over him. He thought he had never tasted anything half so good as this fine meal, brought to him by Dada, nor any wine half so delicious as the poor stuff she had bought of the fruit-dealer. He took the apple from her hand and ate on where she had bitten it with her white teeth; she must drink out of the same gourd with him, and as each one had consumed one of the three eggs she brought with her, they disputed over the third, until finally he yielded and consented to take it as part of his share.

After they had eaten Dada's purchase to the last morsel she asked him for the first time where he expected to take her, and he replied that she would be a welcome guest to his old teacher, the Deacon Eusebius, and there meet again her old companion Agnes. This charmed her, and when she found out by having her attention aroused at the mention of a "deacon," that her future protector was to be the same venerable man whose words had touched her heart so deeply at St. Mark's church, she told Marcus of her having entered the house of God, and how much more peaceful she had been in mind ever since. Something had come over her entirely new there, and since then she had been longing all the time to see him again and talk over all this with him; what she had learned of Christ's teachings did her heart good and raised her spirits. The world was so beautiful, and she knew there were more good than bad people in it. To love one's neighbor was a delight, and to pardon wrong something that she could always do. It must be so pleasant upon earth if everybody feels as kindly to his neighbor as she did to him and he to her, and life would be right easy if in every trouble one had somebody always ready to listen to us and help us out of mere goodness.

And these words struck Marcus as the greatest miracle of all that had been worked this day in his favor. The soul, which heaven had bidden him save in a dream, was already walking in the path of salvation, and now he laid before her many a thing that seemed peculiarly exalted and glorious in his faith, and finally he confessed, too, that he loved his neighbor, it was true, for Christ's sake, but that full and perfect love had only been manifested to him through her. No power in the world could ever part him from her, and if she had received baptism their love might endure even beyond the grave, so long as endless eternity endures; but she listened to him rapturously and said that she was his own and would remain so forever and ever.

To-day there were only a few persons in the garden, although commonly at this hour in the afternoon it was thronged with tired people and children with their nurses; but these last had been kept in the house to-day on account of the disturbances apprehended in the street, and the first were in the hippodrome and its bustle.

This suited the lovers precisely, for they could sit hand in hand

and look into each other's eyes, yes, as old Phabis (who had long lost sight of them, and finally came up with them again in the public gardens) drew near them, he saw from his hiding-place how his young master shyly looked around and first imprinted a kiss upon the singer's curls, then upon her eyes, and finally even upon her lips.

So hours passed with them as if on wings amid grave discourse and delightful chit-chat, so that when at last they gained their consent to leave this quiet retreat it was already twilight.

Soon they again found themselves in Canopian Street in the midst of the crowd that they had often to struggle against now, inasmuch as the current of home-comers had long since ceased to flow, and thousands were now turning their faces to the hippodrome where there were lively carryings on. Marcus slackened his pace as he was passing by his paternal mansion, pointing it out to Dada, and saying that the day was not far distant when she should be introduced there.

Suddenly she became grave and whispered: "No, no, not here, not in the grand palace in this street. We would like to live in a small house all quiet and to ourselves. There should be a garden to it, too, with a seat where we might rest in the shade. Here, here lives your mother too!" She blushed and looked down as she spoke; but he suspected what was going on in her mind, and begged her only to have patience, for if she were a Christian, Eusebius would intercede for her directly. Then he praised his mother's piety and goodness, asking Dada if she had not seen her at the races.

"Yes," answered she hesitatingly, and when he went on to ask if she did not think Maria beautiful and noble-looking, she replied candidly: "Yes, certainly, but at the same time so high and exalted that she must want quite a different sort of a daughter from a poor, deserted orphan like me, a singing-girl, whom nobody respects. But to you, I am right to you just as I am, and you know that I love you. If I do not find my uncle again then I have nobody on earth to look to but you; I need nobody else, however, for you are my all in all, and to live for you and with you is enough for me. But you must never desert me else I shall die! You dare not, for you have told me that my soul is dearer to you than your own life, and if I have you and your love I shall get better and better; but if you allow anything to part us, I shall be undone; once more, you must know that then I shall be undone body and soul! I do not know why I feel so distressed. Let us hurry by this house; if your mother should see us!"

He did as she wished and sought to soothe her, while, with the blind love of a child he praised his mother's virtues. But she only harkened with half an ear to these eulogies, and moreover he was soon interrupted, for the nearer they came to the Rhakotis the thicker grew the throng, and henceforth their conversation ceased and they could only think of working their way forward; but still they were happy.

In this manner they reached Sun Street, one of the principal business thoroughfares of the city, which cut Canopian Street at right angles, and they followed it to the city wall and the gate of Helios

The Serapeum now lay to their right, and several roads led to it from Sun Street. In order to arrive at the little street where Eusebius lived they should have turned into Acropolis Street, but through this, and over the city of the dead* came tearing toward them a confused mass of disorderly, ruffian-like men, who came from the Serapeum. The sun was already approaching the western horizon.

Now Marcus sought to escape collision with such desperadoes and draw Dada to the corner house, but in vain; for the multitude pouring out of Acropolis Street were raving like madmen, and thought of nothing save the trophies of which they had possessed themselves.

In front of a great car which served otherwise for the transportation of balconies, columns, and blocks of stone, several dozens of black and white fellows besides a few women and monks had harnessed themselves, and were drawing through the streets a huge, shapeless block of wood, the stump of the destroyed image of Serapis.

"To the hippodrome!" "Burn it!" "Down with idols!" "See the divine body of Serapis!" Such were the cries sent forth in tones of thunder by thousands of lips as the tumultuous groups moved on.

Monks had dragged from its niche the desecrated stump of what had been Serapis, pulled it through the temple into the open air, and were now bearing it through the city into the arena, to burn it there. Other wearers of sheepskin and Christian citizens who had caught the destructive mania, had forced their way into the sanctuary of Anubis adjacent to the Serapeum, had thrown down from the altar and destroyed the jackal-headed idols, the Canopian gods, besides four immense vases on which served as covers the head of a man, an ape, a sparrow-hawk, and a jackal. Now they bore these queer heads of animals before them, while others dragged with them, on barrows, or carried in baskets and upon their shoulders dismembered limbs of statues of Apollo, Athene and Venus, in order to cast them in the flames at the hippodrome with the wooden stump Serapis.

