

# ***THE EMPEROR***

***BOOK II***

**By Georg Ebers**

## BOOK 2.

### CHAPTER I.

Dame Hannah had watched by Selene till sunrise and indefatigably cooled both her injured foot and the wound in her head. The old physician was not dissatisfied with the condition of his patient, but ordered the widow to lie down for a time and to leave the care of her for a few hours to her young friend. When Mary was alone with the sick girl and had laid the fresh cold handkerchief in its place, Selene turned her face towards her and said:

"Then you were at Lochias yesterday. Tell me how you found them all there. Who guided you to our lodgings and did you see my little brother and sisters?"

"You are not yet quite free of fever, and I do not know how much I ought to talk to you – but I would with all my heart."

The words were spoken kindly and there was a deep loving light in the eyes of the deformed girl as she said them. Selene excited not merely her sympathy and pity, but her admiration too, for she was so beautiful, so totally different from herself, and in every little service she rendered her, she felt like some despised beggar whom a prince might have permitted to wait upon him. Her hump had never seemed to her so bent, nor her brown skin so ugly at any other time as it did to-day, when side by side with this symmetrical and delicate girlish form, rounded to such tender contours.

But Mary felt not the smallest movement of envy. She only felt happy to help Selene, to serve her, to be allowed to gaze at her although she was a heathen. During the night too, she had prayed fervently that the Lord might graciously draw to himself this lovely, gentle creature, that He might permit her to recover, and fill her soul with the same love for the Saviour that gave joy to her own. More than once she had longed to kiss her, but she dared not, for it seemed to her as though the sick girl were made of finer stuff than she herself.

Selene felt tired, very tired, and as the pain diminished, a comfortable sense stole over her of peace and respite in the silent and loving homeliness of her surroundings; a feeling that was new and very soothing, though it was interrupted, now and again, by her anxiety for those at home. Dame Hannah's presence did her good, for she fancied she recognized in her voice something that had been peculiar to her mother's, when she had played with her and pressed her with special affection to her heart.

In the papyrus factory, at the gumming-table, the sight of the little hunchback had disgusted Selene, but here she observed what good eyes she had, and how kind a voice, and the care with which Mary lifted the compress from her foot—as softly, as if in her own hands she felt the pain that Selene was suffering—and then laid another on the broken ankle, aroused her gratitude. Her sister Arsinoe was a vain and thorough Alexandrian girl, and she had nicknamed the poor thing after the ugliest of the Hellenes who had besieged Troy. "Dame Thersites," and Selene herself had often repeated it. Now she forgot the insulting name altogether, and met the objections of her nurse by saying:

"The fever cannot be much now; if you tell me something I shall not think so constantly of this atrocious pain. I am longing to be at home. Did you see the children?"

"No, Selene. I went no farther than the entrance of your dwelling, and the kind gate-keeper's wife told me at once that I should find neither your father nor your sister, and that your slave-woman was gone out to buy cakes for the children."

"To buy them!" exclaimed Selene in astonishment. "The old woman told me too that the way to your apartments led through several rooms in which slaves were at work, and that her son, who happened to be with her, should accompany me, and so he did, but the door was locked, and he told me I might entrust his mother with my commission. I did so, for she looked as if she were both judicious and kind."

"That she is."

"And she is very fond of you, for when I told her of your sufferings the bright tears rolled down her cheeks, and she praised you as warmly, and was as much troubled as if you had been her own daughter."

"You said nothing about our working in the factory?" asked Selene anxiously.

"Certainly not, you had desired me not to mention it. I was to say everything that was kind to you from the old lady."

For several minutes the two girls were silent, then Selene asked:

"Did the gate-keeper's son who accompanied you also hear of the disaster that had befallen me?"

"Yes, on the way to your rooms he was full of fun and jokes, but when I told him that you had gone out with your damaged foot and now could not get home again, and were being treated by the leech, he was very angry and used blasphemous language."

"Can you remember what he said?"

"Not perfectly, but one thing I still recollect. He accused his gods of having created a beautiful work only to spoil it, nay he abused them" Mary looked down as she spoke, as if she were repeating something ill to tell, but Selene colored slightly with pleasure, and exclaimed eagerly, as if to outdo the sculptor in abuse:

"He is quite right, the powers above act in such a way —"

"That is not right," said the deformed girl reprovingly.

"What?" asked the patient. "Here you live quietly to yourselves in perfect peace and love. Many a word that I heard dame Hannah say has stuck in my mind, and I can see for myself that you act as kindly as you speak. The gods no doubt are good to you!"

"God is for each and all."

"What!" exclaimed Selene with flashing eyes. "For those whose every pleasure they destroy? For the home of eight children whom

they rob of their mother? For the poor whom they daily threaten to deprive of their bread-winner?"

"For them too, there is a merciful God," interrupted dame Hannah who had just come into the room. "I will lead you to the loving Father in Heaven who cares for us all as if we were His children; but not now—you must rest and neither talk nor hear of anything that can excite your fevered blood. Now I will rearrange the pillow under your head. Mary will wet a fresh compress and then you must try to sleep."

"I cannot," replied Selene, while Hannah shook her pillows and arranged them carefully. "Tell me about your God who loves us."

"By-and-bye, dear child. Seek Him and you will find Him, for of all His children He loves them best who suffer."

"Those who suffer?" asked Selene, in surprise. "What has a God in his Olympian joys to do with those who suffer?"

"Be quiet, child," interrupted Hannah, patting the sick girl with a soothing hand, "you soon will learn how God takes care of you and that Another loves you."

"Another," muttered Selene, and her cheeks turned crimson.

She thought at once of Pollux, and asked herself why the story of her sufferings should have moved him so deeply if he were not in love with her. Then she began to seek some colorable ground for what she had heard as she went past the screen behind which he had been working. He had never told her plainly that he loved her. Why should he, an artist and a bright, high spirited young fellow, not be allowed to jest with a pretty girl, even if his heart belonged to another. No, she was not indifferent to him: that she had felt that night when she had stood as his model, and now—as she thought—I could guess, nay, feel sure of, from Mary's story.

The longer she thought of him, the more she began to long to see him whom she had loved so dearly even as a child. Her heart had never yet beat for any other man, but since she had met Pollux again in the hall of the Muses, his image had filled her whole soul, and

what she now felt must be love – could be nothing else. Half awake, but half asleep, she pictured him to herself, entering this quiet room, sitting down by the head of her couch, and looking with his kind eyes into hers. Ah! and how could she help it – she sat up and opened her arms to him.

"Be still, my child, be still," said Hannah. "It is not good for you to move about so much."

Selene opened her eyes, but only to close them again and to dream for some time longer till she was startled from her rest by loud voices in the garden. Hannah left the room, and her voice presently mingled with those of the other persons outside, and when she returned her cheeks were flushed and she could not find fitting words in which to tell her patient what she had to say.

"A very big man, in the most outrageous dress," she said at last, "wanted to be let in; when the gatekeeper refused, he forced his way in. He asked for you."

"For me," said Selene, blushing.

"Yes, my child, he brought a large and beautiful nosegay of flowers, and said 'your friend at Lochias sends you his greeting.'"

"My friend at Lochias?" murmured thoughtfully Selene to herself. Then her eyes sparkled with gladness, and she asked quickly:

"You said the man who brought the flowers was very tall."

"He was."

"Oh please, dame Hannah, let me see the flowers?" cried Selene, trying to raise herself.

"Have you a lover, child?" asked the widow.

"A lover? – no, but there is a young man with whom we always used to play when we were quite little – an artist, a kind, good man – and the nosegay must be from him."

Hannah looked with sympathy at the girl, and signing to Mary she said:

"The nosegay is a very large one. You may see it, but it must not remain in the room; the smell of so many flowers might do you harm."

Mary rose from her seat at the head of the bed, and whispered to the sick girl:

"Is that the tall gate-keeper's son?" Selene nodded, smiling, and as the women went away she changed her position from lying on one side, stretched herself out on her back, pressed her hand to her heart, and looked upwards with a deep sigh. There was a singing in her ears, and flashes of colored light seemed to dance before her closed eyes. She drew her breath with difficulty, but still it seemed as though the air she drew in was full of the perfume of flowers.

Hannah and Mary carried in the enormous bunch of flowers. Selene's eyes shone more brightly, and she clasped her hands in admiration. Then she made them show her the lovely, richly-tinted and fragrant gift, first on one side and then on the other, buried her face in the flowers, and secretly kissed the delicate petals of a lovely, half-opened rose-bud. She felt as if intoxicated, and the bright tears flowed in slow succession down her cheeks. Mary was the first to detect the brooch stuck into the ribbons that tied the stems of the flowers. She unfastened it and showed it to Selene, who hastily took it out of her hand. Blushing deeper and deeper, she fixed her eyes on the intaglio carved on the stone of the love god sharpening his arrows. She felt her pain no more pain, she felt quite well, and at the same time glad, proud, too happy. Dame Hannah noted her excitement with much anxiety; she nodded to Mary and said:

"Now my daughter, this must do; we will place the flowers outside the window so that you may see them."

"Already," said Selene, in a regretful tone, and she broke off a few violets and roses from the crowded mass. When she was alone again, she laid the flowers down and once more tenderly contemplated the figures on the handsome gem. It had no doubt been engraved by Teuker, the brother of Pollux. How fine the

carving was, how significant the choice of the subject represented! Only the heavy gold setting disturbed the poor child, who for so many years had had to stint and contrive with her money. She said to herself that it was wrong of the young fellow, who, besides being poor, had to support his sister, to rush into such an outlay for her. But his gift gave her none the less pleasure, out of her own possessions nothing would have seemed too precious to give him. She would teach him to be saving by-and-bye.

The women presently returned after they had with much trouble set up the nosegay outside the window, and they renewed the wet handkerchief without speaking. She did not in the least want to talk, she was listening with so much pleasure to the fair promises which her fancy was making, and wherever she turned her eyes they fell on something she could love, The flowers on her bed, the brooch in her hand, the nosegay outside the window, and never dreaming that another—not the man she loved—could have sent it to her, another for whom she cared even less than for the Christians who walked up and down in Paulina's garden, under her window. There she lay, full of sweet contentment and secure of a love that had never been hers—of possessing the heart of a man who never once thought of her, but who, only a few hours since, had rushed off with her sister, intoxicated with joy and delight. Poor Selene!

And her next dreams were of untroubled happiness, but the minutes flew after each other, each bringing her nearer to waking—and what a waking!

Her father had not come, as he had intended, to see her before going to the prefect's house with Arsinoe. His desire to conduct his daughter to Julia in a dress worthy of her prospects had detained him a long time, and even then he had not succeeded in his object. All the weavers, and the shops were closed, for every workman, whether slave or free, was taking part in the festivities, and when the hour fixed by the prefect drew near, his daughter was still sitting in her litter, in her simple white dress and her modest peplum, bound with blue ribbon, which looked even more insignificant by day than in the evening.

The nosegay which had been given to Arsinoe by Verus gave her much pleasure, for a girl is always pleased with beautiful flowers—



may, they have something in common. As she and her father approached the prefect's house Arsinoe grew frightened, and her father could not conceal his vexation at being obliged to take her to the lady Julia in so modest a garb. Nor was his gloomy humor at all enlivened when he was left to wait in the anteroom while Julia and the wife of Verus, aided by Balbilla chose for his daughter the finest colored and costliest stuffs of the softest wool, silk, and delicate bombyx tissue. This sort of occupation has this peculiarity, that the longer time it takes the more assistance is needed, and the steward had to submit to wait fully two hours in the prefect's anteroom, which gradually grew fuller and fuller of clients and visitors. At last Arsinoe came back all glowing and full of the beautiful things that were to be prepared for her.

Her father rose slowly from his easy seat, and as she hastened towards him the door opened, and through it came Plutarch, freshly wreathed, freshly decked with flowers which were fastened to the breast-folds of his gallium, and lifted into the room by his two human crutches. Every one rose as he came in, and when Keraunus saw that the chief lawyer of the city, a man of ancient family, bowed before him, he did likewise. Plutarch's eyesight was stronger than his legs were, and where a pretty woman was to be seen, it was always very keen. He perceived Arsinoe as soon as he had crossed the threshold and waved both hands towards her, as if she were an old and favorite acquaintance.

The sweet child had quite bewitched him; in his younger days he would have given anything and everything to win her favor; now he was satisfied to make his favor pleasing to her; he touched her playfully two or three times on the arm and said gaily:

"Well pretty Roxana, has dame Julia done well with the dresses?"

"Oh! they have chosen such pretty, such really lovely things!" exclaimed the girl.

"Have they?" said Plutarch, to conceal by speech the fact that he was meditating on some subject; "Have they? and why should they not?"

Arsinoe's washed dress had caught the old man's eye, and remembering that Gabinius the curiosity-dealer had that very morning been to him to enquire whether Arsinoe were not in fact one of his work-girls, and to repeat his statement that her father was a beggarly toady, full of haughty airs, whose curiosities, of which he contemptuously mentioned a few, were worth nothing, Plutarch was hastily asking himself how he could best defend his pretty protege against the envious tongues of her rivals; for many spiteful speeches of theirs had already come to his ears.

"Whatever the noble Julia undertakes is always admirably done," he said aloud, and he added in a whisper: "The day after to-morrow when the goldsmiths have opened their workshops again, I will see what I can find for you. I am falling in a heap, hold me up higher Antaeus and Atlas. So. — Yes, my child you look even better from up here than from a lower level. Is the stout man standing behind you your father?"

"Yes."

"Have you no mother?"

"She is dead."

"Oh!" said Plutarch in a tone of regret. Then turning to the steward he said:

"Accept my congratulations on having such a daughter Keraunus. I hear too that you have to supply a mother's place to her."

"Alas sir! she is very like my poor wife, since her death I live a joyless life."

"But I hear that you take pleasure in collecting rare and beautiful objects. This is a taste we have in common. Are you inclined to part with the cup that belonged to my namesake Plutarch? It must be a fine piece of work from what Gabinius tells me."

"That it is," replied the steward proudly. "It was a gift to the philosopher from Trajan; beautifully carved in ivory. I cannot bear to part with such a gem but," and as he spoke he lowered his voice.

"I am under obligations to you, you have taken charge of my daughter's outfit and to offer you some return I will — "

"That is quite out of the question," interrupted Plutarch, who knew men, and who saw from the steward's pompous pretentiousness that the dealer had done him no injustice in describing him as overbearing. "You are doing me an honor by allowing me to contribute what I can towards decorating our Roxana. I beg you to send me the cup, and whatever price you put upon it, I, of course, shall pay, that is quite understood."

Keraunus had a brief internal conflict with himself. If he had not so sorely needed money, if he had not so keenly desired to see a young and comely slave walking behind him, he would have adhered to his purpose of presenting the cup to Plutarch; as it was he cleared his throat, looked at the ground, and said with an embarrassed manner and without a trace of his former confidence:

"I remain your debtor, and it seems you do not wish this business to be mixed up with other matters. Well then, I had two thousand drachmae for a sword that belonged to Antony."

"Then certainly," interrupted Plutarch, "the cup, the gift of Trajan, must be worth double, particularly to me who am related to the illustrious owner. May I offer you four thousand drachmae for your precious possession?"

"I am anxious to oblige you, and so I say yes," replied the steward with much dignity, and he squeezed Arsinoe's little finger, for she was standing close to him. Her hand had for some time been touching his in token of warning that he should adhere to his first intention of making the cup a present to Plutarch.

As the pair, so unlike each other, quitted the anteroom, Plutarch looked after them with a meaning smile and thought to himself: "That is well done. How little pleasure I generally have from my riches! How often when I see a sturdy porter I would willingly change places with him! But to-day I am glad to have as much money as I could wish. Sweet child! She must have a new dress of course for the sake of appearance, but really her beauty did not suffer from the washed-out rag of a dress. And she belongs to me,

for I have seen her at the factory among the workwomen, of that I am certain."

Keraunus had gone out with his daughter and once outside the prefect's house, he could not help chuckling aloud, while he patted his daughter on the shoulder, and whispered to her:

"I told you so child! we shall be rich yet, we shall rise in life again and need not be behind the other citizens in any thing."

"Yes, father, but it is just because you believe that, that you ought to have given the cup to the old man."

"No," replied Keraunus, "business is business, but by and bye I will repay him tenfold for all he does for you now, by giving him my painting by Apelles. And Julia shall have the pair of sandals set with cut-gems that came off a sandal of Cleopatra's."

Arsinoe looked down, for she knew what these treasures were worth, and said:

"We can consider all that later."

Then she and her father got into the litters that had been waiting for them, and without which Keraunus thought he could no longer exist, and they were carried to the garden of Pudeus' widow.

Their visit came to interrupt Selene's blissful dreams. Keraunus behaved with icy coldness to dame Hannah, for it afforded him a certain satisfaction to make a display of contempt for every thing Christian. When he expressed his regret that Selene should have been obliged to remain in her house, the widow replied:

"She is better here than in the street, at any rate." And when Keraunus went on to say that he would take nothing as a gift and would pay her for her care of his daughter, Hannah answered:

"We are happy to do all we can for your child, and Another will reward us."

"That I certainly forbid," exclaimed the steward wrathfully.

"We do not understand each other," said the Christian pleasantly. "I do not allude to any mortal being, and the reward we work for is not gold and possessions, but the happy consciousness of having mitigated the sufferings of a fellow-creature."

Keraunus shrugged his shoulders, and after desiring Selene to ask the physician when she might be taken home, he went away.

"I will not leave you here an instant longer than is necessary," he said as urgently as though she were in some infected house; he kissed her forehead, bowed to Hannah as loftily as though he had just bestowed an alms upon her, and departed, without listening to Selene's assurances that she was extremely happy and comfortable with the widow.

The ground had long burnt under his feet, and the money in his pocket, he was now possessed of ample means to acquire a good new slave, perhaps, if he threw old Sebek into the bargain, they might even suffice to procure him a handsome Greek, who might teach the children to read and write. He could direct his first attention to the external appearance of the new member of his household, if he were a scholar as well, he would feel justified in the high price he expected to be obliged to pay for him.

As Keraunus approached the slave-market he said, not without some conscious emotion at his own paternal devotion:

"All for the credit of the house, all, and only, for the children."

Arsinoe carried out her intention of staying with Selene; her father was to fetch her on his way home. After he was gone, Hannah and Mary left the two sisters together, for they supposed that they must wish to discuss a variety of things without the presence of strangers.

As soon as the girls were alone Arsinoe began: "Your cheeks are rosy, Selene, and you look cheerful—ah! and I, I am so happy—so happy!"

"Because you are to fill the part of Roxana?"

"That is very nice too, and who would have thought only yesterday morning that we should be so rich today. We hardly know what to do with all the money."

"We?"

"Yes, for father has sold two objects out of his collection for six thousand drachmae."

"Oh!" cried Selene clasping her hands, "then we can pay our most pressing debts."

"To be sure, but that is not nearly all."

"No?"

"Where shall I begin? Ah! Selene, my heart is so full. I am tired, and yet I could dance and sing and shout all day and all the night through till to-morrow. When I think how happy I am, my head turns, and I feel as if I must use all my self-control to keep myself from turning giddy. You do not know yet how you feel when the arrow of Eros has pierced you. Ah! I love Pollux so much, and he loves me too."

At these words all the color fled from Selene's cheeks, and her pale lips brought out the words:

"Pollux? The son of Euphorion, Pollux the sculptor?"

"Yes, our dear, kind, tall Pollux!" cried Arsinoe. "Now prick up your ears, and you shall hear how it all came to pass. Last night on our way to see you he confessed how much he loved me, and now you must advise me how to win over my father to our side, and very soon too. By-and-bye he will of course say yes, for Pollux can do anything he wants, and some day he will be a great man, as great as Papias, and Aristaeus, and Kealkes all put together. His youthful trick with that silly caricature — but how pale you are, Selene!"

"It is nothing — nothing at all — a pain — go on," said Selene.

"Dame Hannah begged me not to let you talk much."

"Only tell me everything; I will be quiet."

"Well, you have seen the lovely head of mother that he made," Arsinoe went on. "Standing by that we saw each other and talked for the first time after long years, and I felt directly that there was not a dearer man than he in the whole world, wide as it is. And he fell in love too with a stupid little thing like me. Yesterday evening he came here with me; and then as I went home, taking his arm in the dark through the streets, then—Oh, Selene, it was splendid, delightful! You cannot imagine!—Does your foot hurt you very much, poor dear? Your eyes are full of tears."

"Go on, tell me all, go on."

And Arsinoe did as she was desired, sparing the poor girl nothing that could widen and deepen the wound in her soul. Full of rapturous memories she described the place in the streets where Pollux had first kissed her. The shrubs in the garden where she had flung herself into his arms, her blissful walk in the moonlight, and all the crowd assembled for the festival, and finally how, possessed by the god, they had together joined the procession, and danced through the streets. She described, with tears in her eyes, how painful their parting had been, and laughed again, as she told how an ivy leaf in her hair had nearly betrayed everything to her father. So she talked and talked, and there was something that intoxicated her in her own words.

How they were affecting Selene she did not observe. How could she know that it was her narrative and no other suffering which made her sister's lips quiver so sorrowfully? Then, when she went on to speak of the splendid garments which Julia was having made for her, the suffering girl listened with only half an ear, but her attention revived when she heard how much old Plutarch had offered for the ivory cup, and that her father proposed to exchange their old slave for a more active one.