The mob had broken the god's noses, smeared the marble with pitch, or bedabbled it marvelously with red paint found in the writing-room of the Serapeum. Whoever got near enough the stump or any other piece of the broken idol, spit upon it, beat or punched at it, and hitherto no heathen had ventured to oppose resistance to such carryings on.

Behind the oaken heart of the image of Serapis and those other trophies thronged a troop of men, women, and monks, and a large *carruca* † (that had accidentally crossed their track and become entangled in the seething mass of human beings that extended further than the eye could reach) moved along with them at a slow pace. The noble horses drawing this vehicle had to be led and held in with the bit, for they trembled from impatience and excitement, sometimes trying to break away from the traces, sometimes to rear.

* A quarter of the city in its extreme west, appropriated to cemeteries and catacombs.

† A four-wheeled carriage, used not only for traveling, but as a means of locomotion in the city also.

In the *carruca* sat the merchant Porphyrius, who had recovered consciousness, and Gorgo.

Constantine had remained at the side of the convalescent until the physician Apuleius had declared his further attentions superfluous, and then his duty had called him away. He had received the announcement of his daughter's projected union with the former friend of her childhood, as welcome news, long expected.

A few of the prefect's knights had been ordered to escort Porphyrius' carriage to the gates of the Serapeum, and an abbot, with whom Constantine had become acquainted at Arsinoe, undertook to see that the *carruca* should be guarded on its way home, and preserved from the attacks of the raging multitude.

At the place where Acropolis Street joined Sun Street, and where Marcus and Dada had halted, being unable to go backward or forward, just as the carriage got there, a body of armed heathen, meeting their deadly toes, fell upon the Christians, who had dared heap insults upon all that they held most sacred, and now ensued a fierce struggle. Near to the young Christian a heathen struck down the bearer of the soiled head of a Muse. Dada, in terror, pressed close up to her beloved, and he began to be seriously alarmed for her, when, as he was looking out for some means of safety, he perceived his brother Demetrius, who was making animated signs to him, as he did so clearing a way for him through the crowd. The farmer also exchanged signs with the occupants of the *carruca*, and when, at last, he got to Marcus, he briefly signified to him that Dada must be, first of all, put in a place of safety.

Glad to escape from the crowd and the danger, she nimbly climbed into the carriage, and after she had cursorily greeted father and daughter, beckoned Marcus to follow her; but his brother restrained him, and after it had been most hurriedly arranged that the maiden should be brought away from the merchant's house, in the evening, and Demetrius had whispered a few words in Gorgo's ear, commendatory of the singing-girl, the carriage was once more put in motion.

Among the heathen, by whom this was now surrounded, many knew the noble friend of Olympius, and made way for his carriage, so that he succeeded in reaching unchallenged Euergeten Street, outside the city wall, which gave access to the rear of the Isis temple, the dock of Clement and the merchant's mansion.

Few remarks had been exchanged in the carriage, for the horses moved forward only one step at a time, and under manifold difficulties.

It had grown dark, and the uproar had extended to the usually quiet and retired Euergeten Street. The lurid glare of flames crimsoning the night-sky with their awful splendor showed what attracted the multitude.

The monks had thrown fire into the Isis temple; by a north-west wind, the flames had been driven to Clement's dock, there finding welcome and costly nutriment in the vast stores of wood and hulks of vessels there laid up. From the work-shops roared and crackled rich jets of radiant sparks, emulating the light of the early stars.

Porphyrius saw that his house had been also in peril, but thanks

to the circumspection of the steward and the untiring diligence of his slaves, it had been untouched by the flames.

Meanwhile the brothers had long since left the crowd behind them.

The farmer had not been alone, and as soon as he had made his companion, an abbot of friendly aspect, acquainted with Marcus, he gave animated expression to his joy at meeting the second son of Apelles, the man who had saved his life.

While he was leading Dada to Marcus in the arena, he had caught sight of Anubis, who had attended his father as body-servant to Syria, and never been heard of since. Demetrius had pursued the Egyptian without delay, seized him, overpowered him, not without danger, and then had him put in the prison near the prefecture. Here Demetrius had succeeded in inducing the slave to speak, and from his communications, it had been brought out that Apelles had actually fallen in battle with the Saracens. The Egyptian had profited by his master's death only in so far as to run off with his money. The slave had escaped to Crete, and there bought a small estate with his rich booty, and had now returned, moved by longing after his wife and children, in order to take them with him to his new home.

Finally, in order to confirm the truth of his narration, which cleared him of having murdered his master, and therefore merited little faith, he stated that he had met in Alexandria, the day before, one of the monks who had been cognizant of his master's end; and Demetrius had immediately set out to find this man again by making inquiries among the monks.

In this he had speedily succeeded; and Cosmas, who had since then been elected abbot of the Nitrian brotherhood, to which he belonged, now also told Marcus how heroically his father had fought with the infidels who had fallen upon his caravan. Apelles, he affirmed, had saved his own life and those of two other anchorites, one of whom was likewise in Alexandria at this time. Seven in number, they had journeyed from Hebron to Aila, had put themselves under the protection of the Alexandrian's escort, and all had progressed excellently until they had been attacked by infidel Saracens, in the mountain chain south of Petra. He and two of his companions had happily made their escape while the Alexandrian was contending with the infidels; but from the cliffs above, which they had scaled in their flight, they had seen him fall, and henceforth always included him in their prayers. It would fill him with joyful satisfaction to do his part in procuring for a man like Apelles the place due him on the list of martyrs.

Full of joyful impatience, Marcus wanted to hasten immediately to his mother, and tell her what he had learned; but Demetrius held him back.

The bishop, he informed the youth, had bidden him wait upon him that he might congratulate him upon his victory; it was his duty to accept this invitation, and forthwith profit by the favorable opportunity of securing to his deceased father the honor rightfully his.

It seemed strange indeed to Marcus that his brother should so heartily interest himself in a cause to which he had hitherto shown

himself so averse; however, he immediately repaired to the episcopal palace, in company with the abbot, and after the farmer had waited for them a half hour outside, his brother reappeared with sparkling eyes, and told how graciously he had been received by the primate, who had thanked him for his victory, and bidden him proffer some request. Thereupon he had immediately thought of his father, and called in the abbot's testimony. He had immediately heard what Cosmas had to say, and then Theophilus had declared himself ready, with pleasure, to add the name of Apelles to the list of Syrian martyrs. The bishop had always resisted, reluctantly, the urgent solicitation to that effect of so good and active a Christian as Maria; but now that he had obtained such satisfactory testimony to the manner of her husband's death, it would give him unfeigned satisfaction to accord this highest of all honors to the victor and his excellent mother. "And now," continued Marcus, "now I'll run home, and with what joy will mother—"

But his brother would not let him finish his sentence, but grasped him by the shoulder and called out, "Patience, my dear boy, patience! You stay by me, and do not see your mother until I have arranged the needful. No contradiction, I beg of you, unless you would hinder my having the gratification of indemnifying your pretty little friend for gross injustice done her. What you need, above all things, is your mother's blessing; and do you think that will be an easy thing to obtain, my boy? Not a bit of it. But I can and will procure it for you, provided that you mind me and consent to having old Karnis' niece baptized."

"She is already a Christian!" exclaimed Marcus, eagerly.

Demetrius, however, continued composedly:

"Then she is yours to-morrow if you submit to the arrangements of your older and more prudent brother.

"That can not fall hardly upon you; for you will be obliged to admit, that if I had not wrestled with Anubis—the fellow snapped at all about him like a wounded fox—I could not have gotten him into custody; and if I had not run my legs nearly off me searching after the worthy abbot, father would never have obtained the honor that is at last his portion. Who could have made me believe that I should ever rejoice over that crown of martyrdom? Nothing is impossible with the gods, and I think the manes of the deceased will forgive me for your sake. But it gets ever later, and so only this one thing more: as for myself, I claim it as my privilege to inform your mother of what has come to pass, and for your part, go directly to Eusebius and ask him to receive Dada at his house. If he consents—and he will—then go together to Uncle Porphyrius' and wait there for me, so that, if all goes well, I may accompany you to your mother, or, if otherwise, to Eusebius."

"Dada go with me to mother!" exclaimed Marcus. "But how will she—"

"She will receive her as a daughter," interposed his brother, "if you keep handsomely to yourself what has happened until I give you leave to speak. There, the long gate-keeper is already shutting up the episcopal palace, and so nothing more leaves there to-day for the city. *Au revoir*, you child of fortune! I am in a hurry!"

So saying, Demetrius departed, leaving unanswered the thousand

questions with which Marcus was ready to besiege him; but the latter repaired, as he had been bidden, full of hope and yet not free from many an anxious thought, to his old friend and preceptor.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WHILE Marcus was following his brother's advice, Dada was impatiently awaiting him and Eusebius.

Gorgo had had her conducted by her nurse into the brightly-lighted music-room, sending her word that she would join her there, as soon as her father's condition would allow her to leave him. They had also placed refreshments before her, which consisted merely of dainties, and remained untouched before her, for it struck her that the rich merchant's daughter was purposely avoiding her, and the excitements which she had undergone, and a sense of loneliness, deprived her of appetite.

To divert her thoughts, she examined the beautiful objects of art all around her, felt the material with which the cushions were covered, and touched the lute that was resting against the pedestal of a Muse. She played only a few chords, and yet these awakened various associations, and now she threw herself upon a divan resting in a less brilliantly lighted corner of the spacious apartment, and gave herself up to reverie. She thought over the varied occurrences of the last few days, and the issue seemed to her too beautiful to be actually true. Yes, her hopes were so rich and precious that she trembled lest they might fail of fulfilment, yet these instants of apprehension were few and brief; for her young heart was full of confidence, full-winged, so that if a qualm of uneasiness held it down, it was soon again soaring aloft, indulging in the loftiest aspirations.

Overflowing with bliss and gratitude, she thought of Marcus and his love, painted her own future with him at her side, and if vexation at Gorgo's non-appearance, solicitude about the fate of her family, and dread of her lover's mother, slightly clouded her soul, quickly that feeling of rapturous delight by which she was possessed reasserted itself. So she forgot time and hour, until at last Gorgo joined her.

The merchant's daughter had not purposely avoided the singer; she had been really detained in attendance upon her father. Necessarily, the tidings had now reached him that his mother, the beloved head of his family, was no longer among the living. By the desire of his physician this had been kept secret from him so long as he tarried in the Serapeum, but immediately after his return home, through the incaution of a friend, he had been told a tale of horror that had filled the city with excitement for some hours past, and almost set him wild.

The merchant's two sons were at Thessalonica, and a ship coming from there had brought the well-authenticated information that fifteen thousand citizens had been treacherously murdered in the circus.

This horrible deed of blood had been committed by soldiers, at the command of the Emperor Theodosius, who had cunningly in-

vited the unhappy inhabitants of the place into the hippodrome, in order basely to slaughter them there. His Gothic general, Botheric, had been murdered by the populace at Thessalonica, and the emperor had bloodily avenged this crime.

Porphyrius knew his sons' ways, and was certain that they were never missing where any spectacle was to be seen. Most assuredly they were among the spectators, and must have been likewise cut down by the murderer's sword. His mother and two blooming children had been torn from him, and he would have again had recourse to the relief promised by poison if a feeble ray of hope had not pointed to the possibility of those whom he believed dead being yet alive. Nevertheless, his demeanor was that of one desperate, who has lost his last treasure.

Gorgo spoke to him, sought to cherish his hope that her brothers might yet be living, reminded him of the philosopher's duty to bear calmly the strokes of fate; but he did not listen, and in the midst of bitterest lamentations burst into a violent rage. At last he desired to be alone, and reminded Gorgo of her duty to pay some attention to Dada. Thereupon the young lady acted upon his suggestion, but she did not do so cheerfully; for, however much good she had heard of the singing-girl through Demetrius, she still felt a little shy of her.

When she approached it was to accost her with the condescending manner of one who enters the wretched abode of poverty. But her father was right; she was her guest and must be treated kindly.

Before she entered the music-hall she wiped off the tears she was shedding for her brothers, too sacred in her estimation to be seen flowing in the presence of a creature who had transgressed the limits which custom prescribes for her sex. Appearances led her to suppose that Dada had condescended to an amour with her cousin, hence all those feelings must be foreign to her which, following her philosophical instructor, she would denominate "moral earnestness" and "striving after the highest things." She felt herself greatly her superior; but it would not have been magnanimous to let her perceive this, and so she advanced to meet her graciously; but Dada responded to her salutation without cordiality and with constraint.