"Our good black mouse-catching old stork looks shabby enough it is true," said Arsinoe, "still I am very sorry he should go away. If you had been at home, perhaps father would have waited to consider."

Selene laughed drily, and her lips curled scornfully as she said:

"That is the way! go on! two days before you are turned out of house and home you ride in a chariot and pair!"

"You always see the worst side," said Arsinoe with annoyance. "I tell you it will all turn out far better and nicer and more happily than we expect. As soon as we are a little richer we will buy back the old man, and keep him and feed him till he dies."

Selene shrugged her shoulders, and her sister jumped up from her seat with her eyes full of tears. She had been so happy in telling how happy she was that she firmly believed that her story must bring brightness into the gloom of the sick girl's soul, like sunshine after a dark night; and Selene had nothing to give her but scornful words and looks. If a friend refuses to share in joys it is hardly less wounding than if he were to abandon us in trouble.

"How you always contrive to embitter my happiness!" cried Arsinoe. "I know very well that nothing that I can do can ever be right in your eyes; still, we are sisters, and you need not set your teeth and grudge your words, and shrug your shoulders when I tell you of things which, even a stranger, if I were to confide them to her, would rejoice over with me. You are so cold and heartless! I dare say you will betray me to my father —"

But Arsinoe did not finish her sentence, for Selene looked up at her with a mixture of suffering and alarm, and said:

"I cannot be glad—I am in too much pain." As she spoke the tears ran down her cheeks and as soon as Arsinoe saw them she felt a return of pity for the sick girl, bent over and kissed her cheeks once, twice, thrice; but Selene pushed her aside and murmured piteously:

"Leave me—pray leave me; go away, I can bear it no longer." She turned her face to the wall, sobbing aloud. Arsinoe attempted once more to show her some marks of affection, but her sister pushed her away still more decidedly, crying out loudly, as if in desperation: "I shall die if you do not leave me alone."



And the happier girl, whose best offerings were thus disdained by her only female friend, went weeping away to await her father's return outside the door of the widow's house.

When Hannah went to lay fresh handkerchiefs on Selene's wounds she saw that she had been crying, but she did not enquire into the reason of her tears. Towards evening the widow explained to her patient that she must leave her alone for half an hour, for that she and Mary were going out to pray to their God with their brethren and sisters, and they would pray for her also.

"Leave me, only leave me," said Selene, "as it is, so it is — there are no gods."

"Gods?" replied Hannah. "No. But there is one good and loving Father in Heaven, and you soon shall learn to know him."

"I know him, well!" muttered the sick girl with keen irony.

No sooner was she alone than she sat up in bed, and flung the flowers, which had been lying on it, far from her across the room, twisted the pin of the brooch till it was broken, and did not stir a finger to save the gold setting and engraved stone when they fell between the bed and wall of the room. Then she lay staring at the ceiling, and did not stir again. It was now quite dark. The lilies and honeysuckle in the great nosegay outside the window began to smell more strongly, and their perfume forced itself inexorably on her senses, rendered painfully acute by fever. She perceived it at every breath she drew, and not for a minute would it let her forget her wrecked happiness, and the wretchedness of her heart, till the heavy sweetness of the flowers became more unendurable than the most pungent odor, and she drew the coverlet over her head to escape this new torment; but she soon cast it off again, for she thought she should be suffocated under it. An intolerable restlessness took possession of her, while the pain in her injured foot throbbed madly, the cut in her head seemed to burn, and her temples beat with an agonizing headache that contracted the muscles of her eyes. Every nerve in her body, every thought of her brain was a separate torture, and at the same time she felt herself without a stay, without protection, and wholly abandoned to some

cruel influence, which tossed and tore her soul as the storm tosses the crowns of the palm-trees.

Without tears, incapable of lying still and yet punished for the slightest movement by some fresh pain, racked in every joint, not strong enough in her bewilderment to carry through a single connected thought, and yet firmly convinced that the perfume she was forced to inhale at every breath was poisoning her—destroying her—driving her mad—she lifted her damaged foot out of bed, dragged the other after it, and sat up on her couch regardless of the pain she felt, and the warnings of the physician. Her long hair fell dishevelled over her face, her arms, and her hands, in which she held her aching head; and in this new attitude the excitement of her brain and heart took fresh development.

She sat gazing at the floor with a freezing gaze, and bitter enmity towards her sister, hatred towards Pollux, contempt for her father's miserable weakness, and her own utter blindness, rang wild changes in her soul. Outside all lay in peaceful calm, and from the house in which Paulina lived the evening breeze now and again bore the pure tones of a pious hymn upon her ear. Selene never heeded it, but as the same air wafted the scent of the flowers in her face even stronger than before, she clutched her hair in her fingers and pulled it so violently that she actually groaned with the pain she gave herself.

The question as to whether her hair was less abundant and beautiful than her sister's suddenly occurred to her, and like a flash in the darkness the wish shot through her soul that she could fling Arsinoe to the ground by the hair, with the hand which was now hurting herself.

That perfume! that horrible perfume!

She could bear it no longer. She stood up on her uninjured foot, and with very short steps she dragged herself half crying to the window, and flung the nosegay with the great jar of burnt clay down on to the ground. The vessel was broken.—It had cost poor Hannah many hardly-saved pieces not long since. Selene stood on one foot, leaning, to recover herself, against the right-hand post of the window-opening, and there she could hear more distinctly than

from her couch, the voice of the waves as they broke on the stone quay just behind dame Hannah's little house. The child of the Lochias was familiar with their tones, but the clashing and gurgling of the cool, moist element against the stones had never affected her before as they did now. Her fevered blood was on fire, her foot was burning, her head was hot, and hatred seemed to consume her soul as in a slow fire; she felt as if every wave that broke upon the seawall was calling out to her: "I am cool, I am moist, I can extinguish the flame that is consuming you. I can refresh and revive you."

What had the world to offer her but new torment and new misery? But the sea—the blue dark sea was wide, and cold, and deep, and its waves promised her in insidious tones to relieve her at once of the rage of her fever, and of the burden of her life. Selene did not pause, did not reflect; she remembered neither the children whom she had so long cared for as a mother, nor her father, whose comfort and support she was—vague voices in her brain seemed to be whispering to her that the world was evil and cruel, and the abode of all the torment and care that gnawed at her heart. She felt as if she had been plunged to the temples in a pool of fire, and, like some poor wretch whose garments have been caught by the flames, she had an instinct to fly to the water, at the bottom of which she might hope to find the fulfilment of her utmost longing, sweet cold death, in which all is forgotten.

Groaning and tottering she pushed her way through the door into the garden and hobbled down to the sea, grasping her temples in her hands.

## CHAPTER II.

The Alexandrians were a stiff-necked generation. Only some phenomenal sight far transcending their every-day experience could avail to make them turn their heads to stare at it, but just now there was something to look at, at every moment and in every street of the city. To-day too each one thought only of himself and of his own pleasure. Some particularly pretty, tall, or well-dressed figure would give rise to a smile or an exclamation of approval, but before one sight had been thoroughly enjoyed the inquisitive eye was seeking a fresh one.

Thus it happened that no one paid any special attention to Hadrian and his companions who allowed themselves to be unresistingly carried along the streets by the current of the crowd; and yet each one of them was, in his way, a remarkable object. Hadrian was dressed as Silenus, Pollux as a faun. Both wore masks and the disguise of the younger man was as well suited to his pliant and vigorous figure as that of the elder to his powerful stately person. Antinous followed his master, dressed as Eros. He wore a crimson mantle and was crowned with roses, while the silver quiver on his shoulder and the bow in his hand clearly symbolized the god he was intended to represent. He too wore a mask, but his figure attracted many gazers, and many a greeting of "Long live the god of love" or "Be gracious to me oh! son of Aphrodite" was spoken as he passed.

Pollux had obtained all the things requisite for these disguises from the store of drapery belonging to his master. Papias had been out, but the young man did not deem it necessary to ask his consent, for he and the other assistants had often used the things for similar purposes with his full permission. Only as he took the quiver intended for Antinous, Pollux hesitated a little for it was of solid silver and had been given to his master by the wife of a wealthy cone-dealer, whom he had represented in marble as Artemis equipped for the chase.

"The Roman's handsome companion," thought the young artist as he placed the costly object in with the others in a basket, which a squinting apprentice was to carry behind him—"The Roman's

handsome companion must be made a splendid Eros – and before sunrise the useless thing will be hanging on its hook again."

Indeed Pollux had not much time to admire the splendid appearance of the god of love he had so richly adorned, for the Roman architect was possessed by such thirst for knowledge and such inexhaustible curiosity as to the minutest details that even Pollux who was born in Alexandria, and had grown up there with his eyes very wide open, was often unable to answer his indefatigable questioning.

The grey-bearded master wanted to see every thing and to be informed on every subject. Not content with making acquaintance with the main streets and squares the public sites and buildings, he peeped into the handsomest of the private houses and asked the names, rank and fortunes of the owners. The decided way in which he told Pollux the way he wished to be conducted proved to the artist that he was thoroughly familiar with the plan of the city. And when the sagacious and enlightened man expressed his approval, nay his admiration of the broad clean streets of the town, the handsome open places, and particularly handsome buildings which abounded on all sides, the young Alexandrian who was proud of his city was delighted.

First Hadrian made him lead him along the seashore by the Bruchiom to the temple of Poseidon, where he performed some devotions, then he looked into the garden of the palace and the courts of the adjoining museum. The Caesareum with its Egyptian gateway excited his admiration no less than the theatre, surrounded with pillared arcades in stories, and decorated with numerous statues. From thence deviating to the left they once more approached the sea to visit the great Emporium, to see the forest of masts of Eunostus, and the finely-constructed quays. They left the viaduct known as the Heptastadion to their right and the harbor of Kibotus, swarming with small merchant craft, did not detain them long.

Here they turned backs on the sea following a street which led inland through the quarter called Khakotis inhabited only by native Egyptians, and here the Roman found much to see that was noteworthy. First he and his companions met a procession of the

priests who serve the gods of the Nile valley, carrying reliquaries and sacred vessels, with images of the gods and sacred animals, and tending towards the Serapeum which towered high above the streets in the vicinity. Hadrian did not visit the temple, but he inspected the chariots which carried people along an inclined road which led up the hill on which was the sanctuary, and watched devotees on foot who mounted by an endless flight of steps constructed on purpose; these grew wider towards the top, terminating in a platform where four mighty pillars bore up a boldly-curved cupola. Nothing looked down upon the temple-building which with its halls, galleries and rooms rose behind this huge canopy.

The priests with their white robes, the meagre, half-naked Egyptians with their pleated aprons and headcloths, the images of beasts and the wonderfully-painted houses in this quarter of the city, particularly attracted Hadrian's attention and made him ask many questions, not all of which could Pollux answer.

Their walk which now took them farther and farther from the sea extended to the extreme south of the town and the shores of lake Mareotis. Nile boats and vessels of every form and size lay at anchor in this deep and sheltered inland sea; here the sculptor pointed out to Hadrian the canal through which goods were conveyed to the marine fleet which had been brought down the river to Alexandria. And he pointed out to the Roman the handsome country-houses and well-tended vineyards on the shores of the lake.

"The bodies in this city ought to thrive," said Hadrian meditatively. "For here are two stomachs and two mouths by which they absorb nourishment; the sea, I mean, and this lake."

"And the harbors in each," added Pollux.

"Just so; but now it is time we should turn about," replied Hadrian, and the party soon took a road leading eastward; they walked without pause through the quiet streets inhabited by the Christians, and finally through the Jews' quarter. In the heart of this quarter many houses were shut up, and there were no signs to be seen of the gay doings which crowded on the sense and fancy in the heathen part of the town, for the stricter among the Hebrews held

sternly aloof, from the holiday festivities in which most of their nation and creed who dwelt among the Greeks, took part.

For a third time Hadrian and his companions crossed the Canopic way which formed the main artery of the city and divided it into the northern and southern halves, for he wished to look down from the hill of the Paneum on the combined effect as a whole of all that he had seen in detail. The carefully-kept gardens which surrounded this elevation swarmed with men, and the spiral path which led to the top was crowded with women and children, who came here to see the most splendid spectacle of the whole day, which closed with performances in all the theatres in the town. Before the Emperor and his escort could reach the Paneum itself the crowd suddenly packed more closely and began exclaiming among themselves, "Here they come!" "They are early to-day!" "Here they are!"

Lictors with their fasces over their shoulders were clearing the broad roadway, which led from the prefect's on the Bruchiom to the Paneum, with their staves and paying no heed to the mocking and witty speeches addressed to them by the mob wherever they appeared. One woman, as she was driven back by a Roman guardian of the peace, cried scornfully, "Give me your rods for my children and do not use them on unoffending citizens."

"There is an axe hidden among the faggots," added an Egyptian letter-writer in a warning voice.

"Bring it here," cried a butcher. "I can use it to slaughter my beasts." The Romans as they heard these bandied words felt the blood mounting to their faces, but the prefect, who knew his Alexandrians well, had counselled them to be deaf; to see everything but to hear nothing. Now there appeared a cohort of the Twelfth Legion, who were quartered in garrison in Egypt, in their richest arms and holiday uniforms. Behind them came two files of particularly tall lictors wearing wreaths, and they were followed by several hundred wild beasts, leopards and panthers, giraffes, gazelles, antelopes, and deer, all led by dark-colored Egyptians. Then came a richly-dressed and much be-wreathed Dionysian chorus with the sound of tambourines and lyres, double flutes and triangles, and finally, drawn by ten elephants and twenty white horses, a large ship, resting on wheels and gilt from stem to stern,

representing the vessel in which the Tyrrhenian pirates were said to have carried off the young Dionysus when they had seen the black-haired hero on the shore in his purple garments. But the miscreants—so the myth went on to say—were not allowed long to rejoice in their violence, for hardly had the ship reached the open sea when the fetters dropped from the god, vines entwined the sails in sudden luxuriance, tendrils encumbered the oars and rudder, heavy grapes clustered round the ropes, and ivy clung to the mast and shrouded the seats and sides of the vessel. Dionysus is equally powerful on sea and on land; in the pirates' ship he assumed the form of a lion, and the pirates, filled with terror, flung themselves into the sea, and in the form of dolphins followed their lost bark.

All this Titianus had caused to be represented just as the Homeric hymns described it, out of slight materials, but richly and elegantly decorated, in order to provide a feast for the eyes of the Alexandrians, with the intention of riding in it himself, with his wife and the most illustrious of the Romans who formed the Empress' suite, to enjoy all the Holiday doings in the chief streets of the city. Young and old, great and small, men and women, Greeks, Romans, Jews, Egyptians, foreigners dark and fair, with smooth hair or crisp wool, crowded with equal eagerness to the edge of the roadway to see the gorgeous boat.

Hadrian, far more anxious to see the show than his younger but less excitable favorite, pushed into the front rank, and as Antinous was trying to follow him, a Greek boy, whom he had shoved aside, snatched his mask from his face, threw himself on the ground, and slipped nimbly off with his booty. When Hadrian looked round for the Bithyman, the ship-in which the prefect was standing between the images of the Emperor and Empress, while Julia, Balbilla, and her companion, and other Roman lords and ladies were sitting in it—had come quite near to them. His sharp eye had recognized them all, and fearing that the lad's uncovered face would betray them he cried out:

"Turn round and get into the crowd again." The favorite immediately obeyed, and only too glad to escape from the crowd, which was a thing he detested, he sat down on a bench close to the Paneum, and looked dreamily at the ground while he thought of



Selene and the nosegay he had sent her, neither seeing nor hearing anything of what was going on around him.

When the gaudy ship left the gardens of the Paneum and turned into the Canopic way, the crowd pursued it in a dense mass, hallooing and shouting. Like a torrent suddenly swelled by a storm it rushed on, surging and growing at each moment, and carrying with it even those who tried to resist its force. Thus even Hadrian and Pollux were forced to follow in its wake, and it was not till they found themselves in the broad Canopic way that they were able to come to a stand-still. The broad roadway of this famous street was bordered on each side by a long vista of colonnade, and it extended from one end of the city to the other. There were hundreds of the Corinthian columns which supported the roof that covered the footway, and near to one of these the Emperor and Pollux succeeded at last in effecting a halt and taking breath.

Hadrian's first thought was for his favorite, and being averse to venturing himself once more to mix with the crowd, he begged the sculptor to go and seek him and conduct him safely.

"Will you wait for me here?" asked Pollux.

"I have known a pleasanter halting place," sighed the Emperor.

"So have I," answered the artist. "But that tall door there, wreathed round with boughs of poplar and ivy, leads into a cook-shop where the gods themselves might be content to find themselves."

"Then I will wait there."

"But I warn you to eat as much as you can, for the Olympian table' as kept by Lykortas, the Corinthian, is the dearest eating-house in the whole city. None but the richest are his guests."

"Very good," laughed Hadrian. "Only find my assistant a new mask and bring him back to me. It will not ruin me quite, even if I pay for a supper for all three of us, and on a holiday one expects to spend something."

"I hope you may not live to repent," retorted Pollux. "But a long fellow like me is a good trencherman, and can do his part with the wine-jar."

"Only show me what you can do," cried Hadrian after him as Pollux hurried off. "I owe you a supper at any rate, for that cabbage stew of your mother's."

While Pollux went to seek the Bithyman in the vicinity of the Paneum, the Emperor entered the eating house, which the skill of the cook had made the most frequented and fashionable in Alexandria. The place in which most of the customers of the house dined, consisted of a large open hall, surrounded by arcades which were roofed in on three of its sides and closed by a wall on its fourth; in these arcades stood couches, on which the guests reclined singly, or in couples, or in larger groups, and ordered the dishes and liquors which the serving slaves, pretty boys with curling hair and hand some dresses, placed before them on low tables. Here all was noise and bustle; at one table an epicure devoted himself silently to the enjoyment of some carefully-prepared delicacy, at another a large circle of men seemed to be talking more eagerly than they either eat or drank, and from several of the smaller rooms behind the wall at the back of the hall came sounds of music and song, and the bold laughter of men and women.

The Emperor asked for a private room, but they were all occupied, and he was requested to wait a little while, for that one of the adjoining. rooms would very soon be vacant. He had taken off his mask, and though he was not particularly afraid of being recognized in his disguise he chose a couch that was screened by a broad pillar in one of the arcades at the inner side of the court, and which, now that evening was beginning to fall was already in obscurity. There he ordered, first some wine and then some oysters to begin, with; while he was eating these he called one of the superintendents and discussed with him the details of the supper he wished presently to be served to himself and his two guests. During this conversation the bustling host came to make his bow to his new customer, and seeing that he had to do with a man fully conversant with all the pleasures of the table, he remained to attend on him, and entered with special zeal into Hadrian's various requirements.

There was, too, plenty to be seen in the court, which roused the curiosity of the most inquisitive and enquiring man of his time. In the large space enclosed by the arcades, and under the eyes of the guests, on gridirons and hearths, over spits and in ovens the various dishes were prepared which were served up by the slaves. The cooks prepared their savory messes on large, clean tables, and the scene of their labors, which, though enclosed by cords was open to public gaze was surrounded by a small market, where however only the choicest of wares were displayed.

Here in tempting array was every variety of vegetable reared on Greek or Egyptian soil; here speckless fruits of every size and hue were set out, and there ready baked, shining, golden-brown pasties were displayed. Those containing meat, fish or the mussels of Canopus were prepared in Alexandria itself, but others containing fruit or the leaves of flowers were brought from Arsinoe on the shores of Lake Moeris, for in that neighborhood the cultivation of fruit and horticulture generally were pursued with the greatest success. Meat of all sorts lay or hung in suitable places; there were juicy hams from Cyrene, Italian sausages and uncooked joints of various slaughtered beasts. By them lay or hung game and poultry in select abundance, and a large part of the court was taken up by a tank in which the choicest of the scaly tribes of the Nile, and of the lakes of Northern Egypt, were swimming about as well as the Muraena and other fish of Italian breed. Alexandrian crabs and the mussels, oysters, and cray-fish of Canopus and Klysma were kept alive in buckets or jars. The smoked meats of Mendes and the neighborhood of Lake Moeris hung on metal pegs, and in a covered but well-aired room, sheltered from the sun lay freshly-imported fish from the Mediterranean and Red Sea. Every guest at the 'Olympian table' was allowed here to select the meat, fruit, asparagus, fish, or pasty which he desired to have cooked for him. The host, Lykortas, pointed out to Hadrian an old gentleman who was busy in the court that was so prettily decorated with still-life, engaged in choosing the raw materials of a banquet he wished to give some friends in the evening of this very day.

"It is all very nice and extremely good," said Hadrian, "but the gnats and flies which are attracted by all those good things are unendurable, and the strong smell of food spoils my appetite."

"It is better in the side-rooms," said the host. "In the one kept for you the company is now preparing to depart. In behind here the sophists Demetrius and Pancrates are entertaining a few great men from Rome, rhetoricians or philosophers or something of the kind. Now they are bringing in the fine lamps and they have been sitting and talking at that table ever since breakfast. There come the guests out of the side room. Will you take it?"

"Yes," said Hadrian. "And when a tall young man comes to ask for the architect Claudius Venato, from Rome, bring him in to me."

"An architect then, and not a sophist or a rhetorician," said mine host, looking keenly at the Emperor.