"I am pleased," began Gorgo, "that accident has brought us together," and Dada replied quickly, "I think that I have your father's goodness to thank, and not accident."

"Yes, he is good," answered the other, purposely taking no notice of the irritation betrayed in the singer's words. "And withal these last hours have brought him unspeakable sorrow. You have heard, perhaps, of his having lost his mother. You knew her, and must be conscious of the kindly feelings she entertained toward you."

"Do not speak of it!" demurred Dada.

"Her heart was hard to win," continued Gorgo; "but she took a fancy to you. Do you doubt it? If you could only have seen the carefulness with which she selected that gown which you have on, and ornaments to match!

"Do not speak of it!" implored the other once more. "She is dead, and I freely forgive her; but she did not mean well by me."

"That is not handsome" interposed Gorgo, making no concealment of the indignation with which this answer filled her. "The departed is poorly thanked by you for her too great generosity."

Here Dada shook her head in the negative, and replied firmly: "I am grateful for the very smallest favor; people have rarely enough done me disinterested good; but once for all, if it must be said, she wanted to make use of me for her own ends, and injure Marcus and his mother through my instrumentality. And you, you must know this too; else why was I too mean to sing with you if you did not believe me to be a girl of light character disposed to do the will of the deceased? All the world takes us to be bad just because we are singers by profession; but you know how to make distinctions, for you went with Agnes. If you would not insult me say no more about the gratitude I owe the deceased."

Gorgo's eyes fell; but after a brief pause she looked up again and said:

"You do not know how terribly the poor thing suffered. Her son's widow inflicted much wrong upon her—such bitter wrong, that she never could forgive her; and so you are probably right in your supposition; but in any case you did please my grandmother, and now, now her wish is gratified, and Marcus has found you, and loves you well, too, if I am not mistaken."

"If you are not mistaken!" repeated Dada, with animation: "May the gods prohibit that! Yes, we have found and love one another; why should I conceal it?"

"And Maria, his mother, what does she say to it?" asked Gorgo.

"I do not know!" replied Dada, shyly.

"But she is his mother!" exclaimed the other impressively. "In opposition to her will the wedding will never, never take place. What he has he gets from her."

"And she may keep it," retorted Dada, eagerly. "The smaller and more modest the house to which he takes me the better. I want his love, nothing else. His designs toward me are good, for he is not like the rest, and does not love me just because he thinks I am pretty. I follow him confidently, and of the honesty of his intentions you may judge, by his placing me under the care of his worthy pastor, Eusebius."

"So you have adopted his faith as yours?" asked Gorgo.

"Certainly I have," answered Dada; but the other continued: "I am glad of that for Marcus' sake; and one would gladly be accounted a Christian if they would only act according to their creed. But only behold how they rage and destroy everything that is beautiful. What say you to that, who have been brought up by Karnis, that friend of the Muses?"

"I?" asked Dada. "There are bad people everywhere, and if they rage against the beautiful, I am sorry; but we two can do light in it afterward as we did before."

"Well for you that you can shut your eyes, and see only as love dictates!" replied Gorgo, sighing softly. "Those people are to be envied who succeed in silencing mind, when it is painful to hear her voice. But I have been brought up to think, and can not give up reflection; and just this it is which builds up a barrier between me and the happiness beckoning to me. And yet, so long as truth

is the highest thing, I shall bless the gift of searching after her with all the faculties of the mind. My betrothed is a Christian like yours, and I wish that I could make his faith mine as easily as you do; but it is not permitted me to jump into the water after I have perceived it to be full of water-spouts and whirlpools. But the question here is not about me but you. Well! Marcus will be happy in possessing you; but, if you do not succeed in winning Maria to your side, he will not stick to you; no, indeed. I know those Christians well, and am well aware that there is no peace of mind possible to them in marriage without a parent's blessing; and if Marcus fails to receive his mother's blessing he will torment himself to death, and grow weary of life as though he had committed some great crime.

"But in spite of all that you say," interrupted Dada, "he can be happy just as little without me as I without him. And I, I have never sued for any man's favor, and yet everywhere I have been treated kindly. Why should I not succeed in gaining his mother's affection? I shall put forth every effort to please her, and it must gratify her to see her son happy. Eusebius will speak a word to her in our behalf, and she will assuredly bless us; but if it is ordered differently, and I may not be his wife in the sight of man, yet I shall just as little desert him as he me, even though he should lord it over me as if he were my master and I his servant."

"But you, poor thing, do you know nothing, then, of the dignity and honor of the wife?" asked Gorgo, clapping her hands. "You bewail the fate of public singers, and the hard sentence pronounced against them by the world, and what a sentiment you express there! It sounds like, do what I want, or I despise the usages of society!"

At this Dada fired up and eagerly exclaimed: "Despise, did you say? I despise the usages of society, did you say? Oh, no, a thousand times no! I feel myself to be utterly insignificant, and there is nothing at all great in me, and because I know that I do not presume. Never in my life have I ever found courage to despise anybody, even a child. But now there has been awakened within me something—through Marcus, through him alone—something that makes me strong; and if I see that manners and customs are leagued against me, because I sung in public, and if they should withhold from me what is nevertheless my right, then within these few hours I have gained courage to submit patiently to the issues of life and death. What you call 'honor' I have been taught to hold and guard sacredly, like yourself, and I have preserved it too as jealously as any girl ever did. Not as if I were doing any great thing either; but you have no idea how it is, when any man who sets up to be great, deems himself justified in being impertinent to you and trying to entrap you. You and young ladies of your station find it quite different, for you have walls and defenses thrown up around you. We are deemed fair game by men, while you are approached like goddesses. And then! I have not heard it only from Karnis—who knows the world and people of fashion—no, I have seen it myself at Rome in senators' houses, where there were young lords and ladies in plenty, for I keep my eyes open: among you love is like lukewarm water in the bath, but us—it consumes

us like fire. The Lesbian Sappho leaped from the Leucadia cliffs when she was scorned by foolish Phaon, and if thereby I could save Marcus from evil, I will follow her example. You too confess that there is one whom you love, but what you feel for him can hardly be the right thing, with all that 'mind,' 'reflection,' at least in my love. I know nothing of any 'if' or 'but,' and yet however much it urges and presses me, I shall patiently wait under Eusebius' protection, and submit to whatever may be prescribed for me. But in spite of all this you pronounce sentence against me, if you—but you—how you stand there! Oh, how you look through me!—You—just so you looked that first time I heard you sing, and you—by all the nine Muses—you yourself belong to us and not to that other cold-blooded class; you are as much and more of an artist than I am, and if the right love once takes possession of you, see to it that you do not soar further above custom and the usages of society than I who am and would like ever to remain a good, modest girl, in the furnace of whatever fiery trial!"