"Silenus, — a philosopher!"

"Oh the two vociferous friends there go about even on other days naked and with ragged cloaks thrown over their lean shoulders. To-day they are feeding at the expense of rich Josephus."

"Josephus! he must be a Jew and yet he is making a large hole in the ham."

"There would be more swine in Cyrene if there were no Jews; they are Greeks like ourselves, and eat everything that is good."

Hadrian went into the vacant room, lay down on a couch that stood by the wall, and urged the slaves who were busied in removing the dishes and vessels used by his predecessors, and which were swarming with flies. As soon as he was alone he listened to the conversation which was being carried on between Favorinus, Florus, and their Greek guests. He knew the two first very well, and not a word of what they were saying escaped his keen ear.

Favorinus was praising the Alexandrians in a loud voice, but in flowing and elegantly-accented Greek. He was a native of Arelas — [Arles] — in Gaul, but no Hellene of them all could pour forth a purer flow of the language of Demosthenes than he. The self-reliant, keen, and vivacious natives of the African metropolis were far more to his taste than the Athenians; these dwelt only in, and for, the past;

the Alexandrians rejoiced in the present. Here an independent spirit still survived, while on the shores of the Ilissus there were none but servile souls who made a merchandise of learning, as the Alexandrians did of the products of Africa and the treasures of India. Once when he had fallen into disgrace with Hadrian, the Athenians had thrown down his statue, and the favor or disfavor of the powerful weighed with him more than intellectual greatness, valuable labors, and true merit.

Florus agreed with Favorinus on the whole, and declared that Rome must be freed from the intellectual influence of Athens; but Favorinus did not admit this; he opined that it was very difficult for any one who had left youth behind him, to learn anything new, thus referring, with light irony, to the famous work in which Florus had attempted to divide the history of Rome into four periods, corresponding to the ages of man, but had left out old age, and had treated only of childhood, youth, and manhood. Favorinus reproached him with overestimating the versatility of the Roman genius, like his friend Fronto, and underrating the Hellenic intellect.

Florus answered the Gaulish orator in a deep voice, and with such a grand flow of words, that the listening Emperor would have enjoyed expressing his approbation, and could not help considering the question as to how many cups of wine his usually placid fellow-countryman might have taken since breakfast to be so excited. When Florus tried to prove that under Hadrian's rule Rome had risen to the highest stage of its manhood, his friend, Demetrius, of Alexandria, interrupted him, and begged him to tell him something about the Emperor's person. Florus willingly acceded to this request, and sketched a brilliant picture of the administrative talent, the learning, and the capability of the Emperor.

"There is only one thing," he cried eagerly, "that I cannot approve of; he is too little at Rome, which is now the core and centre of the world. He must need see every thing for himself, and he is always wandering restlessly through the provinces. I should not care to change with him!"

"You have expressed the same ideas in verse," said Favorinus.

"Oh! a jest at supper-time. So long as I am in Alexandria and waiting on Caesar I can make myself very comfortable every day at the 'Olympian table' of this admirable cook."

"But how runs your poem?" asked Pancrates.

"I have forgotten it, and it deserved no better fate," replied Florus.

"But I," laughed the Gaul, "I remember the beginning. The first lines, I think, ran thus:

*" 'Let others envy Caesar's lot;  
To wander through Britannia's dales  
And be snowed up in Scythian vales  
Is Caesar's taste – I'd rather not?' "*

As he heard these words Hadrian struck his fist into the palm of his left hand, and while the feasters were hazarding guesses as to why he was so long in coming to Alexandria, he took out the folding tablet he was in the habit of carrying in his money-bag, and hastily wrote the following lines on the wax face of it:

*'Let others envy Florus' lot;  
To wander through the shops for drink,  
Or, into foolish dreaming sink  
In a cook-shop, where sticky flies  
Buzz round him till he shuts his eyes  
Is Florus' taste – I'd rather not?'*

Hardly had he ended the lines, muttering them to himself with much relish as he wrote, when the waiter showed in Pollux. The sculptor had failed to find Antinous, and suggested that the young man had probably gone home; he also begged that he might not be detained long at supper, for he had met his master Papias, who had been extremely annoyed by his long absence. Hadrian was no longer satisfied with the artist's society, for the conversation in the next room was to him far more attractive than that of the worthy young fellow. He himself was anxious to quit the meal soon, for he felt restless and uneasy. Antinous could no doubt easily find his way to Lochias, but recollections of the evil omens he had observed in the heavens last night flitted across his soul like bats through a

festal hall, marring the pleasure on which he again tried to concentrate it, in order to enjoy his hours of liberty.

Even Pollux was not so light-hearted as before. His long walk had made him hungry, and he addressed himself so vigorously to the excellent dishes which rapidly followed each other by his entertainer's orders, and emptied the cup with such unfailing diligence, that the Emperor was astonished: but the more he had to think about, the less did he talk.

Pollux, to be sure, had had his answer ready for his master, and without considering how easy it would have been to part from him in kindness, he had shortly and roundly quitted his service. Now indeed he stood on his own feet, and he was longing to tell Arsinoe and his parents of what he had done.

During the course of the meal his mother's advice recurred to his mind: to do his best to win the favor and good will of the architect whose guest he was; but he set it aside, for he was accustomed to owe all he gained to his own exertions, and though he still keenly felt in Hadrian the superiority of a powerful mind, their expedition through the city had not brought him any nearer to the Roman. Some insurmountable barrier stood fixed between himself and this restless, inquisitive man, who required so many answers that no one else had time to ask a question, and who when he was silent looked so absorbed and unapproachable that no one would have ventured to disturb him. The bold young artist had, however, tried now and again to break through the fence, but each time, he had at once been seized with a feeling, of which he could not rid himself, that he had done something awkward and unbecoming. He felt in his intercourse with the architect as a noble dog might feel that sported with a lion, and such sport could come to no good. Thus, for various reasons, host and guest were well content when the last dish was removed. Before Pollux left the room the Emperor gave him the tablets with the verses and begged him, with a meaning smile, to desire the gate-keeper at the Caesareum to give them to Annaeus Florus the Roman. He once more urgently charged the sculptor to look about for his young friend and, if he should find him at Lochias, to tell him that he, Claudius Venator, would return home ere long. Then the artist went his way.

Hadrian still sat a long time listening to the talk close by; but after waiting for above an hour to hear some fresh mention made of himself, he paid his reckoning and went out into the Canopic way, now brilliantly lighted. There he mingled with the revellers, and walked slowly onward, seeking suspiciously and anxiously for his vanished favorite.



### CHAPTER III.

Antinous, searching for his master, had wandered about in the crowd. Whenever he saw any figures of exceptional stature he followed them, but each time only to discover that he had entered on a false track. Long and persistent effort was not in his nature, so as soon as he began to get tired, he gave up the search and sat down again on a stone bench in the garden of the Paneum.

Two cynic philosophers, with unkempt hair, tangled beards, and ragged cloaks flung over their shivering bodies, sat down by him and fell into loud and contemptuous abuse of the deference shown, 'in these days,' to external things and vulgar joys, and of the wretched sensualists who regarded pleasure and splendor, rather than virtue, as the aim and end of existence. In order to be heard by the by-standers they spoke in loud tones, and the elder of the two, flourished his knotted stick as viciously, as though he had to defend himself against an attack. Antinous felt much disgusted by the hideous appearance, the coarse manners, and shrill voices of these persons, and when he rose—as the cynics' diatribe seemed especially directed against him—they scoffed at him as he went, mocking at his costume and his oiled and perfumed hair. The Bithynian made no reply to this abuse. It was odious to him, but he thought it might perhaps have amused Caesar.

He wandered on without thinking; the street in which he presently found himself must no doubt lead to the sea, and if he could once find himself on the shore he could not fail to make his way to Lochias. By the time it was growing dark he was once more standing outside the little gate-house, and there he learnt from Doris that the Roman and her son had not yet returned.

What was he to do alone in the vast empty palace? Were not the very slaves free to-day? Why should not he too for once enjoy life independently and in his own way? Full of the pleasant sense of being his own master and at liberty to walk in a road of his own choosing, he went onwards, and when he presently passed by the stall of a flower-seller, he began once more to think eagerly of Selene and the nosegay, which must long since have reached her hands.

He had heard from Pollux in the morning that the steward's daughter was being tended by Christians in a little house not far from the sea-shore; indeed the sculptor himself had been quite excited as he told Antinous that he himself had peeped into the lighted room and had seen her. 'A glorious creature' he had called her, and had said that she had never looked more beautiful than in a recumbent attitude on her bed.

Antinous recalled all this and determined to venture on an attempt to see again the maiden whose image filled his heart and brain.

It was now dark and the same light which had allowed of the sculptor's seeing Selene's features might this evening reveal them to him also. Full of passion and excitement, he got into the first litter he met with. The swarthy bearers were far too slow for his longing, and more than once he flung to them as much money as they were wont to earn in a week, to urge them to a brisker pace. At last he reached his destination; but seeing that several men and women robed in white, were going into the garden, he desired the bearers to carry him farther. Close to a dark narrow lane which bounded the widow's garden-plot on the east and led directly to the sea, he desired them to stop, got out of the litter and bid the slaves wait for him. At the garden door he still found two men dressed in white, and one of the cynic philosophers who had sat by him on the bench near the Paneum. He paced impatiently up and down, waiting till these people should have disappeared, and thus passing again and again under the light of the torches that were stuck up by the gate.

The dry cynic's prominent eyes were everywhere at once, and as soon as he perceived the peripatetic Bithynian he flung up his arm, exclaiming, as he pointed to him with a long, lean, stiff forefinger — half to the Christians with whom he had been talking and half to the lad himself:

"What does he want. That fop! that over-dressed minion! I know the fellow; with his smooth face and the silver quiver on his shoulder he believes he is Eros in person. Be off with you, you house-rat. The women and girls in here know how to protect themselves against the sort who parade the streets in rose-colored draperies. Take yourself off, or you will make acquaintance with the

noble Paulina's slaves and clogs. Hi! gate-keeper, here! keep an eye on this fellow."

Antinous made no answer, but slowly went back to his litter.

"To-morrow perhaps, if I cannot manage it tonight," he thought to himself as he went; and he never thought of any other means of attaining his end, much as he longed for it. A hindrance that came in his way ceased to be a hindrance as soon as he had left it behind him, and after this reflection he acted on this occasion as on many former ones. The litter was no longer standing where he had left it; the bearers had carried it into the lane leading to the sea, for the only little abode which stood on the eastern side of it belonged to a fisherman whose wife sold thin potations of Pelusium beer.

Antinous went down the green alley overarched with boughs of fig, to call the negroes who were sitting in the dull light of a smoky oil-lamp. Here it was dark, but at the end of the alley the sea shone and sparkled in the moonlight; the splashing of the waves tempted him onwards and he loitered clown to the stone-bound shore. There he spied a boat dancing on the water between two piles and it came into his head that it might be possible to see the house where Selene was sleeping, from the sea.

He undid the rope which secured the boat without any difficulty; he seated himself in it, laid aside the quiver and bow, pushed off with one of the oars that lay at the bottom of the boat and pulled with steady strokes towards the long path of light where the moon touched the crest of each dancing wavelet with unresting tremulous flecks of silver.

There lay the widow's garden. In that small white house must the fair pale Selene be sleeping, but though he rowed hither and thither, backwards and forwards, he could not succeed in discovering the window of which Pollux had spoken. Might it not be possible to find a spot where he could disembark and then make his way into the garden? He could see two little boats, but they lay in a narrow walled canal and this was closed by an iron railing. Beyond, was a terrace projecting into the sea, and surrounded by an elegant balustrade of little columns, but it rose straight out of the sea on smooth high walls. But there—what was that gleaming under the

two palm-trees which, springing from the same root, had grown together tall and slender—was not that a flight of marble steps leading down to the sea?

Antinous dipped his right oar in the waves with a practised hand to alter the head of the boat and was in the act of pulling his hand up to make his stroke against the pressure of the waves—but he did not complete the movement, nay he counteracted the stroke by a dexterous reverse action; a strange vision arrested his attention. On the terrace, which lay full in the bright moonlight, there appeared a white-robed figure with long floating hair.

How strangely it moved! It went now to one side and now to the other, then again it stood still and clasped its head in its hands. Antinous shuddered, he could not help thinking of the Daimons of which Hadrian so often spoke. They were said to be of half-divine and half-human nature, and sometimes appeared in the guise of mortals.

Or was Selene dead and was the white figure her wandering shade? Antinous clutched the handles of the oars, now merely floating on the water, and bending forward gazed fixedly and with bated breath at the mysterious being which had now reached the balustrade of the terrace, now—he saw quite plainly—covered its face with both hands, leaned far over the parapet, and now as a star falls through the sky on a clear night, as a fruit drops from the tree in autumn, the white form of the girl dropped from the terrace. A loud cry of anguish broke the silence of the night which veiled the world, and almost at the same instant the water splashed and gurgled up, and the moonbeams, cold and bright as ever, were mirrored in the thousand drops that flew up from its surface.

Was this Antinous, the indolent dreamer, who so promptly plunged his oars in the water, pulled a powerful stroke, and then, when in a few seconds after her fall, the form of the drowning girl came to the surface again quite close to the boat, flung aside the oar that was in his way? Leaning far over the edge of the boat he seized the floating garment of the drowning creature—it was a woman, no Daimon nor shade—and drew her towards him. He succeeded in raising her high out of the waves, but when he tried to pull her

fairly out of her watery bed, the weight, all on one side of the boat, was too great; it turned over and Antinous was in the sea.

The Bithyman was a good swimmer. Before the white form could sink a second time he had caught at it once more with his right hand and taking care that her head should not again touch the surface of the water, he swam with his left arm and legs towards the spot where he remembered he had seen the flight of steps. As soon as his feet felt the ground he lifted the girl in both arms and a groan of relief broke from his lips as he saw the marble steps close below him. He went up them without hesitation, and then, with a swift elastic step, carried his dripping and senseless burden to the terrace where he had observed that there were benches. The wide floor of the sea-terrace, paved with smooth flags of marble, was brightly lighted by the broad moonshine, and the whiteness of the stone reflected and seemed to increase the light. There stood the benches which Antinous had seen from afar.

He laid his burden on the first he came to, and a thrill of thankful joy warmed his shivering body when the rescued woman uttered a low cry of pain which told him that he had not toiled in vain. He gently slipped his arm between the hard elbow of the marble seat and her head, to give it a somewhat softer resting-place. Her abundant hair fell in clammy tresses, covering her face like a thick but fine veil; he parted it to the right and left and then—then he sank on his knees by her side as if a sudden bolt had fallen from the blue sky above them; for the features were hers, Selene's, and the pale girl before whom he was kneeling was she herself, the woman he loved.

Almost beside himself and trembling in every limb, he drew her closer to him and put his ear against her mouth to listen whether he had not deceived himself, whether she had not indeed fallen a victim to the waves or whether some warm breath were passing the portals of her lips.

Yes she breathed! she was alive! Full of thankful ecstasy he pressed his cheek to hers. Oh! how cold she was, icy, cold as death!

The torch of life was flickering, but he would not—could not—must not let it die out: and with all the care, rapidity and decision of

the most capable man, he once more raised her, lifted her in both arms as if she were a child, and carried her straight to the house whose white walls he could see gleaming among the shrubs behind the terrace. The little lamp was still burning in dame Hannah's room, which Selene had so lately quitted; in front of the window through which the dim light came to mingle with the moonbeams, lay the flowers whose perfume had so troubled the suffering girl, and with them Hannah's clay jar, all still strewn on the ground.

Was this nosegay his gift? Very likely.

But the lamp-lighted room into which he now looked could be none other than the sick-room, which he recognized from the sculptor's account. The housedoor was open and even that of the room in which he had seen the bed was unfastened; he pushed it open with his foot, entered the room, and laid Selene on the vacant couch.

There she lay as if dead; and as he looked at her immovable features, hallowed to solemnity by sorrow and suffering, his heart was touched with an ineffable solicitude, sympathy and pity; and, as a brother might bend over a sleeping sister, he bent over Selene and kissed her forehead. She moved, opened her eyes, gazed into his face—but her glance was so full of horror, so vague, glassy and bewildered, that he drew back with a shudder, and with hands uplifted could only stammer out: "Oh! Selene, Selene! do you not know me?" and as he spoke he looked anxiously in the face of the rescued girl; but she seemed not to hear him and nothing moved but her eyes which slowly followed his every movement.

"Selene!" he cried again, and seizing her inanimate hand which hung down, he pressed it passionately to his lips.

Then she gave a loud cry, a violent shiver shook her in every limb, she turned aside with sighs and groans, and at the same instant the door was opened, the little deformed girl entered the room and gave a shrill scream of terror as she saw Antinous standing by the side of her friend.

The lad himself started and, like a thief who has been caught in the act, he fled out into the night, through the garden, and as far as

the gate which led into the street without being stopped by any one. Here the gate-keeper met him, but he threw him aside with a powerful fling, and while the old man—who had grown gray in his office—caught hold of his wet chiton he tore the door open and ran on, dragging his pursuer with him for some paces. Then he flew down the street with long steps as if he were racing in the Gymnasium, and soon he felt that his pursuer, in whose hand he had left a piece of his garment, had given up the chase.

The gate-keeper's outcry had mingled with the pious hymns of the assembled Christians in Paulina's villa, and some of them had hurried out to help capture the disturber of the peace. But the young Bithynian was swifter than they and might consider himself perfectly safe when once he had succeeded in mixing with a festal procession. Half-willingly and half-perforce, he followed the drunken throng which was making its way from the heart of the city towards the lake, where, on a lonely spot on the shore to the east of Nikropolis, they were to celebrate certain nocturnal mysteries. The goal of the singing, shouting, howling mob with whom Antinous was carried along, was between Alexandria and Canopus and far enough from Lochias; thus it fell out that it was long past midnight when Hadrian's favorite, dirty, out of breath, and his clothes torn, at last appeared in the presence of his master.

## CHAPTER IV.

Hadrian had expected Antinous many hours since, and the impatience and vexation which had been long seething in him were reflected plainly enough in his sternly-bent brow and the threatening fire of his eye.

"Where have you been?" he imperiously asked.

"I could not find you, so I took a boat and went out on the lake."

"That is false."

Antinous did not answer, but merely shrugged his shoulders.

"Alone?" asked the Emperor more gently. "Alone."

"And for what purpose?"

"I was gazing at the stars."

"You!"

"And may I not, for once, tread in your footsteps?"

"Why not indeed? The lights of heaven shine for the foolish as well as for the wise. Even asses must be born under a good or an evil star. One donkey serves a hungry grammarian and feeds on used-up papyrus, while another enters the service of Caesar and is fattened up, and finds time to go star-gazing at night. What a state you are in."

"The boat upset and I fell into the water." Hadrian was startled, and observing his favorite's tangled hair in which the night wind had dried the salt water, and his torn chiton, he anxiously exclaimed:

"Go this instant and let Mastor dry you and anoint you. He too came back with a bruised hand and red eyes. Everything is upside down this accursed evening. You look like a slave that has been hunted by clogs. Drink a few cups of wine and then lie down."

"I obey your orders, great Caesar."



"So formal? The donkey simile vexed you."

"You used always to have a kind word for me."

"Yes, yes, and I shall have them again, I shall have them again. Only not to-night – go to bed."

Antinous left him, but the Emperor paced his room, up and down with long steps, his arms crossed over his breast and his eyes fixed on the ground. His superstitious soul had been deeply disturbed by a series of evil signs which he had not only seen the previous night in the sky, but had also met on his way to Lochias, and which seemed to be beginning to be fulfilled already.

He had left the eating house in an evil humor, the bad omens made him anxious, and though on his arrival at home he had done one or two things which he already regretted, this had certainly not been due to any adverse Daimons but to the brooding gloom of his clouded mind. Eternal circumstances, it is true, had led to his being witness to an attack made by the mob on the house of a wealthy Israelite, and it was attributable to a vexatious accident that at this juncture, he should have met Verus, who had observed and recognized him. Yes, the Spirits of evil were abroad this day, but his subsequent experiences and deeds upon reaching Lochias, would certainly not have taken place on any more fortunate day, or, to be more exact, if he had been in a calmer frame of mind; he himself alone was in fault, he alone, and no spiteful accident, nor malicious and tricky Daimon. Hadrian, to be sure, attributed to these sprites all that he had done, and so considered it irremediable; an excellent way, no doubt, of exonerating oneself from a burdensome duty, or from repairing some injustice, but conscience is a register in which a mysterious hand inexorably enters every one of our deeds, and in which all that we do is ruthlessly called by its true name. We often succeed, it is true, in effacing the record for a longer or a shorter period, but often, again, the letters on the page shine with an uncanny light, and force the inward eye to see them and to heed them.

On this particular night Hadrian felt himself compelled to read the catalogue of his actions and among them he found many a sanguinary crime, many a petty action unworthy of a far meaner

soul than he; still the record commemorated many duties strictly fulfilled, much honest work, an unceasing struggle towards high aims, and an unwearied effort to feel his way intellectually, to the most remote and exalted limits possible to the human mind and comprehension.

In this hour Hadrian thought of none but his evil deeds, and vowed to the gods—whom he mocked at with his philosophical friends, and to whom he nevertheless addressed himself whenever he felt the insufficiency of his own strength and means—to build a temple here, to offer a sacrifice there, in order to expiate old crimes and divert their malice. He felt like a great man must who is threatened with the disfavor of his superiors, and who hopes to propitiate them with gifts. The haughty Roman quailed at the thought of unknown dangers, but he was far from feeling the wholesome pangs of repentance.

Hardly an hour since he had forgotten himself and had disgracefully abused his power over a weaker creature, and now he was vexed at having behaved so and not otherwise; but it never entered his head to humiliate his pride or, by offering some compensation to the offended party, tacitly to confess the injustice he had committed. Often he deeply felt his human weakness, but he was quite capable of believing in the sacredness of his imperial person, and this he always found most easy when he had trodden under foot some one who had been rash enough to insult him, or not to acknowledge his superiority. And was it not on the contemners of the gods that their heaviest punishments fell?

To-day the terrestrial Jupiter had again crushed into the earth with his thunderbolts, an overbold mortal, and this time the son of the worthy gate-keeper was his victim. The sculptor certainly had been so unlucky as to touch Hadrian in his most sensitive spot, but a cordially benevolent feeling is not easily converted into a relentless opposition if we are not ourselves—as was the case with the Emperor—accustomed to jump from one mood to the other, are not conscious—as he was—of having it in our power directly to express our good-will or our aversion in action.

The sculptor's capacities had commanded the Emperor's esteem, his fresh and independent nature had at first suited and attracted

him, but even during the walk together through the streets, the young man's uncompromising manner of treating him as an equal had become unpleasing to him. In his workshop he saw in Pollux only the artist, and delighted in his original and dashing powers; but out of it, and among men of a commoner stamp, from whom he was accustomed to meet with deference, the young man's speech and demeanor seemed unbecoming, bold, and hard to be endured. In the eating-house the huge eater and drinker, who laughingly pressed him to do his part, so as not to make a present to the landlord, had filled Hadrian with repulsion. And after this, when Hadrian had returned to Lochias, out of humor and rendered apprehensive by evil omens, and even then had not found his favorite, he impatiently paced up and down the hall of the Muses and would not deign to offer a greeting to the sculptor, who was noisily occupied behind his screens.

Pollux had passed quite as bad an evening as the Emperor. When, in his desire to see Arsinoe once more, he penetrated to the door of the steward's apartment, Keraunus had stopped his way, and sent him about his business with insulting words. In the hall of the Muses he had met his master, and had had a quarrel with him, for Papias, to whom he repeated his notice to quit, had grown angry, and had desired him then and there to sort out his own tools, and to return those that belonged to him, his master, and for the future to keep himself as far as possible from Papias' house, and from the works in progress at Locluas. On this, hard words had passed on both sides, and when Papias had left the palace and Pollux went to seek Pontius the architect, in order to discuss his future plans with him, he learnt that he too had quitted Lochias a short time before, and would not return till the following morning.

After brief reflection he determined to obey the orders of Papias and to pack his own tools together. Without paying any heed to Hadrian's presence he began to toss some of the hammers, chisels, and wooden modelling tools into one box, and others into another, doing it as recklessly as though he were minded to punish the unconscious tools as adverse creatures who had turned against him.

At last his eye fell on Hadrian's bust of Balbilla. The hideous caricature at which he had laughed only yesterday, made him angry

now, and after gazing at it thoughtfully for a few minutes his blood boiled up furiously, he hastily pulled a lath out of the partition and struck at the monstrosity with such fury that the dry clay flew in pieces, and the fragments were strewed far and wide about the workshop. The wild noise behind the sculptor's screen made the Emperor pause in his walk to see what the artist was doing; he looked on at the work of destruction, unobserved by Pollux, and as he looked the blood mounted to his head; he knit his brows in anger, a blue vein in his forehead swelled and stood out, and ominous lines appeared above his brow. The great master of statecraft could more easily have borne to hear himself condemned as a ruler than to see his work of art despised. A man who is sure of having done some thing great can smile at blame, but he, who is not confident in himself has reason to dread it, and is easily drawn into hating the critic who utters it. Hadrian was trembling with fury, he doubled his fist as he lifted it in Pollux's face, and going close up to him asked in a threatening tone:

"What do you mean by that?"

The sculptor glanced round at the Emperor and answered, raising his stick for another blow:

"I am demolishing this caricature for it enrages me."

"Come here," shouted Hadrian, and clutching the girdle which confined the artist's chiton, in his strong sinewy hand, he dragged the startled sculptor in front of his Urania wrenched the lath out of his hand, struck the bust of the scarcely-finished statue off the body, exclaiming as he did so, in a voice that mimicked Pollux:

"I am demolishing this bungler's work for it enrages me!"

The artist's arms fell by his side; astonished and infuriated he stared at the destroyer of his handiwork, and cried out:

"Madman! this is enough. One blow more and you will feel the weight of my fists."

Hadrian laughed aloud, a cold hard laugh, flung the lath at Pollux's feet and said:

"Judgment against judgment—it is only fair."

"Fair?" shrieked Pollux, beside himself.

"Your wretched rubbish, which my squinting apprentice could have done as well as you, and this figure born in a moment of inspiration! Shame upon you! Once more, if you touch the Urania again I warn you, you shall learn —"

"Well, what?"

"That in Alexandria grey hairs are only respected so long as they deserve it."

Hadrian folded his arms, stepped quite close up to Pollux, and said:

"Gently, fellow, if you value your life."

Pollux stepped back before the imposing personage that stood before him, and, as it were scales, fell from his eyes. The marble statue of the Emperor in the Caesareum represented the sovereign in this same attitude. The architect, Claudius Venator, was none other than Hadrian.

The young artist turned pale and said with bowed head, and in low voice as he turned to go:

"Right is always on the side of the strongest. Let me go. I am nothing but a poor artist—you are some thing very different. I know you now; you are Caesar."

"I am Caesar," snarled Hadrian, "and if you think more of yourself as an artist than of me, I will show you which of us two is the sparrow, and which the eagle."

"You have the power to destroy, and I only desire —"

"The only person here who has a right to desire is myself," cried the Emperor, "and I desire that you shall never enter this palace again, nor ever come within sight of me so long as I remain here. What to do with your kith and kin I will consider. Not another

word! Away with you, I say, and thank the gods that I judge the misdeed of a miserable boy more mercifully than you dared to do in judging the work of a greater man than yourself, though you knew that he had done it in an idle hour with a few hasty touches. Be off, fellow; my slaves will finish destroying your image there, for it deserves no better fate, and because—what was it you said just now? I remember—and because it enrages me."

A bitter laugh rang after the lad as he quitted the hall. At the entrance, which was perfectly dark, he found his master, Papias, who had not missed a word of what had passed between him and the Emperor. As Pollux went into his mother's house he cried out:

"Oh mother, mother, what a morning, and what an evening. Happiness is only the threshold to misery."

## CHAPTER V.

While Pollux and his mother, who was much grieved, waited for Euphorion's return, and while Papias was ingratiating himself with the Emperor by pretending still to believe that Hadrian was nothing more than Claudius Venator, the architect, Aurelius Verus, nicknamed by the Alexandrians, "the sham Eros" had lived through strange experiences.

In the afternoon he had visited the Empress, in the hope of persuading her to look on at the gay doings of the people, even if incognito; but Sabina was out of spirits, declared herself unwell, and was quite sure that the noise of the rabble would be the death of her. Having, as she said, so vivacious a reporter as Verus, she might spare herself from exposing her own person to the dust and smell of the town, and the uproar of men. As soon as Lucilla begged her husband to remember his rank and not to mingle with the excited multitude, at any rate after dark, the Empress strictly enjoined him to see with his own eyes everything that could be worth notice in the festival, and more particularly to give attention to everything that was peculiar to Alexandria and not to be seen in Rome.

After sunset Verus had first gone to visit the veterans of the Twelfth Legion who had been in the field with him against the Numidians, and to whom he gave a dinner at an eating-house, as being his old fellow-soldiers. For above an hour he sat drinking with the brave old fellows; then, quitting them, he went to look at the Canopic way by night, as it was but a few paces thither from the scene of his hospitality. It was brilliantly lighted with tapers, torches, and lamps, and the large houses behind the colonnades were gaudy with rich hangings; only the handsomest and stateliest of them all had no kind of decoration. This was the abode of the Jew Apollodorus.

In former years the finest hangings had decorated his windows, which had been as gay with flowers and lamps as those of the other Israelites who dwelt in the Canopic way, and who were wont to keep the festival in common with their heathen fellow-citizens as jovially as though they were no less zealous to do homage to Dionysus. Apollodorus had his own reasons for keeping aloof on this occasion from all that was connected with the holiday doings of

the heathen. Without dreaming that his withdrawal could involve him in any danger, he was quietly sitting in his house, which was so splendidly furnished as to seem fitted for some princely Greek rather than for a Hebrew. This was especially the case with the men's living-room, in which Apollodorus sat, for the pictures on the walls and pavement of this beautiful hall – of which the roof, which was half open, was supported on columns of the finest porphyry – represented the loves of Eros and Psyche; while between the pillars stood busts of the greatest heathen philosophers, and in the background a fine statue of Plato was conspicuous. Among all the Greeks and Romans there was the portrait of only one Jew, and this was that of Philo, whose intellectual and delicate features greatly resembled those of the most illustrious of his Greek companions.

In this splendid room, lighted by silver lamps, there was no lack of easy couches, and on one of these Apollodorus was reclining; a fine-looking man of fifty, with his mild but shrewd eyes fixed on a tall and aged fellow-Israelite who was pacing up and down in front of him and talking eagerly; the old man's hands too were never still, now he used them in eager gesture, and again stroked his long white beard. On an easy seat opposite to the master of the house sat a lean young man with pale and very regular finely-cut features, black hair and a black beard; he sat with his dark glowing eyes fixed on the ground, tracing lines and circles on the pavement with the stick he held in his hand, while the excited old man, his uncle, urgently addressed Apollodorus in a vehement but fluent torrent of words. Apollodorus, however, shook his head from time to time at his speech and frequently met him with a brief contradiction.

It was easy to see that what he was listening to touched him painfully, and that the two diametrically different men were fighting a battle which could never lead to any satisfactory issue. For, though they both used the Greek tongue and confessed the same religion, all they felt and thought was grounded on views, as widely dissimilar as though the two men had been born in different spheres. When two opponents of such different calibre meet, there is a great clatter of arms but no bloody wounds are dealt and neither rout nor victory can result.



It was on account of this old man and his nephew that Apollodorus had forborne to-day to decorate his house, for the Rabbi Gamaliel, who had arrived only the day before from Palestine, and had been welcomed by his Alexandrian relatives, condemned every form of communion with the gentiles, and would undoubtedly have quitted the residence of his host if he had ventured to adorn it in honor of the feast-day of the false gods. Gamaliel's nephew, Rabbi Ben Jochai, enjoyed a reputation little inferior to that of his father, Ben Akiba. The elder was the greatest sage and expounder of the law—the son the most illustrious astronomer and the most skilled interpreter of the mystical significance of the position of the heavenly bodies, among the Hebrews.

It redounded greatly to the honor of Apollodorus that he should be privileged to shelter under his roof the sage Gamaliel and the famous son of so great a father, and in his hours of leisure he loved to occupy himself with learned subjects, so he had done his utmost to make their stay in his house in every way agreeable to them. He had bought, on purpose for them, a kitchen slave, himself a strict Jew and familiar with the requirements of the Levitical law as to food, who during their stay was to preside over the mysteries of the hearth, instead of the Greek cook who usually served him, so that none but clean meat should be prepared according to the Jewish ritual. He had forbidden his grown-up sons to invite any of their Greek friends into the house during the visit of the illustrious couple or to discuss the festival; they were also enjoined to avoid using the names of the gods of the heathen in their conversation—but he himself was the first to sin against this prohibition.

He, like all the Hebrews of good position in Alexandria, had acquired Greek culture, felt and thought in Greek modes, and had remained a Jew only in name; for though they still believed in the one God of their fathers instead of in a crowd of Olympian deities, the One whom they worshipped was no longer the almighty and jealous God of their nation, but the all-pervading plasmic and life-giving Spirit with whom the Greeks had become familiar through Plato.

Every hour that they had spent in each other's company had widened the gulf between Apollodorus and Gamaliel, and the relations of the Alexandrian to the sage had become almost intolerable, when he learnt that the old man—who was related to himself—had come to Egypt with his nephew, in order to demand the daughter of Apollodorus in marriage. But the fair Ismene was not in the least disposed to listen to this grave and bigoted suitor. The home of her people was to her a barbarous land, the young astronomer filled her with alarm, and besides all this her heart was already engaged; she had given it to the son of Alabarchos, who was the Superior of all the Israelites in Egypt, and this young man possessed the finest horse in the whole city, with which he had won several races in the Hippodrome, and he also had distinguished her above all the maidens. To him, if to any one, would she give her hand, and she had explained herself to this effect to her father when he informed her of Ben Jochai's suit, and Apollodorus, who had lost his wife several years before, had neither the wish nor the power to put any pressure on his pretty darling.

To be sure the temporizing nature of the man rendered it very difficult to him to give a decided no to his venerable old friend; but it had to be done sooner or later, and the present evening seemed to him an appropriate moment for this unpleasant task.

He was alone with his guests. His daughter had gone to the house of a friend to look on at the gay doings in the street, his three sons were out, all the slaves had leave to enjoy their holiday till midnight; nothing was likely to disturb them, and so, after many warm expressions of his deep respect, he found courage to confess to them that he could not support Ben Jochai's pretensions. His child, he said, clung too fondly to Alexandria to wish to quit it, and his learned young friend would be but ill suited with a wife who was accustomed to freer manners and habits, and could hardly feel herself at ease in a home where the laws of her fathers were strictly observed, and in which therefore no kind of freedom of life would be tolerated.

Gamaliel let the Alexandrian speak to the end, but then, as his nephew was beginning to argue against their host's hesitancy, the old man abruptly interrupted him. Drawing up his figure, which

was a little bent, to its full height, and passing his hand among the blue veins and fine wrinkles that marked his high forehead, he began:

"Our house was decimated in our wars against the Romans, and among the daughters of our race Ben Akiba found not one in Palestine who seemed to him worthy to marry his son. But the report of the good fortune of the Alexandrian branch of our family had reached Judea, and Ben Akiba thought that he would do like our father Abraham, and he sent me, his Eliezer, into a strange land to win the daughter of a kinsman to wife for his Isaac. Now, who and what the young man is, and the esteem in which he and his father are held by men—"

"I know well," interrupted Apollodorus, "and my house has never been so highly honored as in your visit."

"And notwithstanding," continued the Rabbi, "we must return home as we came; and indeed this will not only suit you best, but us too, and my brother, whose ambassador I am, for after what I have learnt from you within this last hour we must in any case withdraw our suit. Do not interrupt me! Your Ismene scorns to veil her face, and no doubt it is a very pretty one to look upon—you have trained her mind like that of a man, and so she seeks to go her own way. That may be all very well for a Greek woman, but in the house of Ben Akiba the woman must obey her husband's will, as the ship obeys the helm, and have no will of her own; her husband's will always coincides with what the law commands, which you yourself learnt to obey."

"We recognize its excellence," replied Apollodorus, "but even if all the laws which Moses received on Sinai were binding on all mortals alike, the various ordinances which were wisely laid down for the regulation of the social life of our fathers, are not universally applicable for the children of our day. And least of all can we observe them here, where, though true to our ancient faith, we live as Greeks among Greeks."

"That I perceive," retorted Gamaliel, "for even the language—that clothing of our thoughts—the language of our fathers and of the scriptures, you have abandoned for another, sacrificed to another."

"You and your nephew also speak Greek."

"We do it here, because the heathen, because you and yours, no longer understand the tongue of Moses and the prophets."

"But wherever the Great Alexander bore his arms Greek is spoken; and does not the Greek version of the scriptures, translated by the seventy interpreters under the direct guidance of our God, exactly reproduce the Hebrew text?"

"And would you exchange the stone engraved by Bryasis that you wear on your finger, and showed me yesterday with so much pride, for a wax impression of the gem?"

"The language of Plato is not an inferior thing; it is as noble as the costliest sapphire."

"But ours came to us from the lips of the Most High. What would you think of a child that, disdaining the tongue Of its father listened only to that of its neighbors and made use of an interpreter to be able to understand its parents' commands?"

"You are speaking of parents who have long since left their native land. The ancestor need not be indignant with his descendants when they use the language of their new home, so long as they continue to act in accordance with his spirit."

"We must live not merely in accordance with the spirit, but by the words of the Most High, for not a syllable proceeds from His lips in vain. The more exalted the spirit of a discourse is, the more important is every word and syllable. One single letter often changes the meaning of whole sentences.—What a noise the people outside are making! The wild tumult penetrates even into this room which is so far from the street, and your sons take delight in the disorders of the heathen! You do not even withhold them by force from adding to the number of those mad devotees of pleasure!"

"I was young once myself, and I think it no sin to share in the universal rejoicing."

"Say rather the disgraceful idolatry of the worshippers of Dionysus. It is in name alone that you and your children belong to the elect people of God, in your hearts you are heathens!"

"No, Father," exclaimed Apollodorus eagerly. "The reverse is the case. In our hearts we are Jews but we wear the garments of Greeks."

"Why your name is Apollodorus – the gift of Apollo."

"A name chosen only to distinguish me from others. Who would ever enquire into the meaning of a name if it sounds well."

"You, everybody who is not devoid of sense," cried the Rabbi. "You think to yourself 'need Zenodotus or Hermogenes, some Greek you meet at the bath or else where, know at once that the wealthy personage, with whom he discussed the latest interpretation of the Hellenic myths, is a Jew?' And how charming is the man who asks you whether you are not an Athenian, for your Greek has such a pure Attic accent! And what we ourselves like, we favor in our children, so we choose names for them too which flatter our own vanity."

"By Heracles!"

A faint mocking smile crossed Gamaliel's lips and interrupting the Alexandrian he said:

"Is there any particularly worthy man among our Alexandrian fellow-believers whose name is Heracles?"

"No one" cried the Alexandrian "ever thinks of the son of Alcmene when he asseverates – it only means 'really, – truly –'"

"To be sure you are not fastidiously accurate in the choice of your words and names, and where there is so much to be seen and enjoyed as there is here one's thoughts are not always connected. That is intelligible – quite, peculiarly intelligible! And in this city folks are so polite that they are fain to wrap truth in some graceful disguise. May I, a barbarian from Judea, be allowed to set it before you, bare of clothing, naked and unadorned."

"Speak, I beg you, speak."

"You are Jews; but you had rather not be Jews, and you endure your origin as an inevitable evil. It is only when you feel the mighty hand of the Most High that you recognize it and claim your right to be one of His chosen people. In the smooth current of daily life you proudly number yourselves with his enemies. Do not interrupt me, and answer honestly what I shall ask you. In what hour of your life did you feel yourself that you owed the deepest gratitude to the God of your fathers?"

"Why should I deny it? — In the hour when my lost wife presented me with my first-born son."

"And you called him?"

"You know his name is Benjamin."

"Like the favorite son of our forefather Jacob, for in the hour when you thus named him you were honestly yourself, you felt thankful that it had been vouchsafed to you to add another link to the chain of your race — you were a Jew — you were confident in our God — in your own God. The birth of your second son touched your soul less deeply and you gave him the name of Theophilus, and when your third male child was born you had altogether ceased to remember the God of your fathers, for he is named after one of the heathen gods, Hephaestion. To put it shortly: You are Jews when the Lord is most gracious to you, or threatens to try you most severely but you are heathen whenever your way does not lead you over the high hills or through the dark abysses of life. I cannot change your hearts — but the wife of my brother's son, the daughter of Ben Akiba, must be a daughter of our people, morning, noon, and night. I seek a Rebecca for my daughter and not an Ismene."

"I did not ask you here," retorted Apollodorus. "But if you quit us to-morrow, you as will be followed by our reverent regard. Think no worse of us because we adapt ourselves, more, perhaps, than is fitting, to the ways and ideas of the people among whom we have grown up, and in whose midst we have been prosperous, and whose interests are ours. We know how high our faith is beyond theirs. In our hearts we still are Jews; but are we not bound to try to

open and to cultivate and to elevate our spirits, which God certainly made of stuff no coarser than that of other nations, whenever and wherever we may? And in what school may our minds be trained better or on sounder principles than in ours—I mean that of the Greek sages? The knowledge of the Most High—"

"That knowledge," cried the old man, gesticulating vehemently with his arms. "The knowledge of God Most High and all that the most refined philosophy can prove, all the sublimest and purest of the thinkers of whom you speak can only apprehend by the gravest meditation and heart-searching—all this I say has been bestowed as a free gift of God on every child of our people. The treasures which your sages painfully seek out we already possess in our scriptures, our law and our moral ordinances. We are the chosen people, the first-born of the Lord, and when Messiah shall rise up in our midst—"

"Then," interrupted Apollodorus, "that shall be fulfilled which, like Philo, I hope for, we shall be the priests and prophets for all nations. Then we shall in truth be a race of priests whose vocation it shall be to call down the blessing of the Most High on all mankind."

"For us—for us alone shall the messenger of God appear, to make us the kings, and not the slaves of the nations."

Apollodorus looked with surprise into the face of the excited old man, and asked with an incredulous smile: "The crucified Nazarene was a false Messiah; but when will the true Messiah appear?"