Here Gorgo was reminded of the hour in which she, the woman, had offered as a free gift to the man of her choice what, according to the code of custom, could be granted only in response to suit.

Blushing, her eyes fell before those of the poor singing-girl, and while she was pondering upon a suitable answer, the sound of men's steps was heard approaching, and soon there entered, first Eusebius with Marcus, and then Gorgo's betrothed.

The later was greatly cast down, for at the burning of his father's dock his second brother had lost his life, and under the pressure of such a calamity, it hardly weighed at all in the balance that his father had lost a considerable part of his property through the destruction of those great stores of lumber.

Gorgo had met him in uncertainty, and with embarrassment; but after she had learned what had befallen him and his, she drew up to him and tried to console him. The other, likewise, sympathized in his affliction, and soon, too, a time for weeping came to Dada; for, through Eusebius, she learned of the death of her adopted parents, and Orpheus' severe wound.

In the bright music-room there was naught but mourning, until Demetrius appeared, in order to fulfill his promise and conduct his brother and Dada to Maria, who was expecting them.

He had come in a carriage, for he asserted that his legs would no longer carry him. Man, said he, is just like the horse. A swiftriding nag easily gives out when made to draw, and a strong draught-horse soon fails when forced to run. His own feet are no better fitted for town-pavements, and the confusion, racing and chasing wear him out just as quickly as a rapid race would a plow-horse. He thanks the gods that this day is over. Not until to-morrow will he have strength enough to enjoy the fruit of his labors. But despite this assertion, his whole person beamed with the satisfaction that he experienced to the extent that his manners had a consoling effect upon the afflicted party, each of whom he addressed with cordiality.

As he suggested their breaking up, Gorgo once more kissed the singer. As soon as she perceived her distress, and noticed her silent

weeping, she had hurried to her side and embraced her as if she had been a sister.

Constantine, Gorgo, and old Eusebius were left alone, and the young lady longed to unburden her overflowing heart. She had indeed promised her betrothed to follow him to his afflicted parents; but thus she could not and would not present herself before the Christian pair, beseeching their blessing. The last occurrences had poisoned her joy in the new faith to which she had so hopefully resorted; and although it pained her to cost Constantine fresh trouble, whose burdens were heavy enough without this additional weight, yet both duty and the love of truth bade her give him an insight into her soul, laying bare before him the doubts and scruples which had been pouring in upon her during these last hours.

The presence of the venerable priest was welcome to her, for it was her wish to become, inwardly, a convert to Christianity; and no sooner did she find herself alone with him and Constantine, than she poured out before them the complaints which she had to make against their fellows in the faith. Crime upon crime had been committed by Christians. They had destroyed the creations of art with fiendish shouts of malice. There lay in ashes the temple of Isis, and here the dock, destroyed by Christian incendiaries; her tears were not yet stanchèd, and they flowed for her Christianly disposed brothers, slaughtered in company with thousands of innocent heathen and fellow-believers by the same emperor who styled himself the rock and most faithful follower of the Saviour's teachings, and whom Constantine had often praised as a wise monarch and pious Christian.

When, at last, she had closed her heavy accusations, she called upon Constantine and the priest to justify the actions of their party, and give back to her spirit to confess a faith that permits such crimes.

But neither the one nor the other sought to palliate such proceedings, and Constantine acknowledged that all this flew directly in the face of that high love, which his faith required from its professors. The bad servant, cried he, has committed bad actions, which are directly opposed to the spirit and regulations of his master's household.

But this acknowledgment did not at all satisfy Gorgo, who now maintained that the master must be judged by his servants' conduct; she herself had only turned her back on the old gods, because of her supreme contempt for their worshippers; but now she had been an involuntary witness—the deacon must pardon her—of the fact, that many Christians exceeded even those wretches in the abominations of which they were guilty, as well as brutal coarseness and barbarity. Such experiences filled her with distrust of the faith which she was about to adopt, and her soul felt shaken to its very foundations.

Eusebius had, so far, listened to her in silence, but now he drew nearer to her and asked her, in gentle tones, if she would deem it right to drain the bed of the bountiful Nile, and leave it dry, because, occasionally, were destroyed in its overflow houses and the products of the field?

“These days, these deeds of shame,” continued he sadly, “soil

the pure and noble book of our faith's history, and whoever is a true Christian must bitterly bewail the excesses of the rude multitude. The emperor's shameful, bloody deed will also be condemned by the church; it throws the darkest stain upon his honor and his fair fame; moreover, his own conscience will lash him. Far be it from me to defend what is not to be justified--"

"But all this," interposed Gorgo, "alters in nothing the fact, that with you wicked deeds are just as possible and frequent as with those whom I shall now cease to call my people, and who--"

"And from whom," interrupted Constantine, "you wd not intend to separate, Gorgo, merely on account of their demeanor. Your animosity--confess it, maiden--makes you unjust to yourself, and your own heart. Not out of contempt for vicious and miserable friends of the old gods, but out of love, I hope and believe, you consent to share my--our faith."

"Well, well," said she with animation, thinking blushinglly of the doubt raised by the singer as to the genuineness of her love.

"Well! Out of love for you, out of love for love and peace, I consented to become a Christian; but what I see done by your people; say yourself, and I ask you, too, reverend father, whence originates it--in hatred or love?"