"When will He appear?" cried the Rabbi. "When? Can I tell when? Only one thing I do know; the serpent is already sharpening its fangs to sting the heel of Him who shall tread upon it. Have you heard the name of Bar Kochba?"

"Uncle," said Ben Jochai, interrupting the old Rabbi's speech, and rising from his seat: "Say nothing you might regret."

"Nay, nay," answered Gamaliel earnestly. "Our friends here prefer the human above the divine, but they are not traitors." Then turning again to Apollodorus he continued:

"The oppressors in Israel have set up idols in our holy places, and strive again to force the people to bow down to them; but rather shall our back be broken than we will bend the knee or submit!"

"You are meditating another revolt?" asked the Alexandrian anxiously.

"Answer me—have you heard the name of Bar Kochba?"

"Yes, as that of the foolhardy leader of an armed troupe."

"He is a hero—perhaps the Redeemer."

"And it was for him that you charged me to load my next corn vessel to Joppa with swords, shields and lance-heads?"

"And are none but the Romans to be permitted to use iron?"

"Nay—but I should hesitate to supply a friend with arms if he proposed to use them against an irresistible antagonist, who will inevitably annihilate him!"

"The Lord of Hosts is stronger than a thousand legions!"

"Be cautious uncle," said Ben Jochai again in a warning voice.

Gamaliel turned wrathfully upon his nephew, but before he could retort on the young man's protest, he started in alarm, for a wild howling and the resounding clatter of violent blows on the brazen door of the house rang through the hall and shook its walls of marble.

"They are attacking my house," shouted Apollodorus.

"This is the gratitude of those for whom you have broken faith with the God of your fathers," said the old man gloomily. Then throwing up his hands and eyes he cried aloud: "Hear me Adonai! My years are many and I am ripe for the grave; but spare these, have mercy upon them."



Ben Jochai followed his uncle's example and raised his arms in supplication, while his black eyes sparkled with a lowering glow in his pale face.

But their prayers were brief, for the tumult came nearer and nearer; Apollodorus wrung his hands, and struck his fist against his forehead; his movements were violent—spasmodic. Terror had entirely robbed him of the elegant, measured demeanor which he had acquired among his Greek fellow-citizens, and mingling heathen oaths and adjurations with appeals to the God of his fathers, he flew first one way and then another. He searched for the key of the subterranean rooms of the house, but he could not find it, for it was in the charge of his steward, who, with all the other servants, was taking his pleasure in the streets, or over a brimming cup in some tavern.

Now the newly-purchased kitchen-slave—the Jew to whom the keeping of the Dionysian feast was an abomination—rushed into the room shrieking out, as he plucked at his hair and beard:

"The Philistines are upon us! save us Rabbi, great Rabbi! Cry for us to the Lord, oh! man of God! They are coming with staves and spears and they will tread us down as grass and burn us in this house like the locusts cast into the oven."

In deadly terror he threw himself at Gamaliel's feet and clasped them in his hands, but Apollodorus exclaimed: "Follow me, follow me up on to the roof."

"No, no," howled the slave, "Amalek is making ready the firebrand to fling among our tents. The heathen leap and rage, the flames they are flinging will consume us. Rabbi, Rabbi, call upon the Hosts of the Lord! God of the just! The gate has given way. Lord! Lord! Lord!"

The terrified wretch's teeth chattered and he covered his eyes with his hands, groaning and howling.

Ben Jochai had remained perfectly calm, but he was quivering with rage. His prayer was ended, and turning to Gamaliel he said in deep tones:

"I knew that this would happen, I warned you. Our evil star rose when we set forth on our wanderings.

"Now we must abide patiently what the Lord hath determined. He will be our Avenger."

"Vengeance is His!" echoed the old man, and he covered his head with his white mantle.

"In the sleeping-room—follow me! we can hide under the beds!" shrieked Apollodorus; he kicked away the slave who was embracing the Rabbi's feet, and seized the old man by the shoulder to drag him away with him. But it was too late, for the door of the antechamber had burst open and they could hear the clatter of weapons. "Lost, lost, all is lost!" cried Apollodorus.

"Adonai! help us Adonai!" murmured the old man and he clung more closely to his nephew, who overtopped him by a head and who held him clasped in his right arm as if to protect him.

The danger which threatened Apollodorus and his guests was indeed imminent, and it had been provoked solely by the indignation of the excited mob at seeing the wealthy Israelite's house unadorned for the feast.

A thousand times had it occurred that a single word had proved sufficient to inflame the hot blood of the Alexandrians to prompt them to break the laws and seize the sword. Bloody frays between the heathen inhabitants and the Jews, who were equally numerous in the city, were quite the order of the day, and one party was as often to blame as the other for disturbing the peace and having recourse to the sword. Since the Israelites had risen in several provinces—particularly in Cyrenaica and Cyprus—and had fallen with cruel fury on their fellow-inhabitants who were their oppressors, the suspicion and aversion of the Alexandrians of other beliefs had grown more intense than in former times. Besides this, the prosperous circumstances of many Jews, and the enormous riches of a few, had filled the less wealthy heathen with envy and roused the wish to snatch the possessions of those who, it cannot be denied, had not unfrequently treated their gods with open contumely.

It happened that just within a few days the disputes regarding the festival that was to be held in honor of the Imperial visit had added bitterness to the old grudge, and thus it came to pass that Apollodorus' unlighted house in the Canopic way had excited the populace to attack this palatial residence. And here again one single speech had sufficed to excite their fury.

In the first instance Melampus, the tanner, a drunken swaggerer, who had failed in business, had marched up the street at the head of a tipsy crew, and pointing with his thyrsus to the dark, undecorated house, had shouted:

"Look at that dismal barrack! All that the Jew used to spend on decorating the street, he is saving up now in his money chest!" The words were like a spark among tinder and others followed.

"The niggard is robbing our father Dionysus," cried a second citizen, and a third, flourishing his torch on high, croaked out:

"Let us get at the drachmae he grudges the god; we can find a use for them." Graukus, the sausage maker, snatched from his neighbor's hand the bunch of tow soaked in pitch, and bellowed out, "I advise that we should burn the house over their heads!"

"Stay, stay," cried a cobbler who worked for Apollodorus' slaves, as he placed himself in the butcher's way. "Perhaps they are mourning for some one in there. The Jew has always decorated his house on former occasions."

"Not they," replied a flute-player in a loud hoarse voice. "We met the old miser's son on the Bruchiom with some riotous comrades and misconducted hussies, with his purple mantle fluttering far behind him."

"Let us see which is reddest, the Tyrian stuff or the blaze we shall make if we set the old wretch's house on fire," shouted a hungry-looking tailor, looking round to see the effects of his wit.

"Ay! let us try!" rose from one man, and then, from a number of others:

"Let us get into the house!"

"The mean churl shall remember this day!"

"Fetch him out!"

"Drag him into the street!"

Such shouts as these rose here and there from the crowd, which grew denser every instant as it was increased by fresh tributaries attracted by the riot.

"Drag him out!" again shrieked an Egyptian slavedriver, and a woman shrieked an echo of his words. She snatched the deer-skin from her shoulders, flourished it round and round in the air above her tangled black hair, and bellowed furiously:

"Tear him in pieces!"

"In pieces, with your teeth!" roared a drunken Maenad who, like most of the mob that had collected, knew nothing whatever of the popular grudge against Apollodorus and his house.

But words had already begun to be followed by deeds. Feet, fists, and cudgels stamped, drubbed, and thumped against the firmly-bolted brazen door of the darkened house, and a ship's boy of fourteen sprang on the shoulders of a tall black slave and tried to climb the roof of the colonnade, and to fling the torch which the sausage-maker handed up to him into the open forecourt of the imperilled house.

## CHAPTER VI.

The clatter of arms which Apollodorus and his guests had heard proceeded not from the Jew's besiegers, but from some Roman soldiers who brought safety to the besieged.

It was Verus, who as he was returning from the supper he had given his veterans, with an officer of the Twelfth Legion and his British slaves, had crossed the Canopic way and had been impeded in his progress by the increasing crowd which stood before Apollodorus' house. The praetor had met the Jew at the prefect's house, and knew him for one of the richest and shrewdest men in Alexandria. This attack on his property roused his ire; still he would certainly not have remained an idle spectator even if the house in danger, instead of belonging to a man of mark, had been that of one of the poorest and meanest, even among the Christians. Any lawless act, any breach of constituted order was odious and intolerable to the Roman; he would not have been the man he was if he had looked on passively at an attack by the mob, in times of peace, on the life and property of a quiet and estimable citizen. This licentious man of pleasure, devoted to every enervating enjoyment, in battle, or whenever the need arose, was as prudent as he was brave.

He now first ascertained what purpose the excited crowd had in view, and at once considered the ways and means of frustrating their project. They had already begun to batter the Jew's door, and already several lads were standing on the roof of the arcades with burning torches in their hands.

Whatever he did must be done on the instant, and happily Verus had the gift of thinking and acting promptly. In a few decisive words he begged his companion, Lucius Albinus, to hurry back to his old soldiers and bring them to the rescue; then he desired his slaves to force a way for him with their powerful arms up to the door of the house. This feat was accomplished in no time, but how great was his astonishment when he found the Emperor standing there.

Hadrian stood in the midst of the crowd, and at the instant when Verus appeared on the scene had wrenched the torch out of the hand of the infuriated tailor. At the same time, in a thundering

voice, he commanded the Alexandrians – who were not accustomed to the imperial tone – to desist from their mad project. Whistling, grunting, and words of scorn overpowered the mandate of the sovereign, and when Verus and his slaves had reached the spot where he stood, a few drunken Egyptians had gone up to him and were about to lay hands on the unwelcome counsellor. The praetor stood in their way. He first whispered to Hadrian that Jupiter ought to be ruling the world, and might well leave it to smaller folks to rescue a houseful of Jews; and that in a few seconds the soldiers would arrive. Then he shouted to him in a loud voice:

"Away from this Sophist! Your place is in the Museum, or in the temple of Serapis with your books, and not among the misguided and ignorant. Am I right Macedonian citizens, or am I wrong?" A murmur of assent was heard which became a roar of laughter when Verus, after Hadrian had got away, went on:

"He has a beard like Caesar, and so he behaves as if he wore the purple! You did well to let him escape, his wife and children are waiting for him over their porridge."

Verus had often been implicated in wild adventure among the populace and knew how to deal with them; if he now could only detain them till the advent of the soldiers he might consider the game as won. Hadrian could be a hero when it suited him; but here where no laurels were to be won, he left to Verus the task of quieting the crowd.

As soon as he was fairly gone Verus desired his slaves to lift him on their shoulders; his handsome good-natured face looked down upon the crowd from high above them. He was immediately recognized, and many voices called out:

"The crazy Roman! the praetor! the sham Eros!"

"I am he, Macedonian citizens, yes, I am he," answered Verus in a clear voice. "And I will tell you a story."

"Listen, Listen."

"No let us get into the Jew's house."

"Presently — listen a minute to what the sham Eros says."

"I will knock your teeth down your throat boy, if you don't hold your tongue."

All the crowd were shouting in wild confusion.

Curiosity, on the one hand, to hear the noble gentleman's speech, and the somewhat superficial fury of the mob contended together for a few minutes; at last curiosity seemed to be gaining the day, the tumult subsided, and the praetor began:

"Once upon a time there was a child who had given to him ten little sheep made of cotton, little foolish toys such as the old women sell in the market place."

"Get into the Jew's house, we don't want to hear children's stories —"

"Be quiet there!"

"Hush now listen; from the sheep he will go on to the wolves."

"Not wolves—it will be a she-wolf!" some one shouted in the throng.

"Do not mention the horrid things!" laughed Verus, "but listen to me. — Well, the child set his little sheep up in a row each one close to the next. He was a weaver's son. Are there any weavers here? You? and you—ah, and you out there. If I were not my father's son I should like to be the son of an Alexandrian weaver. You need not laugh! — Well, about the sheep. All the little things were beautifully white but one which had nasty black spots, and the little boy could not bear that one. He went to the hearth, pulled out a burning stick and wanted to burn the little ugly sheep so as only to have pretty white ones. The lambkin caught fire and just as the flame had begun to burn the wooden skeleton of the toy a draught from the window blew the flame towards the other little sheep and in a minute they were all burned to ashes. Then thought the little boy, 'If only I had let the ugly sheep alone! What can I play with now?' and he began to cry. But this was not all, for while the little rascal was drying his eyes, the flame spread and burnt up the loom, the wool, the flax, the

woven pieces, the whole house—the town in which he was born, and even, I believe, the boy himself!—Now worthy friends and Macedonian citizens, reflect a moment. Any man among you who is possessed of any property may read the moral of my fable."

"Put out the torches!" cried the wife of a charcoal dealer.

"He is right; for by reason of the Jew, we are putting the whole town in danger!" cried the cobbler.

"The mad fools have already thrown in some brands!"

"If you fellows up there fling any more I will break your ankles for you," shouted a flax-dealer.

"Don't try any burning," the tailor commanded, "force open the door and have out the Jew." These words raised a storm of applause and the mob pressed forward to the Jew's abode. No one listened to Verus any more, and he slipped down from his slave's shoulders, placed himself in front of the door and called out:

"In the name of Caesar and the law I command you to leave this house unharmed."

The Roman's warning was evidently quite in earnest, and the false Eros looked as if at this moment it would be ill-advised to try jesting with him. But in the universal uproar only a few had heard his words, and the hot-blooded tailor was so rash as to lay his hand on the praetor's girdle in order to drag him away from the door with the help of his comrades. But he paid dearly for his temerity for the praetor's fist fell so heavily on his forehead that he dropped as if struck by lightning. One of the Britons knocked down the sausage-maker and a hideous hand to hand fight would have been the upshot if help had not come to the hardly-beset Romans from two quarters at once. The veterans supported by a number of lictors were the first to appear, and soon after them came Benjamin, the Jew's eldest son, who was passing down the great thoroughfare with his boon-companions and saw the danger that was threatening his father's house.



The soldiers parted the throng as the wind chases the clouds, and the young Israelite pressed forward with his heavy thyrsus fought and pushed his way so valiantly and resolutely through the panic-stricken mob, that he reached the door of his father's house but a few moments later than the soldiers. The lictors battered at the door and as no one opened it, they forced it with the help of the soldiers in order to set a guard in the beleaguered house, and protect it against the raging mob.

Verus and the officer entered the Jew's dwelling with the armed men, and behind them came Benjamin and his friends—young Greeks with whom he was in the habit of consorting daily, in the bath or the gymnasium. Apollodorus and his guests expressed their gratitude to Verus, and when the old Jewish house-keeper, who had seen and heard from a hiding-place under the roof all that had taken place outside her master's house, came into the men's hall and gave a full report of the uproar from beginning to end, the praetor was overwhelmed with thanks; and the old woman embroidered her narrative with the most glowing colors. While this was going on Apollodorus' pretty daughter, Ismene, came in, and after falling on her father's neck and weeping with agitation the house keeper took her hand and led her to Verus, saying:

"This noble lord—may the blessing of the Most High be on him—staked his life to save us. This beautiful robe he let be rent for our sakes, and every daughter of Israel should fervently kiss this torn chiton, which in the eyes of God is more precious than the richest robe—as I do."

And the old woman pressed the praetor's dress to her lips, and tried to make Ismene do the same; but the praetor would not permit this.

"How can I allow my garment," he exclaimed, laughing, "to enjoy a favor of which I should deem myself worthy—to be touched by such lips."

"Kiss him, kiss him!" cried the old woman, and the praetor took the head of the blushing girl in his hands, and pressing his lips to her forehead with a by no means paternal air, he said gaily:

"Now I am richly rewarded for all I have been so happy as to do for you, Apollodorus."

"And we," exclaimed Gamaliel. "We—myself and my brother's first-born son—leave it in the hands of God Most High to reward you for what you have done for us."

"Who are you?" asked Verus, who was filled with admiration for the prophet-like aspect of the venerable old man and the pale intellectual head of his nephew.

Apollodorus took upon himself to explain to him how far the Rabbi transcended all his fellow Hebrews in knowledge of the law and the interpretation of the Kabbala, the oral and mystical traditions of their people, and how that Simeon Ben Jochai was superior to all the astrologers of his time. He spoke of the young man's much admired work on the subject called Sohar, nor did he omit to mention that Gamaliel's nephew was able to foretell the positions of the stars even on future nights.

Verus listened to Apollodorus with increasing attention, and fixed a keen gaze on the young man, who interrupted his host's eager encomium with many modest deprecations. The praetor had recollected the near approach of his birthday, and also that the position of stars in the night preceding it, would certainly be observed by Hadrian. What the Emperor might learn from them would seal his fate for life. Was that momentous night destined to bring him nearer to the highest goal of his ambition or to debar him from it?

When Apollodorus ceased speaking, Verus offered Simeon Ben Jochai his hand, saying:

"I am rejoiced to have met a man of your learning and distinction. What would I not give to possess your knowledge for a few hours!"

"My knowledge is yours," replied the astrologer. "Command my services, my labors, my time—ask me as many questions as you will. We are so deeply indebted to you—"

"You have no reason to regard me as your creditor," interrupted the praetor, "you do not even owe me thanks. I only made your acquaintance after I had rescued you, and I opposed the mob, not for the sake of any particular man, but for that of law and order."

"You were benevolent enough to protect us," cried Ben Jochai, "so do not be so stern as to disdain our gratitude."

"It does me honor, my learned friend; by all the gods it does me honor," replied Verus. "And in fact it is possible, it might very well be—Will you do me the favor to come with me to that bust of Hipparchus? By the aid of that science which owes so much to him you may be able to render me an important service."

When the two men were standing apart from the others, in front of the white marble portrait of the great astronomer, Verus asked:

"Do you know by what method Caesar is wont to presage the fates of men from the stars?"

"Perfectly."

"From whom?"

"From Aquila, my father's disciple."

"Can you calculate what he will learn from the stars in the night preceding the thirtieth of December, as to the destinies of a man who was born in that night, and whose horoscope I possess?"

"I can only answer a conditional yes to that question."

"What should prevent your answering positively?"

"Unforeseen appearances in the heavens."

"Are such signs common?"

"No, they are rare, on the contrary."

"But perhaps my fortune is not a common one-and I beg of you to calculate on Hadrian's method what the heavens will predict on that

night for the man whose horoscope my slave shall deliver to you early to-morrow morning."

"I will do so with pleasure."

"When can you have finished this work?"

"In four days at latest, perhaps even sooner."

"Capital! But one thing more. Do you regard me as a man, I mean, as a true man?"

"If you were not, would you have given me such reason to be grateful to you?"

"Well then, conceal nothing from me, not even the worst horrors, things that might poison another man's life, and crush his spirit. Whatever you read in the celestial record, small or great, good or evil. I require you to tell me all."

"I will conceal nothing, absolutely nothing."

The praetor offered Ben Jochai his right hand, and warmly pressed the Jew's slender, well-shaped fingers. Before he went away he settled with him how he should inform him when he had finished his labors.

The Alexandrian with his guests and children accompanied the praetor to the door. Only Ben Jamin was absent; he was sitting with his companions in his father's dining-room, and rewarding them for the assistance they had given him with right good wine. Gamaliel heard them shouting and singing, and pointing to the room he shrugged his shoulders, saying, as he turned to his host:

"They are returning thanks to the God of our fathers in the Alexandrian fashion."

And peace was broken no more in the Jew's house but by the firm tramp of lictors and soldiers who kept watch over it, under arms.

In a side street the praetor met the tailor he had knocked down, the sausage-maker, and other ringleaders of the attack on the

Israelite's house. They were being led away prisoners before the night magistrates. Verus would have set them at liberty with all his heart, but he knew that the Emperor would enquire next morning what had been done to the rioters, and so he forbore. At any other time he would certainly have sent them home unpunished, but just now he was dominated by a wish that was more dominant than his good nature or his facile impulses.

## CHAPTER VII.

When he reached the Caesareum the high-chamberlain was waiting to conduct him to Sabina who desired to speak with him notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, and when Verus entered the presence of his patroness, he found her in the greatest excitement. She was not reclining as usual on her pillows but was pacing her room with strides of very unfeminine length.

"It is well that you have come!" she exclaimed to the praetor. "Lentulus insists that he has seen Mastor the slave, and Balbilla declares – but it is impossible!"

"You think that Caesar is here?" asked Verus.

"Did they tell you so too?"

"No. I do not linger to talk when you require my presence and there is something important to be told just now then – but you must not be alarmed."

"No useless speeches!"

"Just now I met, in his own person –"

"Who?"

"Hadrian."

"You are not mistaken, you are sure you saw him?"

"With these eyes."

"Abominable, unworthy, disgraceful!" cried Sabina, so loudly and violently that she was startled at the shrill tones of her own voice. Her tall thin figure quivered with excitement, and to any one else she would have appeared in the highest degree graceless, unwomanly, and repulsive: but Verus had been accustomed from his childhood to see her with kinder eyes than other men, and it grieved him.

There are women who remind us of fading flowers, extinguished lights or vanishing shades, and they are not the least attractive of their sex: but the large-boned, stiff and meagre Sabina had none of the yielding and tender grace of these gentle creatures. Her feeble health, which was very evident, became her particularly ill when, as at this moment, the harsh acrimony of her embittered soul came to light with hideous plainness.

She was deeply indignant at the affront her husband had put upon her. Not content with having a separate house established for her he kept aloof in Alexandria without informing her of his arrival. Her hands trembled with rage, and stammering rather than speaking she desired the praetor to order a composing draught for her. When Verus returned she was lying on her cushions, with her face turned to the wall, and said lamentably:

"I am freezing; spread that coverlet over me. I am a miserable, ill-used creature."

"You are sensitive and take things too hardly," the praetor ventured to remonstrate.

She started up angrily, cut off his speech, and put him through as keen a cross-examination as if he were an accused person and she his judge. Ere long she had learnt that Verus also had encountered Mastor, that her husband was residing at Lochias, that he had taken part in the festival in disguise, and had exposed himself to grave danger outside the house of Apollodorus. She also made him tell her how the Israelite had been rescued, and whom her friend had met in his house, and she blamed Verus with bitter words for the heedless and foolhardy recklessness with which he had risked his life for a miserable Jew, forgetting the high destinies that lay before him. The praetor had not interrupted her, but now bowing over her, he kissed her hand and said:

"Your kind heart foresees for me things that I dare not hope for. Something is glimmering on the horizon of my fortune. Is it the dying glow of my failing fortunes, is it the pale dawn of a coming and more glorious day? Who can tell? I await with patience whatever may be impending – an early day must decide."

"That will bring certainty, and put an end to this suspense," murmured Sabina.

"Now rest and try to sleep," said Verus with a tender fervency, that was peculiar to his tones. "It is past midnight and the physician has often forbidden you to sit up late. Farewell, dream sweetly, and always be the same to me as a man, that you were to me in my childhood and youth."

Sabina withdrew the hand he had taken, saying:

"But you must not leave me. I want you. I cannot exist without your presence."

"Till to-morrow — always — forever I will stay with you whenever you need me."

The Empress gave him her hand again, and sighed softly as he again bowed over it, and pressed it long to his lips.

"You are my friend, Verus, truly my friend; yes, I am sure of it," she said at last, breaking the silence.

"Oh Sabina, my Mother!" he answered tenderly. "You spoiled me with kindness even when I was a boy, and what can I do to thank you for all this?"

"Be always the same to me that you are to-day. Will you always — for all time be the same, whatever your fortunes may be?"

"In joy and in adversity always the same; always your friend, always ready to give my life for you."

"In spite of my husband, always, even when you think you no longer need my favor!"

"Always, for without you I should be nothing — utterly miserable."

The Empress heaved a deep sigh and sat bolt upright on her couch. She had formed a great resolve, and she said slowly, emphasizing every word:



"If nothing utterly unforeseen occurs in the heavens on your birth-night, you shall be our son, and so Hadrian's successor and heir. I swear it."

There was something solemn in her voice, and her small eyes were wide open.

"Sabina, Mother, guardian spirit of my life!" cried Verus, and he fell on his knees by her couch. She looked in his handsome face with deep emotion, laid her hands on his temples, and pressed her lips on his dark curls.

A moist brilliancy sparkled in those eyes, unapt to tears, and in a soft and appealing tone that no one had ever before heard in her voice she said:

"Even at the summit of fortune, after your adoption, even in the purple all will be the same between us two. Will it? Tell me, will it?"

"Always, always!" cried Verus. "And if our hopes are fulfilled —"

"Then, then," interrupted Sabina and she shivered as she spoke. "Then, still you will be to me the same that you are now; but to be sure, to be sure—the temples of the gods would be empty if mortals had nothing left to wish for."

"Ah! no. Then they would bring thank-offerings to the divinity," cried Verus, and he looked up at the Empress; but she turned away from his smiling glance and exclaimed in a tone of reproof and alarm:

"No playing with words, no empty speeches or rash jesting! in the name of all the gods, not at this time! For this hour, this night is among its fellows what a hallowed temple is among other buildings—what the fervent sun is among the other lights of heaven. You know not how I feel, nay, I hardly know myself. Not now, not now, one lightly-spoken word!"

Verus gazed at Sabina with growing astonishment. She had always been kinder to him than to any one else in the world and he felt bound to her by all the ties of gratitude and the sweet memories of childhood. Even as a boy, out of all his playfellows he was the

only one who, far from fearing her had clung to her. But to-night! who had ever seen Sabina in such a mood? Was this the harsh bitter woman whose heart seemed filled with gall, whose tongue cut like a dagger every one against whom she used it? Was this Sabina who no doubt was kindly disposed towards him but who loved no one else, not even herself? Did he see rightly, or was he under some delusion? Tears, genuine, honest, unaffected tears filled her eyes as she went on:

"Here I he, a poor sickly woman, sensitive in body and in soul as if I were covered with wounds. Every movement, and even the gaze and the voice of most of my fellow-creatures is a pain to me. I am old, much older than you think and so wretched, so wretched, none of you can imagine how wretched. I was never happy as a child, never as a girl, and as a wife — merciful gods! — every kind word that Hadrian has ever vouchsafed me I have paid for with a thousand humiliations."

"He always treats you with the utmost esteem," interrupted Verus.

"Before you, before the world! But what do I care for esteem! I may demand the respect, the adoration of millions and it will be mine. Love, love, a little unselfish love is what I ask — and if only I were sure, if only I dared to hope that you give me such love, I would thank you with all that I have, then this hour would be hallowed to me above all others."

"How can you doubt me Mother? My dearly beloved Mother!"

"That is comfort, that is happiness!" answered Sabina. "Your voice is never too loud for me, and I believe you, I dare trust you. This hour makes you my son, makes me your mother."

Tender emotion, the emotion that softens the heart, thrilled through Sabina's dried-up nature and sparkled in her eyes. She felt like a young wife of whom a child is born, and the voice of her heart sings to her in soothing tones: "It lives, it is mine, I am the providence of a living soul, I am a mother."

She gazed blissfully into Verus' eyes and exclaimed, "Give me your hand my son, help me up, for I will be here no longer. What

good spirits I feel in! Yes, this is the joy that is allotted to other women before their hair is grey! But child—dear and only child—you must love me really as a mother. I am too old for tender trifling, and yet I could not bear it if you gave me nothing but a child's reverence. No, no, you must be my friend whose heart warns him of my wishes, who can laugh with me to-day, and weep with me to-morrow—and who shows that he is happier when his eye meets mine. You are now my son; and soon you shall have the name of son; that is happiness enough for one evening. Not another word—this hour is like the finished masterpiece of some great painter; every touch that could be added might spoil it. You may kiss my forehead, I will kiss yours; now I will go to rest, and to-morrow when I wake I shall say to myself that I possess something worth living for—a child, a son."

When the Empress was alone she raised her hand in prayer but she could find no words of thanksgiving. One hour of pure happiness she had indeed enjoyed, but how many days, months, years of joylessness and suffering lay behind her! Gratitude knocked at the door of her heart but it was instantly met by bitter defiance; what was one hour of happiness in the balance against a ruined lifetime?

Foolish woman! she had never sown the seeds of love, and now she blamed the gods for niggardliness and cruelty in denying her a harvest of love. And now, on what soil had the seed of maternal tenderness fallen?

Verus it is true had left her content and full of hope—Sabina's altered demeanor, it is true, had touched his heart—he purposed to cling to her faithfully even after his formal adoption; but the light in his eye was not that of a proud and happy son, on the contrary it sparkled like that of a warrior who hopes to gain the victory.

Notwithstanding the late hour, his wife had not yet gone to bed. She had heard that he had been summoned to the Empress on his return home, and awaited him not without anxiety, for she was not accustomed to anything pleasant from Sabina. Her husband's hasty step echoed loudly from the stone walls of the sleeping palace. She heard it at some distance, and went to the door of her room to meet him. Radiant, excited, and with flushed cheeks, he held out both his

hands to her. She looked so fair in her white night-wrapper of fine white material, and his heart was so full that he clasped her in his arms as fondly as when she was his bride; and she loved him even now no less than she had done then, and felt for the hundredth time with grateful joy that the faithless scapegrace had once more returned to her unchangeable and faithful heart, like a sailor who, after wandering through many lands seeks his native port.

"Lucilla," he cried, disengaging her arms from round his neck. "Oh, Lucilla! what an evening this has been! I always judged Sabina differently from you, and have felt with gratitude that she really cared for me. Now all is clear between her and me! She called me her son. I called her mother. I owe it to her, and the purple—the purple is ours! You are the wife of Verus Caesar; you are certain of it if no signs and omens come to frighten Hadrian."

In a few eager words, which betrayed not merely the triumph of a lucky gambler, but also true emotion and gratitude, he related all that had passed in Sabina's room. His frank and confident contentment silenced her doubts, her dread of the stupendous fate which, beckoning her, yet threatening her, drew visibly nearer and nearer. In her mind's eye she saw the husband she loved, she saw her son, seated on the throne of the Caesars, and she herself crowned with the radiant diadem of the woman whom she hated with all the force of her soul. Her husband's kindly feeling towards the Empress and the faithful allegiance which had tied him to her from his boyhood did not disquiet her; but a wife allows the husband of her choice every happiness, every gift excepting only the love of another woman, and will forgive her hatred and abuse rather than such love.

Lucilla was greatly excited, and a thought, that for years had been locked in the inmost shrine of her heart, to-day proved too strong for her powers of reticence. Hadrian was supposed to have murdered her father, but no one could positively assert it, though either he or another man had certainly slain the noble Nigrinus. At this moment the old suspicion stirred her soul with revived force, and lifting her right hand, as if in attestation, she exclaimed:

"Oh, Fate, Fate! that my husband should be heir of the man who murdered my father!"

"Lucilla," interrupted Verus, "it is unjust even to think of such horrors, and to speak of them is madness. Do not utter it a second time, least of all to-day. What may have occurred formerly must not spoil the present and the future which belong to us and to our children."

"Nigrinus was the grandfather of those children," cried the Roman mother with flashing eyes.

"That is to say that you harbor in your soul the wish to avenge your father's death on Caesar."

"I am the daughter of the butchered man."

"But you do not know the murderer, and the purple must outweigh the life of one man, for it is often bought with many thousand lives. And then, Lucilla, as you know, I love happy faces, and Revenge has a sinister brow. Let us be happy, oh wife of Caesar! Tomorrow I shall have much to tell you, now I must go to a splendid banquet which the son of Plutarch is giving in my honor. I cannot stay with you—truly I cannot, I have been expected long since. And when we are in Rome never let me find you telling the children those old dismal stories—I will not have it."

As Verus, preceded by his slaves bearing torches, made his way through the garden of the Caesareum he saw a light in the rooms of Balbilla, the poetess, and he called up merrily:

"Good-night, fair Muse!"

"Good-night, sham Eros!" she retorted.

"You are decking yourself in borrowed feathers, Poetess," replied he, laughing. "It is not you but the ill-mannered Alexandrians who invented that name!"

"Oh! and other and better ones," cried she. "What I have heard and seen to-day passes all belief!"

"And you will celebrate it in your poems?"

"Only some of it, and that in a satire which I propose to aim at you."

"I tremble!"

"With delight, it is to be hoped; my poem will embalm your memory for posterity."

"That is true, and the more spiteful your verses, the more certainly will future generations believe that Verus was the Phaon of Balbilla's Sappho, and that love scorned filled the fair singer with bitterness."

"I thank you for the caution. To-day at any rate you are safe from my verse, for I am tired to death."

"Did you venture into the streets?"

"It was quite safe, for I had a trustworthy escort."

"May I be allowed to ask who?"

"Why not? It was Pontius the architect who was with me."

"He knows the town well."

"And in his care I would trust myself to descend, like Orpheus, into Hades."

"Happy Pontius!"

"Most happy Verus!"

"What am I to understand by those words, charming Balbilla?"

"The poor architect is able to please by being a good guide, while to you belongs the whole heart of Lucilla, your sweet wife."

"And she has the whole of mine so far as it is not full of Balbilla. Good-night, saucy Muse; sleep well."

"Sleep ill, you incorrigible tormentor!" cried the girl, drawing the curtain across her window.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The sleepless wretch on whom some trouble has fallen, so long as night surrounds him, sees his future life as a boundless sea in which he is sailing round and round like a shipwrecked man, but when the darkness yields, the new and helpful day shows him a boat for escape close at hand, and friendly shores in the distance.

The unfortunate Pollux also awoke towards morning with sighs many and deep; for it seemed to him that last evening he had ruined his whole future prospects. The workshop of his former master was henceforth closed to him, and he no longer possessed even all the tools requisite for the exercise of his art.

Only yesterday he had hoped with happy confidence to establish himself on a footing of his own, to-day this seemed impossible, for the most indispensable means were lacking to him. As he felt his little money-bag, which he was wont to place under his pillow, he could not forbear smiling in spite of all his troubles, for his fingers sank into the flaccid leather, and found only two coins, one of which he knew alas! was of copper, and the dried merry-thought bone of a fowl, which he had saved to give to his little nieces.

Where was he to find the money he was accustomed to give his sister on the first day of every month? Papias was on friendly terms with all the sculptors of the city, and it was only to be expected that he would warn them against him, and do his best to make it difficult to him to find a new place as assistant. His old master had also been witness of Hadrian's anger against him, and was quite the man to take every advantage of what he had overheard. It is never a recommendation for any one that he is an object of dislike to the powerful, and least of all does it help him with those who look for the favor and gifts of the great men of the world. When Hadrian should think proper to throw off his disguise, it might easily occur to him to let Pollux feel the effects of his power. Would it not be wise in him to quit Alexandria and seek work or daily bread in some other Greek city?

But for Arsinoe's sake he could not turn his back on his native place. He loved her with all the passion of his artist's soul, and his youthful courage would certainly not have been so quickly and

utterly crushed if he could have deluded himself as to the fact that his hopes of possessing her had been driven into the remote background by the events of the preceding evening. How could he dare to drag her into his uncertain and compromised position? And what reception could he hope for from her father if he should now attempt to demand her for his wife. As these thoughts overpowered his mind he suddenly felt as if his eyes were smarting with sand that had blown into them, and he could not help springing out of bed; he paced his little room with long steps, and he held his forehead pressed against the wall.

The dawn of a new day appeared as a welcome comfort, and by the time he had eaten the morning porridge which his mother set before him—and her eyes were red with weeping—the idea struck him that he would go to Pontius, the architect. That was the lifeboat he espied.

Doris shared her son's breakfast but, contrary to her usual custom, she spoke very little, only she frequently passed her hand over her son's curly hair. Euphorion strode up and down the room, rummaging his brain for ideas for an ode in which he might address the Emperor and implore forgiveness for his son. Soon after breakfast Pollux went up to the rotunda where the Queens' busts stood, hoping to see Arsinoe again, and a loud snatch of song soon brought her out on to the balcony. They exchanged greetings, and Pollux signed to her to come down to him. She would have obeyed him more than gladly, but her father had also heard the sculptor's voice and drove her back into the room. Still the mere sight of his beloved fair one had done the artist good. Hardly had he got back to his father's little house when Antinous came sauntering in—he represented in the artist's mind the hospitable shores on which he might gaze. Hope revived his soul, and Hope is the sun before which despair flies as the shades of night flee at the rising of the day-star.

His artistic faculties were once more roused into play, and found a field for their freest exercise when Antinous told him that he was at his disposal till mid-day, since his master—or rather Caesar as he was now permitted to name him—was engaged in business. The prefect Titianus had come to him with a whole heap of papers, to



work with him and his private secretary. Pollux at once led the favorite into a side room of the little house, with a northern aspect; here on a table lay the wax and the smaller implements which belonged to himself and which he had brought home last evening. His heart ached, and his nerves were in a painful state of tension as he began his work. All sorts of anxious thoughts disturbed his spirit, and yet he knew that if he put his whole soul into it he could do something good. Now, if ever, he must put forth his best powers, and he dreaded failure as an utter catastrophe, for on the face of the whole earth there was no second model to compare with this that stood before him.

But he did not take long to collect himself for the Bithynian's beauty filled him with profound feeling and it was with a sort of pious exaltation that he grasped the plastic material and moulded it into a form resembling his sitter. For a whole hour not a word passed between them, but Pollux often sighed deeply and now then a groan of painful anxiety escaped him.

Antinous broke the silence to ask Pollux about Selene. His heart was full of her, and there was no other man who knew her, and whom he could venture to entrust with his secret. Indeed it was only to speak to her that he had come to the artist so early. While Pollux modelled and scraped Antinous told him of all that had happened the previous night. He lamented having lost the silver quiver when he was upset into the water and regretted that the rose-colored chiton should afterwards have suffered a reduction in length at the hands of his pursuer. An exclamation of surprise, a word of sympathy, a short pause in the movement of his hand and tool, were all the demonstration on the artist's part, to which the story of Selene's adventure and the loss of his master's costly property gave rise; his whole attention was absorbed in his occupation. The farther his work progressed the higher rose his admiration for his model. He felt as if intoxicated with noble wine as he worked to reproduce this incarnation of the ideal of unblemished youthful and manly beauty. The passion of artistic procreation fired his blood, and threw every thing else—even the history of Selene's fall into the sea, and her subsequent rescue—into the region of commonplace. Still he had not been inattentive, and what he heard must have had some effect in his mind; for long after

Antinous had ended his narrative, he said in a low voice and as if speaking to the bust, which was already assuming definite form:

"It is a wonderful thing!" and again a little later; "There was always something grand in that unhappy creature."

He had worked without interruption for nearly four hours, when standing back from the table, he looked anxiously, first at his work and then at Antinous, and then asked him:

"How will that do?"

The Bithynian gave eager expression to his approbation, and Pollux had, in fact, done wonders in the short time. The wax began to display in a much reduced scale the whole figure of the beautiful youth and in the very same attitude which the young Dionysus carried off by the pirates, had assumed the day before. The incomparable modelling of the favorite's limbs and form was soft but not effeminate; and, as Pollux had said to himself the day before, no artist in his happiest mood, could conceive the Nysaeon god as different from this.

While the sculptor in order to assure himself of the accuracy of his work was measuring his model's limbs with wooden compasses and lengths of tape, the sound of chariot-wheels was heard at the gate of the palace, and soon after the yelping of the Graces. Doris called to the dogs to be quiet and another high-pitched woman's voice mingled with hers. Antinous listened and what he heard seemed to be somewhat out of the common for he suddenly quitted the position in which the sculptor had placed him only a few minutes before, ran to the window and called to Pollux in a subdued voice:

"It is true! I am not mistaken! There is Hadrian's wife Sabina talking out there to your mother."

He had heard rightly; the Empress had come to Lochias to seek out her husband. She had got out of the chariot at the gate of the old palace for the paving of the court-yard would not be completed before that evening.

Dogs, of which her husband was so fond, she detested; the shrewd beasts returned her aversion, so dame Doris found it more difficult than usual to succeed in reducing her disobedient pets to silence when they flew viciously at the stranger. Sabina terrified, vehemently desired the old woman to release her from their persecution, while the chamberlain who had come with her and on whom she was leaning kicked out at the irrepressible little wretches and so increased their spite. At last the Graces withdrew into the house. Dame Doris drew a deep breath and turned to the Empress.

She did not suspect who the stranger was for she had never seen Sabina and had formed quite a different idea of her.

"Pardon me good lady," she said in her frank confiding manner. "The little rascals mean no harm and never bite even a beggar, but they never could endure old women. Whom do you seek here mother?"

"That you shall soon know," replied Sabina sharply, "what a state of things, Lentulus, your architect Pontius' work has brought about. And what must the inside be like if this but is left standing to disgrace the entrance of the palace! It must go with its inhabitants. Desire that woman to conduct us to the Roman lord who dwells here."

The chamberlain obeyed and Doris began to suspect who was standing before her, and she said as she smoothed down her dress and bowed low:

"What great honor befalls us illustrious lady; perhaps you are even the Emperor's wife? If that be the case —"

Sabina made an impatient sign to the chamberlain who interrupted the old woman exclaiming:

"Be silent and show us the way."

Doris was not feeling particularly strong that day, and her eyes already red with weeping about her son again filled with tears. No one had ever spoken so to her before, and yet, for her son's sake she

would not repay sharp words in the same coin, though she had plenty at her command.

She tottered on in front of Sabina, and conducted her to the hall of the Muses. There Pontius relieved her of the duty, and the respect he paid to the stranger made her sure that in fact she was none other than the Empress in person.

"An odious woman!" said Sabina, as she went on pointing to Doris, whom her words could not escape. This was too much for the old woman; past all self-control she flung herself on to a seat that was standing by, covered her face with her hands and began crying bitterly. She felt as if the very ground were snatched from under her feet.

Her son was in disgrace with Caesar, and she and her house were threatened by the most powerful woman in the world. She pictured herself as already turned into the streets with Euphorion and her dogs, and asked herself what was to become of them all when they had lost their place and the roof that covered them. Her husband's memory grew daily weaker, soon his voice even might fail; and how greatly had her own strength failed during the last few years, how small were the savings that were hidden in their chest. The bright, genial old woman felt quite broken down. What hurt her was, not merely the pressing need that threatened her, but the disgrace too which would fall upon her, the dislike she had incurred—she who had been liked by every one from her youth up—and the painful feeling of having been treated with scorn and contempt in the presence of others by the powerful lady whose favor she had hoped to win.

At Sabina's advent all good spirits had fled from Lochias, so at least Doris felt, but she was not one of those who succumb helplessly to a hostile force. For a few minutes she abandoned herself to her sorrows and sobbed like a child. Now she dried her eyes, and her eased heart felt the beneficial relief of tears; by degrees she could compose herself and think calmly.