"Hatred!" answered Constantine, dispiritedly; and Eusebius added, with troubled mien: "In these momentous days our faith shows itself in a shape utterly foreign to its nature, noble young lady. Trust my words! Have you not learned already in your young life that just what is greatest and highest becomes the vilest in its exaggeration? Let noble pride transgress proper limits, and it becomes unscrupulous ambition; the lofty virtue of humility trenches on the unworthy exhibition of self-will, a spirit of untiring energy tempts to that mad chase after fortune in which is trodden down all that interferes with its attainment. What is sweeter than the tender mother; but when she does battle for her child she is transformed into a tigress. Thus faith, that comforter of the heart, changes into a raging monster when it degenerates into fanaticism. Would you learn to know what Christianity is, you must neither look at the misguided mob and the ambitious, who are seeking to gratify their own selfish aims, and following the dictates of passion, nor even up to the throne, where power transmutes the impulse of an unhappy moment into fatal deeds. Would you know what pure and genuine Christianity is, then enter the domestic circle, and behold the families of true believers. I know them, for my humble office leads me into daily and hourly converse with them. You must look upon them if you intend to bestow your hand upon a Christian, and with him raise up a family altar. There, child, there you will see the blessed fruits of our Saviour's teachings, there will you find love and harmony, mercy toward the poor, pious zeal and unfeigned forgiveness of injuries endured. There have I seen the Christian devote his last possession to the service of his unfortunate adversary, the enemy of his house, whether heathen or Jew, because such are men, and because we must feel our neighbor's sorrows as our own. There you will find disposition to do every good thing, a never withering hope of better days in future, when suffering severest trials, and if death claims some dear one or beckons to ourselves,

there is a firm confidence in the forgiveness of our sins, through the grace of Christ. Believe me, then, dear young lady, there is no happier home than the Christian's; for whoever has a true knowledge of our Saviour and his doctrines need not be miserable here in order to be made partaker of heavenly bliss, and gain admittance into the bright world above. On the contrary, He who called sinners to Himself, who drew little children to his heart, who preferred the poor before the rich, who was a cheerful guest at the marriage feast, who bade us put his spiritual pound out at interest, the same commanded us to remember him at the social meal; He who opened our hearts to love, has desired to rid earthly existence of every possible pain and lack. Where love and peace reign, must there not be happiness? And since He has preached nothing more emphatically than love and peace, He can not have meant us voluntarily to darken life upon earth, and burden ourselves with wretchedness in order to be fit for happiness hereafter. Every one who is conscious of being one with Him feels himself freed from guilt and misery, even here below; for Jesus has taken upon Himself all the sin and suffering of the world; and if Fate punishes the Christian, too, with heaviest strokes, yet he bears them meekly and patiently. Our Lord is love itself; He knows neither hatred nor envy, like the heathen gods, and if He punishes us, He, the mild, omniscient disciplinarian, does it for the best good of our souls. The all-wise God knows wherefore, and the Christian submits with the docility of the little child to the wise father, on whose goodness he may always rely, and he even comes to thank Him for pains and sufferings, as if they were benefits."

Here Gorgo again shook her head and replied:

"All that sounds noble and beautiful; and it is required of Christians, and certainly exemplified sometimes. But the stoics demanded the same from their disciples, and, Constantine, you used to know the Stoic Damon, and remember how sternly he required others to rise proudly above pain and distress. But when his only daughter lost her eye-sight—she is a friend of mine—he behaved like a madman. In earlier days my father also recommended philosophy to you, as a means for rising superior to the crosses of life and the tricks of Fate. And now? You should only see my poor, dear father. What good do all these lofty maxims do him now?"

"He has lost much, very much," remarked Constantine with a slight sigh, heaved for the loss of his own brother. But Eusebius shook his head gently and said, "In such sorrow, neither philosophy nor reasoning helps. What has hurt the soul can be cured only through the soul, not the mind or any of its argumentation. Faith, child, is the most efficacious balsam to apply. The reason is its enemy; yet from the soul, its fountain, it extracts nourishment; and let the wound from which a believer is bleeding be ever so deep, it can supply balm wherewith to close and heal it. You have learned to exercise a rich mind, to rest everything upon it, and abide by its decisions. The knowledge that you have gained through arguments and conclusions is the highest and last thing with you; but besides intellect the Lord has implanted spirit within us, and it stirs and moves in its own ways, and the knowledge to which it attains—even that, dear child, is faith. You love, my

daughter; and love, too, pertains to the spirit; and I should like to advise you not to mix up that thinking mind with love, as it does not belong to it, but nourish and cherish it from your own rich spirit; only in that case will it thrive beautifully and harmoniously.

"Here I must make an end of my talk, for I have already kept the wounded from the Serapeum waiting too long. If it so pleases you, hereafter I shall expound to you Christianity in all its depth and beauty; and your love for this brave man will enlist your heart in behalf of my teachings. Then a day will come when you will as graciously heed the voice of the spirit as hitherto the requirements of intellect, and something quite new will spring up within you that you will esteem more highly than ever you did your richest mental acquisitions. And this day will surely come for you, because he yonder has guided you into the path that leads to the portals of truth: and since you seek wisdom, you will find it.

"For the present, farewell! If you need the teacher, just come to him, and I know he will not have to wait for you long."

Gorgo looked after the old man thoughtfully, and then followed Constantine to his parents.

Silently the two traversed the short distance separating the mansions, and silently they entered the house.

From the vestibule issued rays of light. The curtains before the tall door stood open; and as they approached the threshold, Constantine pointed to a bier that stood by the flower-bed in the middle of this open court, and to his parents, who knelt beside it.

Neither of the two ventured to disturb their silent devotions; but now the master ship-builder arose, drew up his tall form erect, and turned his manly, benignant countenance to his wife, who now also stood up. He drew one hand through his abundant hoary locks, and held out to her his right hand. Mariamne clasped it, looked at him lovingly, and as she wiped away her tears, he said, firmly and calmly, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away!"

Then she sunk upon his breast, and added, in low, fervent tones, "Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

"Yes, blessed be his name!" repeated Clement, aloud, and impressively, as at the same time he drew his arm over his eyes. "Thirty-two years has God spared him to us, and in here"—and he pointed to his broad breast—"in here He will live on for you and for me. That other loss—much property of my own and others was comprised in that lumber—that other loss can be made up for in the course of years. Let us thank the Most High for sparing us so much!"

Then Gorgo felt the pressure of her lover's hand, and understood what it signified, and she drew fondly up to him and whispered, "That is great, that is true!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN the great mansion on Canopian Street, they were likewise slow in retiring to night. Even Demetrius, the farmer, in spite of his fatigue, had been untrue to his habit of retiring early to rest; he had to see the grain mature that he had sown for his brother.

It had been no light task to incline Maria to accede to his wishes, but he had finally prevailed to his satisfaction.

He had been ill received, indeed, when he had begun with sounding Dada's praises, and had proclaimed his desire to see her married to Marcus; but in all calmness he had moved toward his goal a step at a time, and after he disclosed the fact, that he had it in his power to obtain the martyr's crown for her deceased husband Apelles, it had come to insinuations and open accusations of insincerity from her side; oaths had been required of him, and threats made against him of both heavenly and earthly punishments; but he had calmly let the storm blow over his head, had sworn as required, pledging not only the salvation of his soul, but his worldly goods as well, until, convinced of his power to obtain for her the warmest desire of her heart, she had become more accessible and assumed an altered deportment.

But then, in her vacillation and perplexity, he had not attempted to assist her by even so much as one word; leaving her to fight out her own hard battle, looking on, not without malicious enjoyment in the same, but likewise with some solicitude, until the first decisive question was addressed to him.

She had referred to his having told her previously of Dada's determination to receive baptism, and after she had been certified by his answer, that the maiden was disposed to become a Christian, she had gone on to say: "And is it Marcus who has won her for the faith?"

"He, he alone."

"And you swear that you deem her a pure and modest girl?"

"Gladly, and in the full conviction that I speak truth!"

"I have seen her in the arena. She is beautiful and uncommonly graceful; and Marcus?"

"He has set his whole heart on the girl, and I know that she reciprocates his affection sincerely and disinterestedly. And then, I need hardly remind you, that, in this city, among the most distinguished ladies of our acquaintance, there are those whose origin is much more questionable than that of your son's lady-love, for she belongs to a free, unimpeachable family. Her uncle's kindred belong to the first people in all Sicily; yet that need trouble us but little, for the wife of Philip's grandson would have respect paid her if she were only a freedman's daughter."

"I know," Maria had murmured, as though all this was of slight significance to her; but then she had sat still a long while, but at last opened her eyes, and, in a voice that betokened the battle which had been waged in her spirit, and was not yet completely won, she exclaimed: "What shall I ask, then, more than my child's happiness? In the Lord's sight, we are all alike—small and great; but I am only a weak woman, full of imperfections and feebleness; and I could have wished a different alliance than this for the only son of a noble house. So I say now: I regard this connection as a humiliation which the Most High imposes upon me, but I grant it my blessing, and do so out of a full heart, if the bride brings with her as a dowry the one thing that for him, as for me, must crown his every wish, viz., the eternal salvation of Apelles. The martyr's crown opens for him, who was your father, as well the gates of Heaven.

Procure it for him, and I shall, with my own hand, bestow the singer upon my son!"

"That is a bargain," cried the countryman, and soon after midnight he had, at last, gotten to rest; for, in his presence Maria had led the singer up to her son, and imparted to the betrothed her motherly blessing.

A few weeks later, together with Gorgo, Dada was baptized, and, at the same time, received the name of Cecilia. In compliance with Maria's wish, the nuptials of the young pair were solemnized by the bishop himself.

In spite of the lavish proofs of more than a motherly tenderness with which the widow overwhelmed her daughter-in-law, Dada felt chilled and embarrassed in her vicinity, and in the grand mansion on Canopian Street.

When, therefore, a few weeks after their marriage, Demetrius, in her presence, proposed to her husband that he should assume the management of their family's property in Cyrenaica, she caught at the idea with enthusiasm, and Marcus quickly made up his mind to adopt the suggestion, after Demetrius had promised to go with him and assist him during the first years by counsel and co-operation.

Their dread lest their mother might offer earnest objection to this plan had been vain; for, although Maria declared life would be a burden to her without her children, she quickly yielded to her son's desire, and called it rational and good.

She did not dread the loneliness; for, as the widow of the martyr Apelles she now stood first among the Christian ladies in the city, and preferred no longer to confine herself to the narrowness of the domestic circle. To visitors she constantly expatiated upon the charms of her daughter-in-law Cecilia, praising her beauty, piety, and amiability; yes, she even made it appear as if she herself had selected Dada as Marcus' wife. But Maria did not detain this "beloved daughter" in Alexandria; for, at all public assemblies to which ladies were admitted, the noble widow of him who had sealed his faith with blood held pre-eminence, whether or not the former singer was in her company.

The youthful pair journeyed to Cyrenaica. Dada learned to manage upon her husband's great estates with sound sense and acceptability. Out of the lively professional singer developed an accomplished housewife; out of Marcus, the ideal lover of horses, a diligent farmer. His brother Demetrius had remained with him three years as counselor and guide; and when afterward he visited him, as was frequently the case, he used to remark to the happy Marcus: "In Alexandria I am a heathen out and out, but in your Cecilia's house it is a pleasure to be a Christian."

Before their departure a heavy misfortune had overtaken the gray-haired deacon Eusebius. The sermon which he had preached just before the fall of Serapis, in order to calm his congregation, and point out to them the right way, had been misconstrued by some fanatical clergymen present, and by them represented to the bishop as favorable to paganism, and blasphemous. Theophilus had intrusted the investigation of this affair, and of the deacon's orthodoxy to his zealous nephew and later successor, Cyril. In so doing it had come to light, also, that he had not only furnished shelter to the

Arian Agnes, but intrusted her with the nursing of orthodox patients, and so heavy penances had been imposed upon the venerable old ecclesiastic by young Cyril. Moreover, Theophilus had decided that he should be relieved of his clerical office in the city "where stronger minds were needed," and only allowed the care of souls in some country community.

It was hard for the aged couple to leave the house and little garden where they had been happy for thirty years; but they were soon indemnified in a handsome manner; for Marcus summoned his worthy spiritual guide to be priest on his estates. The churches which he had built in his villages here were dedicated by old Eusebius, whose mild teachings and friendly love for their souls induced many peasants and slaves to be baptized. But yet greater influence than his preaching was exerted by the persuasions and example of their young mistress. Man and woman, bond and free, loved her, honored her, and thought that to do as she did could only bring honor; certainly could be nothing else than good and kind.