"After all," said she to herself, "none but Caesar can command here, and it is said that he gets on but badly with his spiteful wife, and cares very little what she wishes. Hadrian let Pollux feel his

power, but he has always been friendly to me. My dogs and birds amused him, and did he not even do me the honor to relish a dish out of my kitchen? No, no, if only I can succeed in speaking with him alone all may yet be well," and thus thinking she rose from her seat.

As she was about to quit the anteroom the art dealer, Gabinius, of Nicaea, came in, to whom Keraunus had refused to sell the mosaic in the palace, and whose daughter had been deprived by Arsinoe of the part of Roxana. Pontius had desired him to come to the palace and he had made his appearance at once, for, since the evening before, a rumor had been afloat that the Emperor was staying in Alexandria, and was inhabiting the palace at Loehias. Whence it was derived, or on what facts it was supported no one could say; but there it was, passing from mouth to mouth in every circle and acquiring certainty every hour. Of all that grows on earth nothing grows so quickly as Rumor, and yet it is a miserable foundling that never knows its own parents.

The dealer pushed on into the palace with a glance of astonishment at the old woman, while Doris debated whether she should seek Hadrian then and there, or return to her little gate-House, and wait till he should at some time be going out of the palace and passing by her dwelling. Before she could come to any decision Pontius appeared on the scene; he had always been very kind to her, and she therefore ventured to address him and tell him what had occurred between her son and the Emperor. This was no novelty to the architect; he advised her to have patience till Hadrian should have cooled, and he promised her that later he would do every thing in his power for Pollux, whom he loved and esteemed. On this very day he was obliged by Caesar's command to start on a journey and for a long absence; his destination was Pelusium, where he was to erect a monument to the great Pompey on the spot where he had been murdered. Hadrian, as he passed the old ruined monument on his way from Mount Kasius to Egypt, had determined to replace it by a new one, and had entrusted the work to Pontius whose labors at Lochias were now nearly ended. All that might yet be lacking to the fitting of the restored palace Hadrian himself wished to select and procure and in this occupation so

agreeable to his tastes, Gabinius, the curiosity-dealer, was to lend him a helping hand.

While Doris was still speaking with Pontius, Hadrian and his wife came towards the anteroom. Hardly had the architect recognized the tones of Sabina's voice, than he hastily said in a low voice:

"Till by-and-bye this must do, dame. Stand aside; Caesar and the Empress are coming."

And he hastened away. Doris slipped into the doorway of a side room, which was closed only by a heavy curtain, for at that moment she would as soon have met a raging wild beast as the haughty lady from whom she had nothing to expect but insult and unkindness. Hadrian's interview with his wife had lasted barely a quarter of an hour, and it must have been anything rather than amiable, for his face was scarlet, while Sabina's lips were perfectly white, and her painted cheeks twitched with a restless movement. Doris was too much excited and terrified to listen to the royal couple, still she overheard these words uttered by the Emperor in a tone of the utmost decision.

"In small matters and where it is fitting I let you have your way; more important things I shall this time, as always, decide by my own judgment – my own exclusively."

These words were fraught with the fate of the gatehouse and its inhabitants, for the removal of the "hideous hut" at the entrance of the palace was one of the "small matters" of which Hadrian spoke. Sabina had required this concession, since it could not be pleasant to any one visiting Lochias to be received on the threshold by an old Megaera of evil omen, and to be fallen upon by infuriated dogs. But Doris so little divined the import of Hadrian's words that she rejoiced at them, for they told her how little he was disposed to yield to his wife in important things, and how could she suspect that her fate and that of her house should not be included among important matters, nay the most important?

Sabina had quitted the anteroom leaning on her chamberlain and Hadrian was standing there alone with his slave Mastor. The old woman would not be likely to have another such favorable

opportunity of supplicating the all-powerful man who stood before her, without the hindrance of witnesses, to exercise his magnanimity and clemency towards her son. His back turned to her; if she could have seen the threatening scowl with which he stood gazing on the ground she would surely have remembered the architect's warning and have postponed her address till a future day.

How often do we spoil our best chances by following an urgent instinct to arrive at certainty as early as possible, and by not being strong enough to postpone opening our business till a favorable moment offers. Uncertainty in the present often seems less endurable than adverse fate in the future.

Doris stepped out of the side door. Mastor, who knew his master well, and whose friendly impulse was to spare the old woman any humiliation, made eager signs to warn her to withdraw and not to disturb Hadrian at that moment; but she was so wholly possessed by her anxiety and wishes that she did not observe them. As the Emperor turned to leave the room she gathered courage, stood in the doorway through which he must pass, and tried to fall on her knees before him. This was a difficult effort to her old joints and Doris was forced to clutch at the door-post in order not to lose her balance.

Hadrian at once recognized the suppliant, but to-day he found no kind word for her, and the glance he cast down at her was anything rather than gracious. How had he ever been able to find amusement even in this woeful old body? Alas! poor Doris was quite a different creature in her little house, among her flowers, dogs and birds to what she seemed here in the spacious hall of a magnificent palace. This wide and gorgeous frame but ill-suited so modest a figure. Thousands of good people who in the midst of their everyday surroundings command our esteem and attract our regard give rise to very different feelings when they are taken out of the circle to which they belong.

Doris had never worn so unpleasing an aspect to Hadrian as at this instant, in this decisive moment of her life. She had followed the Empress straight from the kitchen-hearth just as she was after passing a sleepless night and full of her many anxieties, she had scarcely set her grey hair in order, and her kind bright eyes, usually

the best feature of her face, were red with many tears. The neat brisk little mother looked to-day anything rather than smart and bright; in the Emperor's eyes she was in no way distinguished from any other old woman, and he regarded all old women as of evil omen, if he met them as he went out of any place he was in.

"Oh, Caesar, Great Caesar!" cried Doris throwing up her hands which still bore many traces of her labors over the hearth. "My son, my unfortunate Pollux!"

"Out of my way!" said Hadrian sternly.

"He is an artist, a good artist, who already excels many a master, and if the gods —"

"Out of the way, I told you. I do not want to hear anything about the insolent fellow," said Hadrian angrily.

"But Great Caesar, he is my son, and a mother, as you know —"

"Mastor," interrupted the monarch, "carry away this old woman and make way for me."

"Oh! my lord, my lord!" wailed the agonized woman while the slave pulled her up, not without difficulty. "Oh! my lord, how can you find it in your heart to be so cruel? And am I no longer old Doris whom you have even joked with, and whose food you have eaten?"

These words recalled to the Emperor's fancy the moment of his arrival at Lochias; he felt that he was somewhat in the old woman's debt, and being wont to pay with royal liberality he broke in with:

"You shall be paid for your excellent dish a sum with which you can purchase a new house, for the future your maintenance too shall be provided for, but in three hours you must have quitted Lochias."

The Emperor spoke rapidly as though desirous of bringing a disagreeable business to a prompt termination, and he stalked past Doris who was now standing on her feet and leaning as if stunned against the doorpost. Indeed if Hadrian had not left her there and



had he been in the mood to hear her farther, she was not now in a fit state to answer him another word.

The Emperor received the honors due to Zeus and his fiat had ruined the happiness of a contented home as completely as the thunderbolt wielded by the Father of the gods could have done.

But this time Doris had no tears. The frightful shock that had fallen in her soul was perceptible also to her body; her knees shook, and being quite incapable just then of going home at once, she sunk upon a seat and stared hopelessly before her while she reflected what next, and what more would come upon her.

Meanwhile the Emperor was standing in a room just behind the antechamber that had only been finished a few hours since. He began to regret his hardness upon the old woman—for had she not, without knowing who he was, been most friendly to him and to his favorite. "Where is Antinous?" he asked Mastor.

"He went out to the gate-house."

"What is he doing there?"

"I believe he meant—there, perhaps he—"

"The truth, fellow!"

"He is with Pollux the sculptor."

"Has he been there long?"

"I do not exactly know."

"How long, I ask you?"

"He went after you had shut yourself in with Titianus."

"Three hours—three whole hours has he been with that braggart, whom I ordered off the premises!" Hadrian's eye sparkled wrathfully as he spoke. His annoyance at the absence of his favorite, whose society he permitted no one to enjoy but himself, and least of all Pollux, smothered every kind feeling in his mind, and in a tone of

anger bordering on fury he commanded Mastor to go and fetch Antinous, and then to have the gate-house utterly cleared out.

"Take a dozen slaves to help you," he cried. "For aught I care the people may carry all their rubbish into a new house, but I will never set eyes again on that howling old woman, nor her imbecile husband. As for the sculptor I will make him feel that Caesar has a heavy foot and can unexpectedly crush a snake that creeps across his path."

Mastor went sadly away and Hadrian returned to his work-room, and there called out to his secretary Phlegon:

"Write that a new gate-keeper is to be found for this palace. Euphorion, the old one, is to have his pay continued to him, and half a talent is to be paid to him at the prefect's office. Good—Let the man have at once whatever is necessary; in an hour neither he nor his are to be found in Lochias. Henceforth no one is to mention them to me again, nor to bring me any petition from them. Their whole race may join the rest of the dead."

Phlegon bowed and said:

"Gabinus, the curiosity-dealer, waits outside."

"He comes at an appropriate moment," cried the Emperor. "After all these vexations it will do me good to hear about beautiful things."

## CHAPTER IX.

Aye, truly! Sabina's advent had chased all good spirits from the palace at Lochias.

The Emperor's commands had come upon the peaceful little house as a whirlwind comes on a heap of leaves. The inhabitants were not even allowed time fully to realize their misfortune, for instead of bewailing themselves all they could do was to act with circumspection. The tables, seats, cushions, beds and lutes, the baskets, plants, and bird-cages, the kitchen utensils and the trunks with their clothes were all piled in confusion in the courtyard, and Doris was employing the slaves appointed by Mastor in the task of emptying the house, as briskly and carefully as though it was nothing more than a move from one house to another. A ray of the sunny brightness of her nature once more sparkled in her eyes since she had been able to say to herself that all that happened to her and hers was one of the things inevitable, and that it was more to the purpose to think of the future than of the past. The old woman was quite herself again over the work, and as she looked at Euphorion, who sat quite crushed on his couch with his eyes fixed on the ground, she cried out to him:

"After bad times, come good ones! only let us keep from making ourselves miserable. We have done nothing wrong, and so long as we do not think ourselves wretched, we are not so. Only, hold up your head!

"Up, old man, up! Go at once to Diotima and tell her that we beg her to give us hospitality for a few days, and house-room for our chattels."

"And if Caesar does not keep his word?" asked Euphorion gloomily. "What sort of a life shall we live then?"

"A bad one-a dog's life; and for that very reason it is wiser to enjoy now what we still possess. A cup of wine, Pollux, for me and your father. But there must be no water in it to-day."

"I cannot drink," sighed Euphorion.

"Then I will drink your share and my own too."

"Nay-nay, mother," remonstrated Pollux.

"Well put some water in, lad, just a little water, only do not make such a pitiful face. Is that the way a young fellow should look who has his art, and plenty of strength in his hands, and the sweetest of sweethearts in his heart?"

"It is certainly not for myself, mother," retorted the sculptor, "that I am anxious. But how am I ever to get into the palace again to see Arsinoe, and how am I to deal with that ferocious old Keraunus?"

"Leave that question for time to answer," replied Doris.

"Time may give a good answer, but it may also give a bad one."

"And the best she only gives to those who wait for her in the antechamber of Patience."

"A bad place for me, and for those like me," sighed Pollux.

"You have only to sit still and go on knocking at the doors," replied Doris, "and before you can look round you Time will call out, 'come in.' Now show the men how they are to treat the statue of Apollo, and be my own happy, bright boy once more."

Pollux did as she desired, thinking as he went: "She speaks wisely — she is not leaving Arsinoe behind. If only I had been able to arrange with Antinous at least, where I should find him again; but at Caesar's orders the young fellow was like one stunned, and he tottered as he went, as if he were going to execution."

Dame Doris had not been betrayed by her happy confidence, for Phlegon the secretary came to inform her of the Emperor's purpose to give her husband half a talent, and to continue to pay him in the future his little salary.

"You see," cried the old woman, "the sun of better days is already rising. Half a talent! Why poverty has nothing to do with such rich folks as we are! What do you think — would it not be right to pour

out half a cup of wine to the gods, and allow ourselves the other half?"

Doris was as gay as if she were going to a wedding, and her cheerfulness communicated itself to her son, who saw himself relieved of part of the anxiety that weighed upon him with regard to his parents and sister. His drooping courage, and spirit for life, only needed a few drops of kindly dew to revive it, and he once more began to think of his art. Before anything else he would try to complete his successfully-sketched bust of Antinous.

While he was gone back into the house to preserve his work from injury and was giving the slaves, whom he had desired to follow him, instructions as to how it should be carried so as not to damage it, his master Papias came into the palace-court. He had come to put the last touches to the works he had begun, and proposed to make a fresh attempt to win the favor of the man whom he now knew to be the Emperor. Papias was somewhat uneasy for he was alarmed at the thought that Pollux might now betray how small a share his master had in his last works — which had brought him higher praise than all he had done previously. It might even have been wise on his part to pocket his pride and to induce his former scholar, by lavish promises, to return to his workshop; but the evening before he had been betrayed into speaking before the Emperor with so much indignation at the young artist's evil disposition, of his delight at being rid of him, that, on Hadrian's account, he must give up that idea. Nothing was now to be done, but to procure the removal of Pollux from Alexandria, or to render him in some way incapable of damaging him, and this he might perhaps be able to do by the instrumentality of the wrathful Emperor.

It even came into his mind to hire some Egyptian rascal to have him assassinated; but he was a citizen of peaceful habits, to whom a breach of the law was an abomination and he cast the thought from him as too horrible and base. He was not over-nice in his choice of means, he knew men, was very capable of finding his way up the backstairs, and did not hesitate when need arose to calumniate others boldly, and thus he had before now won the day in many a battle against his fellow-artists of distinction. His hope of succeeding in the tripping of a scholar of no great repute, and of

rendering him harmless so long as the Emperor should remain in Alexandria, was certainly not an over-bold one. He hated the gate-keeper's son far less than he feared him, and he did not conceal from himself that if his attack on Pollux should fail and the young fellow should succeed in proving independently of what he was capable he could do nothing to prevent his loudly proclaiming all that he had done in these last years for his master.

His attention was caught by the slaves in Euphorion's little house, who were carrying the household chattels of the evicted family into the street. He had soon learnt what was going forward, and highly pleased at the ill-will manifested by Hadrian towards the parents of his foe, he stood looking on, and after brief reflection desired a negro to call Pollux to speak to him.

The master and scholar exchanged greetings with a show of haughty coolness and Papias said:

"You forgot to bring back the things which yesterday, without asking my leave, you took out of my wardrobe. I must have them back to-day."

"I did not take them for myself, but for the grand lord in there, and his companion. If any thing is missing apply to him. It grieves me that I should have taken your silver quiver among them, for the Roman's companion has lost it. As soon as I have done here, I will take home all of your things that I can recover, and bring away my own. A good many things belonging to me are still lying in your workshop."

"Good," replied Papias. "I will expect you an hour before sunset, and then we will settle every thing," and without any farewell he turned his back on his pupil and went into the palace.

Pollux had told him that some of the properties, which he had taken without asking permission, had been lost-among them an object of considerable value—and this perhaps would give him a hold over him by which to prevent his injuring him. He remained in the palace scarcely half an hour and then, while Pollux was still engaged in escorting his mother and their household goods to his sister's house, he went to visit the night magistrate, who presided

over the safety of Alexandria. Papias was on intimate terms with this important official, for he had constructed for him a sarcophagus for his deceased wife, an altar with panels in relief for his men's apartment, and other works, at moderate prices, and he could count on his readiness to serve him. When he quitted him he carried in his hand an order of arrest against his assistant Pollux, who had attacked his property and abstracted a quiver of massive silver. The magistrate had also promised him to send two of his guards who would carry the offender off to prison.

Papias went home with a much lighter heart. His pupil, after he had accomplished the easy transfer of his parents, had returned to the palace, and there, to his delight, came across Mastor, who soon fetched him the garments and masks that he had lent the day before to Hadrian and Antinous. The Sarmatian at the same time told him, with tears in his eyes, a sad, very sad story, which stirred the young sculptor's soul deeply, and which would have prompted him to penetrate into the palace at once, and at any risk, if he had not seen the necessity of being with Papias at the appointed hour, which was drawing near, to answer for the valuable property that was missing. Thinking of nothing, wishing nothing so much as to be back as promptly as possible at Lochias, where he was much needed, and where his heart longed to be, he took the bundle out of the slave's hand and hurried away. Papias had sent all his assistants and even his slaves off the premises; he received the breathless Pollux quite alone, and took from him, with icy calmness, the things which had been borrowed from his property-room, asking for them one by one.

"I have already told you," cried Pollux, "that it is not I, but the illustrious Roman—you know as well as I do, who he is—who is answerable for the silver quiver and the torn chiton." And he began to tell him how Antinous had commanded him, in the name of his master, to find masks and disguises for them both. But Papias cut off his speech at the very beginning, and vehemently demanded the restoration of his quiver and bow, of which Pollux could not work out the value in two years. The young man whose heart and thoughts were at Lochias and who, at any cost, did not want to be detained longer than was necessary, begged his master, with all possible politeness, to let him go now, and to settle the matter with him to-morrow after he had discussed it with the Roman, from

whom he might certainly demand any compensation he chose. But when Papias interrupted him again and again, and obstinately insisted on the immediate restoration of his property, the artist whose blood was easily heated, grew angry and replied to the attacks and questions of the older man with vehement response.

One angry word led to another, and at last Papias hinted of persons who took possession of other person's silver goods, and when Pollux retorted that he knew of some who could put forward the works of others as their own, the master struck his fist upon the table, and going towards the door he cried out, as soon as he was at a safe distance from the furious lad's powerful fists:

"Thief! I will show you how fellows like you are dealt with in Alexandria."

Pollux turned white with rage, and rushed upon Papias, who fled, and before Pollux could reach him he had taken refuge behind the two guards sent by the magistrate, and who were waiting in the antechamber.

"Seize the thief!" he cried. "Hold the villain who stole my silver quiver and now raises his hand against his master. Bind him, fetter him, carry him off to prison."

Pollux did not know what had come upon him; he stood like a bear that has been surrounded by hunters; doubtful but at bay. Should he fling himself upon his pursuers and fell them to the earth? should he passively await impending fate?

He knew every stone in his master's house; the anteroom in which he stood, and indeed the whole building was on the ground floor. In the minute while the guards were approaching and his master was giving the order to the lictor, his eye fell on a window which looked out upon the street, and possessed only by the single thought of defending his liberty and returning quickly to Arsinoe he leaped out of the opening which promised safety and into the street below.

"Thief—stop thief!" he heard as he flew on with long strides; and like the pelting of rain driven by all the four winds came from all



sides the senseless, odious, horrible cry: "Stop thief!—stop thief!" it seemed to deprive him of his senses.

But the passionate cry of his heart: "To Lochias, to Arsinoe! keep free, save your liberty if only to be of use at Lochias!" drowned the shouts of his pursuers and urged him through the streets that led to the old palace.

On he went faster and farther, each step a leap; the briny breeze from the sea already fanned his glowing cheeks and the narrow empty street yonder he well knew led to the quay by the King's harbor, where he could hide from his pursuers among the tall piles of wood. He was just turning the corner into the alley when an Egyptian ox-driver threw his goad between his legs; he stumbled, fell to the ground, and instantly felt that a dog which had rushed upon him was tearing the chiton he wore, while he was seized by a number of men. An hour later and he found himself in prison, bitten, beaten, and bound among a crew of malefactors and real thieves.

Night had fallen. His parents were waiting for him and he came not; and in Lochias which he had not been able to reach there were misery and trouble enough, and the only person in the world who could carry comfort to Arsinoe in her despair was absent and nowhere to be found.

## CHAPTER X.

The story told by Mastor which had so greatly agitated Pollux and had prompted him to his mad flight was the history of events which had taken place in the steward's rooms during the hours when the young artist was helping his parents to transfer their household belongings into his sister's tiny dwelling. Keraunus was certainly not one of the most cheerful of men, but on the morning when Sabina came to the palace and the gate-keeper was driven from his home, he had worn the aspect of a thoroughly-contented man.

Since visiting Selene the day before he had given himself no farther concern about her. She was not dangerously ill and was exceptionally well taken care of, and the children did not seem to miss her. Indeed, he himself did not want her back to-day. He avoided confessing this to himself it is true, still he felt lighter and freer in the absence of his grave monitor than he had been for a long time. It would be delightful, he thought, to go on living in this careless manner, alone with Arsinoe and the children, and now and again he rubbed his hands and grinned complacently. When the old slave-woman brought a large dish full of cakes which he had desired her to buy, and set it down by the side of the children's porridge, he chuckled so heartily that his fat person shook and swayed; and he had very good reason to be happy in his way, for Plutarch quite early in the morning, had sent a heavy purse of gold pieces for his ivory cup, and a magnificent bunch of roses to Arsinoe; he might give his children a treat, buy himself a solid gold fillet, and dress Arsinoe as finely as though she were the prefect's favorite daughter.