Thus, the temples and sanctuaries on the land of the martyr's son had been deserted voluntarily, without force or threatening, and soon went to decay. And as it happened on Marcus' estates so did it on those of the Prefect Constantine. These were situated only a day's journey away from Marcus' domain, and the two land-owners were friends and good neighbors. What Constantine called his had belonged to the Libyan Barcas, the same who, with his successors, had been vainly expected at the Serapeum. The state had confiscated these extensive and valuable possessions; and, after retiring from the service, Constantine had purchased them with the large fortune which old Damia had left to her grandchild, Gorgo.

The merchant Porphyrius' sons had fortunately escaped the massacre at Thessalonica, and since they were Christians, piously devoted to their church, already in his life-time, he passed over to them his business, and a large share of his wealth, in order to be without a care as to his last will, and keeping entirely aloof from the Christian Church, serve the old gods. The beautiful art treasures, which Constantine and Gorgo found in Barcas' house, were carefully preserved, and soon, in this region, too, only a few heathen were left, although earlier it had been the center of many insurrections in favor of the old gods.

Little Papias was brought up with Dada, Cecilia's children, on Marcus' estates, and far from his sister; for, after she had been relieved of the charge of her little brother, she had sought and found a life path of her own.

After his parents' death, fighting for Serapis, the sorely wounded Orpheus had been conveyed to the hospital, of which Eusebius had the spiritual oversight.

Agnes had undertaken to nurse him, and watched by his couch night and day. For Dada and little Papias had gone away under charge of Eusebius, and, in Marcus' name, she had received the assurance that, in the event of the good deacon's death, both she and her brother should be taken the very best care of. For the present the child's education had been committed to that venerable man, and he daily delighted Agnes by reporting to her the good qualities in the boy, that he supposed he himself to have newly discovered.

As to the little fellow himself, he was well content in his new home; and, rejoiced as he was to see Agnes again, after his sister's departure, he bounded off merrily, with Eusebius and his Dada.

Orpheus recognized neither the maiden nor the child, and, after his visitors left the sick-chamber, spoke louder than ever to the great Apollo and other heathen gods. Then he fancied himself doing battle for Serapis; and, in imagination, hewed down thousands of Christian opponents.

In such fits of rage, Agnes spoke kindly to him (although he but seldom recognized her), and tried also to speak to him of her Saviour and everlasting life; but ever he would begin again his sinful discourse, and sometimes curse her.

Such deep sorrow she had never experienced before as at this bedside, and yet she could not take her eyes off his face; and when she said to herself that he would soon cease to be, and that the glance of his eye could never more meet hers, it seemed to her as if the light of the sun would shine no more for her, and, in future, all on earth be dark. But his sound constitution made him last several more days and nights. On his last evening he took Agnes for a nurse, called to her, and then, with his hand in hers, fell back senseless upon his bed, to move no more; but while she waited anxiously, minute after minute, dreading lest his hand should grow cold in hers, she listened to the conversation of two deaconesses, who were watching by the couch of the slumbering patient.

The one told the other that her sister's husband, a stone-mason, had died as an arch-enemy to the Christians, and a stiff-necked pagan. Then her sister Dorothea had taken upon herself the task of saving his soul. She fled from her children, leaving them to the tender mercies of the community, and repaired to a convent in order to pray there in secret for the redemption of her deceased husband's soul.

In the beginning, he had appeared to her with angry gestures, in company with centaurs and club-footed creatures, and bidden her go back to her children, and leave his soul in peace, for he liked it right well among these merry devils; but soon afterward he had approached her with scorched limbs, and besought her to plead piteously for his pardon, because he was being grievously tormented in hell.

Then Dorothea had retired to the desert at Colcium, and still lived in a cave there, being fed on herbs, roots, and mussels that the sea casts on the strand. She had deprived herself of sleep, and still prayed day and night for the soul of her husband; and power had been given her to keep ever in view her own and her husband's welfare, and to think no more about her children. Such fervid devotion had finally attained the fairest reward, for it had been some time since the deceased had appeared to her, clad in white raiment, and often attended by beautiful angels.

Agnes had lost not a word of this narration; and when, on the following day, she felt Orpheus grow cold, and looked upon the painfully contracted features of the dead, cold shudders ran over her; for she said to herself, this dead man, like Dorothea's husband, will have to endure many tortures in hell. When they left her alone

with him, then, she stooped down to him, kissed his pallid lips, and vowed to save his soul.

On the same evening she went back to Eusebius, and revealed to him her wish to go into the Colcian desert, to join there another female anchorite.

The old man begged her to stay at his house, and watch over her little brother, also not to leave his old companion and himself alone. He explained that it was a beautiful service, on the Christian's part, to exercise loving kindness and care for aged friends in their feebleness.

The deacon's wife, with tears, joined her entreaties to his; but suddenly a strange coldness had steeled Agnes' heart; with dry eyes she insisted upon having her way, and took leave of her benefactors and Papias. On foot, and begging her food, she traveled to the south-east, until she reached the shores of the Red Sea. There she found the stone-mason's widow, with silvered hair, emaciated, and nigh unto death. She remained by her, closed her eyes, continued in the same cavern the deceased's mode of life, and the fame of her sanctity gradually penetrated far beyond the confines of Egypt.

As a grown man and steward of the now elderly Demetrius, Papias visited her, in order to induce her follow him to his new home; but she would not consent, preferring to remain in her solitary cell. She would not have exchanged this for a king's palace, inasmuch as long since Orpheus had appeared to her every night, encircled by a halo of heavenly light, and the time drew near when she might hope to meet him again.

The Widow Maria, in her later years, undertook many a pilgrimage to shrines and holy persons, and among them the hermitess Agnes; but at Cyrenaica, whither her children and grandchildren frequently invited her, she never visited; for it needed stronger attractions to induce her to submit to the discomforts of a journey.

Before her end every vestige of paganism had vanished from the old Greek city. With it departed her glory and perished her grandeur, and of all the splendors of that second mistress of the world, the city of Serapis, nothing has been left but one mighty column, towering heavenward, which belonged to that sublime temple of the prince of gods, whose fall marked the close of a great era in the spiritual life of humanity. Like that column, so the heathen conception of beauty in the concrete has not been lost. We look up to both, and where the living soul of Christianity fills and penetrates this beautiful form with its light, there has been fulfilled the fairest hope of old Eusebius. In Christian art the twain have been made one.

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