His vanity was gratified in every particular.

And what a splendid fellow was the slave who now—with a superbly reverential bow-presented him with a roast chicken and who was to walk behind him in the afternoon to the council-chamber. The tall Thessalian who marched after the Archidikastes to the Hall of justice, carrying his papers, was hardly grander than his "body-servant." He had bought him yesterday at quite a low price. The well-grown Samian was scarcely thirty years old; he could read and write and was in a position therefore to instruct the children in these arts; nay, he could even play the lute. His past, to be sure, was

not a spotless record, and it was for that reason that he had been sold so cheaply. He had stolen things on several occasions; but the brands and scars which he bore upon his person were hidden by his new chiton and Keraunus felt in himself the power to cure him of his evil propensities.

After desiring Arsinoe to let nothing he about of any value, for their new house-mate seemed not to be perfectly honest, he answered his daughter's scruples by saying:

"It would be better, no doubt, that he should be as honest as the old skeleton I gave in exchange for him, but I reflect that even if my body-servant should make away with some of the few drachmae we carry about with us, I need not repent of having bought him, since I got him for many thousand drachmae less than he is worth, on account of his thefts, while a teacher for the children would have cost more than he can steal from us at the worst. I will lock up the gold in the chest with my documents. It is strong and could only be opened with a crow-bar. Besides the fellow will have left off stealing at any rate at first, for his late master was none of the mildest and had cured him of his pilfering I should think, once for all. It is lucky that in selling such rascals we should be compelled to state what their faults are; if the seller fails to do so compensation maybe claimed from him by the next owner for what he may lose. Lykophron certainly concealed nothing, and setting aside his thieving propensities the Samian is said to be in every respect a capital fellow."

"But father," replied Arsinoe, her anxiety once more urging her to speak, "it is a bad thing to have a dishonest man in the house."

"You know nothing about it child!" answered Keraunus. "To us to live and to be honest are the same thing, but a slave!—King Antiochus is said to have declared that the man who wishes to be well served must employ none but rascals."

When Arsinoe had been tempted out on to the balcony by her lover's snatch of song and had been driven in again by her father, the steward had not reproved her in any way unkindly, but had stroked her cheeks and said with a smile: "I rather fancy that lad of the gatekeeper's—whom I once turned out of doors has had his eye

on you since you were chosen for Roxana. Poor wretch! But we have very different suitors in view for you my little girl. How would it be, think you, if rich Plutarch had sent you those roses, not on his own behalf but as a greeting on the part of his son? I know that he is very desirous of marrying him but the fastidious man has never yet thought any Alexandrian girl good enough for him."

"I do not know him, and he does not think of a poor thing like me," said Arsinoe.

"Do you think not?" asked Keraunus smiling. "We are of as good family, nay of a better than Plutarch, and the fairest is a match for the wealthiest. What would you say child to a long flowing purple robe and a chariot with white horses, and runners in front?"

At breakfast Keraunus drank two cups of strong wine, in which he allowed Arsinoe to mix only a few drops of water. While his daughter was curling his hair a swallow flew into the room; this was a good omen and raised the steward's spirits. Dressed in his best and with a well-filled purse, he was on the point of starting for the council-chamber with his new slave when Sophilus the tailor and his girl-assistant were shown into the living-room. The man begged to be allowed to try the dress, ordered for Roxana by the prefect's wife, on the steward's daughter. Keraunus received him with much condescension and allowed him to bring in the slave who followed him with a large parcel of dresses,—and Arsinoe, who was with the children, was called.

Arsinoe was embarrassed and anxious and would far rather have yielded her part to another; still, she was curious about the new dresses. The tailor begged her to allow her maid to dress her; his assistant would help her because the dresses which were only slightly stitched together for trying on, were cut, not in the Greek but in the Oriental fashion.

"Your waiting woman," he added turning to Arsinoe, "will be able to learn to-day the way to dress you on the great occasion."

"My daughter's maid," said Keraunus, winking slyly at Arsinoe, "is not in the house."

"Oh, I require no help," cried the tailor's girl. "I am handy too at dressing hair, and I am most glad to help such a fair Roxana."

"And it is a real pleasure to work for her," added Sophilus. "Other young ladies are beautified by what they wear, but your daughter adds beauty to all she wears."

"You are most polite," said Keraunus, as Arsinoe and her handmaid left the room.

"We learn a great deal by our intercourse with people of rank," replied the tailor. "The illustrious ladies who honor me with their custom like not only to see but to hear what is pleasing. Unfortunately there are among them some whom the gods have graced with but few charms, and they, strangely enough, crave the most flattering speeches. But the poor always value it more than the rich when benevolence is shown them."

"Well said," cried Keraunus. "I myself am but indifferently well off for a man of family, and am glad to live within my moderate means — so that my daughter —"

"The lady Julia has chosen the costliest stuffs for her; as is fitting — as the occasion demands," said the tailor. "Quite right, at the same time —"

"Well, my lord?"

"The grand occasion will be over and my daughter, now that she is grown up, ought to be seen at home and in the street in suitable and handsome, though not costly, clothes.

"I said just now, true beauty needs no gaudy raiment."

"Would you be disposed now, to work for me at a moderate price?"

"With pleasure; nay, I shall be indebted to her, for all the world will admire Roxana and inquire who may be her tailor."

"You are a very reasonable and right-minded man. What now would you charge for a dress for her?"

"That we can discuss later."

"No, no, I beg you sincerely – "

"First let me consider what you want. Simple dresses are more difficult, far more difficult to make, and yet become a handsome woman better than rich and gaudy robes. But can any man make a woman understand it? I could tell you a tale of their folly! Why many a woman who rides by in her chariot wears dresses and gems to conceal not merely her own limbs, but the poverty-stricken condition of her house."

Thus, and in this wise did Keraunus and the tailor converse, while the assistant plaited up Arsinoe's hair with strings of false pearls that she had brought with her, and fitted and pinned on her the costly white and blue silk robes of an Asiatic princess. At first Arsinoe was very still and timid. She no longer cared to dress for any one but Pollux; but the garments prepared for her were wonderfully pretty – and how well the fitter knew how to give effect to her natural advantages. While the neat-handed woman worked busily and carefully many merry jests passed between them – many sincere and hearty words of admiration – and before long Arsinoe had become quite excited and took pleased interest in the needle-woman's labors.

Every bough that is freshly decked by spring seems to feel gladness, and the simple child who was to-day so splendidly dressed was captivated by pleasure in her own beauty, and its costly adornment which delighted her beyond measure. Arsinoe now clapped her hands with delight, now had the mirror handed to her, and now, with all the frankness of a child, expressed her satisfaction not only with the costly clothes she wore, but with her own surprisingly grand appearance in them.

The dress-maker was enchanted with her, proud and delighted, and could not resist the impulse to give a kiss to the charming girl's white, beautifully round throat.

"If only Pollux could see me so!" thought Arsinoe. "After the performance perhaps I might show myself in my dress to Selene,

and then she would forgive my taking part in the show. It is really a pleasure to look so nice!"

The children all stood round her while she was being dressed, and shouted with admiration each time some new detail of the princess's attire was added. Helios begged to be allowed to feel her dress, and after satisfying herself that his little hands were clean she stroked them over the glistening white silk.

She had now advanced so far that her father and the tailor could be called in. She felt remarkably content and happy. Drawn up to her tallest, like a real king's daughter, and yet with a heart beating as anxiously as that of any girl would who is on the point of displaying her beauty—hitherto protected and hidden in her parents' home—to the thousand eyes of the gaping multitude, she went towards the sitting-room; but she drew back her hand she had put forth to raise the latch, for she heard the voices of several men who must just now have joined her father.

"Wait a little while, there are visitors," she cried to the seamstress who had followed her, and she put her ear to the door to listen. At first she could not make out anything that was going on, but the end of the strange conversation that was being carried on within was so hideously intelligible that she could never forget it so long as she lived.

Her father had ordered two new dresses for her, beating down the price with the promise of prompt payment, when Mastor came into the steward's room and informed Keraunus that his master and Gabinus, the curiosity-dealer from Nicaea, wished to speak with him.

"Your master," said Keraunus haughtily, "may come in; I think that he regrets the injury he has done me; but Gabinus shall never cross this threshold again, for he is a scoundrel."

"It would be as well that you should desire that man to leave you for the present," said the slave, pointing to the tailor.

"Whoever comes to visit me," said the steward loftily, "must be satisfied to meet any one whom I permit to enter my house."

"Nay, nay," said the slave urgently, "my master is a greater man than you think. Beg this man to leave the room."

"I know, I know very well," said Keraunus with a smile. "Your master is an acquaintance of Caesar's. But we shall see, after the performance that is about to take place, which of us two Caesar will decide for. This tailor has business here and will stay at my pleasure. Sit in the corner there, my friend."

"A tailor!" cried Mastor, horrified. "I tell you he must go."

"He must!" asked Keraunus wrathfully. "A slave dares to give orders in my house? We will see."

"I am going," interrupted the artisan who understood the case. "No unpleasantness shall arise here on my account, I will return in a quarter of an hour."

"You will stay," commanded Keraunus. "This insolent Roman seems to think that Lochias belongs to him; but I will show him who is master here."

But Mastor paid no heed to these words spoken in a high pitch; he took the tailor's hand and led him out, whispering to him:

"Come with me if you wish to escape an evil hour."

The two men went off and Keraunus did not detain the artisan, for it occurred to his mind that his presence did him small credit. He purposed to show himself in all his dignity to the overbearing architect, but he also remembered that it was not advisable to provoke unnecessarily the mysterious bearded stranger, with the big clog. Much excited, and not altogether free from anxiety, he paced up and down his room. To give himself courage he hastily filled a cup from the wine-jar that stood on the breakfast table, emptied it, refilled it and drank it off a second time without adding any water, and then stood with his arms folded and a strong color in his face awaiting his enemy's visit.

The Emperor walked in with Gabinius. Keraunus expected some greeting, but Hadrian spoke not a word, cast a glance at him of the utmost contempt and passed by him without taking any more notice



of him than if he had been a pillar or a piece of furniture. The blood mounted to the steward's head and heated his eyes and for fully a minute he strove in vain to find words to give utterance to his rage. Gabinius paid no more heed to Keraunus than the Roman had done. He walked on ahead and paused in front of the mosaic for which he had offered so high a price, and over which a few days since he had been so sharply dealt with by the steward.

"I would beg you," he said, "to look at this masterpiece."

The Emperor looked at the ground, but hardly had he begun to study the picture, of which he quite understood and appreciated the beauty, when just behind him he heard in a hoarse voice these words uttered with difficulty:

"In Alexandria—it is the custom, to greet—to say something—to the people you visit." Hadrian half turned his head towards the speaker and said indifferently but with strong and insulting contempt:

"In Rome too it is the custom to greet honest people." Then looking down again at the mosaic he said, "Exquisite, exquisite an inestimable and precious work." At Hadrian's words Keraunus' eyes almost started out of his head. His face was crimson and his lips pale; he went close up to him and as soon as he had found breath to speak he said:

"What have you—what are your words intended to convey?"

Hadrian turned suddenly and full upon the steward; in his eyes sparkled that annihilating fire which few could endure to gaze on and his deep voice rolled sullenly through the room as he said to the miserable man:

"My words are intended to convey that you have been an unfaithful steward, that I know what you would rather I should not know, that I have learned how you deal with the property entrusted to you, that you—"

"That I?"—cried the steward trembling with rage and stepping close up to the Emperor.

"That you," shouted Hadrian in his face, "tried to sell this picture to this man; in short that you are a simpleton and a scoundrel into the bargain."

"I—I," gasped Keraunus slapping his hand on his fat chest. "I—a—a—but you shall repent of these words."

Hadrian laughed coldly and scornfully, but Keraunus sprang on Gabinius with a wonderful agility for his size, clutched him by the collar of his chiton and shook the feeble little man as if he were a sapling, shrieking meanwhile:

"I will choke you with your own lies—serpent, mean viper!"

"Madman!" cried Hadrian "leave hold of the Ligurian or by Sirius you shall repent it."

"Repent it?" gasped the steward. "It will be your turn to repent when Caesar comes. Then will come a day of reckoning with false witnesses, shameless calumniators who disturb peaceful households, while credulous idiots—"

"Man, man," interrupted Hadrian, not loudly but sternly and ominously, "you know not to whom you speak."

"Oh I know you—I know you only too well. But I—I—shall I tell you who I am?"

"You—you are a blockhead," replied the monarch shrugging his shoulders contemptuously. Then he added calmly, with dignity—almost with indifference:

"I am Caesar."

At these words the steward's hand dropped from the chiton of the half-throttled dealer. Speechless and with a glassy stare he gazed in Hadrian's face for a few seconds. Then he suddenly started, staggered backwards, uttered a loud choking, gurgling, nameless cry, and fell back on the floor like a mass of rock shaken from its foundations by an earthquake. The room shook again with his fall.

Hadrian was startled and when he saw him lying motionless at his feet he bent over him—less from pity than from a wish to see what was the matter with him; for he had also dabbled in medicine. Just as he was lifting the fallen man's hand to feel his pulse Arsinoe rushed into the room. She had heard the last words of the antagonists with breathless anxiety and her father's fall and now threw herself on her knees by the side of the unhappy man, just opposite to Hadrian, and as his distorted and grey-white face told her what had occurred she broke out in a passionate cry of anguish. Her brothers and sisters followed at her heels, and when they saw their favorite sister bewailing herself they followed her example without knowing at first what Arsinoe was crying for, but soon with terror and horror at their father lying there stiff and disfigured. The Emperor, who had never had either son or daughter of his own, found nothing so intolerable as the presence of crying children. However he endured the wailing and whimpering that surrounded him till he had ascertained the condition of the man lying on the ground before him.

"He is dead," he said in a few minutes. "Cover his face, Master."

Arsinoe and the children broke out afresh, and Hadrian glanced down at them with annoyance. When his eye fell on Arsinoe, whose costly robe, merely pinned and slightly stitched together had come undone with the vehemence of her movements and were hanging as flapping rags in tumbled disorder, he was disgusted with the gaudy fluttering trumpery which contrasted so painfully with the grief of the wearer, and turning his back on the fair girl he quitted the chamber of misery.

Gabinus followed him with a hideous smirk. He had directed the Emperor's attention to the mosaic pavement in the steward's room, and had shamelessly accused Keraunus of having offered to sell him a work that belonged to the palace, contrasting his conduct with his own rectitude. Now the calumniated man was dead, and the truth could never come to light; this was necessarily a satisfaction to the miserable man, but he derived even greater pleasure from the reflection that Arsinoe could not now fill the part of Roxana, and that consequently there was once more a possibility that it might devolve on his daughter.

Hadrian walked on in front of him, silent and thoughtful. Gabinius followed him into his writing-room, and there said with fulsome smoothness:

"Ah, great Caesar, thus do the gods punish with a heavy hand the crimes of the guilty."

Hadrian did not interrupt him, but he looked him keenly and enquiringly in the face, and then said, gravely, but coolly:

"It seems to me, man, that I should do well to break off my connection with you, and to give some other dealer the commissions which I proposed to entrust to you."

"Caesar!" stammered Gabinius, "I really do not know —"

"But I do know," interrupted the Emperor. "You have attempted to mislead me, and throw your own guilt on the shoulders of another."

"I—great Caesar? I have attempted—" began the Ligurian, while his pinched features turned an ashy grey. "You accused the steward of a dishonorable trick," replied Hadrian. "But I know men well, and I know that no thief ever yet died of being called a scoundrel. It is only undeserved disgrace that can cost a man's life."

"Keraunus was full-blooded, and the shock when he learnt that you were Caesar —"

"That shock accelerated the end no doubt," interrupted the monarch, "but the mosaic in the steward's room is worth a million of sesterces, and now I have seen enough to be quite sure that you are not the man to save your money when a work like that mosaic is offered you for sale—be the circumstances what they may. If I see the case rightly, it was Keraunus who refused your demand that he should resign to you the treasure in his charge. Certainly, that was the case exactly! Now, leave me. I wish to be alone."

Gabinius retired with many bows, walking backwards to the door, and then turned his back on the palace of Lochias muttering many impotent curses as he went.

The steward's new 'body-servant,' the old black woman, Mastor, the tailor and his slave, helped Arsinoe to carry her father's lifeless body and lay it on a couch, and the slave closed his eyes. He was dead – so each told the despairing girl, but she would not, could not believe it. As soon as she was alone with the old negress and the dead, she lifted up his heavy, clumsy arm, and as soon as she let go her hold it fell by his side like lead. She lifted the cloth from the dead man's face, but she flung it over him again at once, for death had drawn his features. Then she kissed his cold hand and brought the children in and made them do the same, and said sobbing:

"We have no father now; we shall never, never see him again."

The little blind boy felt the dead body with his hands, and asked his sister:

"Will he not wake again to-morrow morning and make you curl his hair, and take me up on his knee?"

"Never, never; he is gone, gone for ever."

As she spoke Mastor entered the room, sent by his master. Yesterday had he not heard from the overseer of the pavement-workers the comforting tidings that after our grief and suffering here on earth there would be another, beautiful, blissful and eternal life? He went kindly up to Arsinoe and said:

"No, no, my children; when we are dead we become beautiful angels with colored wings, and all who have loved each other here on earth will meet again in the presence of the good God."

Arsinoe looked at the slave with disapproval.

"What is the use," she asked, "of cheating the children with silly tales? Their father is gone, quite gone, but we will never, never forget him."

"Are there any angels with red wings?" asked the youngest little girl.

"Oh! I want to be an angel!" cried Helios, clapping his hands. "And can the angels see?"

"Yes, dear little man," replied Mastor, "and their eyes are wonderfully bright, and all they look upon is beautiful."

"Tell them no more Christian nonsense," begged Arsinoe. "Ah! children, when we shall have burned our father's body there will be nothing left of him but a few grey ashes."

But the slave took the little blind boy on his knees and whispered to him:

"Only believe what I tell you — you will see him again in Heaven."

Then he set him down again, gave Arsinoe a little bag of gold pieces in Caesar's name, and begged her—for so his master desired—to find a new abode and, after the deceased was burned on the morrow, to quit Lochias with the children. When Mastor was gone Arsinoe opened the chest, in which lay her father's papyri and the money that Plutarch had paid for the ivory cup, put in the heavy purse sent by the Emperor, comforting herself while her tears flowed, with the reflection that she and the children were provided at any rate against immediate want.

But where was she to go with the little ones? Where could she hope to find a refuge at once? What was to become of them when all they now possessed was spent. The gods be thanked! she was not forlorn; she still had friends. She could find protection and love with Pollux and look to dame Doris for motherly counsel.

She quickly dried her eyes and changed the remains of her splendor for the dark dress in which she was accustomed to work at the papyrus factory; then, as soon as she had taken the pearls out of her hair, she went down to the little gate-house.

She was only a few steps from the door—but why did not the Graces come springing out to meet her? Why did she see no birds, no flowers in the window? Was she deceived, was she dreaming or was she tricked by some evil spirit? The door of the dear home-like little dwelling was wide open and the sitting-room was absolutely empty, not a chattel was left behind, forgotten—not a leaf from a plant was lying on the ground; for dame Doris, in her tidy fashion, had swept out the few rooms where she had grown grey in peace

and contentment as carefully as though she were to come into them again to-morrow.

What had happened here? Where were her friends gone? A great terror came over her, all the misery of desolation fell upon her, and as she sank upon the stone bench outside the gate-house to wait for the inhabitants who must presently return, the tears again flowed from her eyes and fell in heavy drops on her hands as they lay in her lap.

She was still sitting there, thinking with a throbbing heart of Pollux and of the happy morning of this now dying day, when a troupe of Moorish slaves came towards the deserted house. The head mason who led them desired her to rise from the bench, and in answer to her questions, told her that the little building was to be pulled down, and that the couple who had inhabited it were evicted from their post, turned out of doors and had gone elsewhere with all their belongings. But where Doris and her son had taken themselves no one knew. Arsinoe as she heard these tidings felt like a sailor whose vessel has grounded on a rocky shore, and who realizes with horror that every plank and beam beneath him quivers and gapes. As usual, when she felt too weak to help herself unaided, her first thought was of Selene, and she decided to hasten off to her and to ask her what she could do, what was to become of her and the children.

It was already growing dark. With a swift step, and drying her eyes from time to time on her peplum as she went, she returned to her own room to fetch a veil, without which she dared not venture so late into the streets. On the steps—where the dog had thrown down Selene—she met a man hurrying past her; in the dim light she fancied he bore some resemblance to the slave that her father had bought the day before; but she paid no particular heed, for her mind was full of so many other things. In the kitchen sat the old negress in front of a lamp and the children squatted round her; by the hearth sat the baker and the butcher, to whom her father owed considerable sums and who had come to claim their dues, for ill news has swifter wings than good tidings, and they had already heard of the steward's death. Arsinoe took the lamp, begged the men to wait, went into the sitting-room, passing, not without a

shudder, the body of the man who a few hours since had stroked her cheeks and looked lovingly into her eyes.

How glad she felt to be able to pay her dead father's debts and save the honor of his name! She confidently drew the key out of her pocket and went up to the chest. What was this? She knew, quite positively, that she had locked it before going out and yet it was now standing wide open; the lid, thrown back, hung askew by one hinge; the other was broken. A dread, a hideous suspicion, froze her blood; the lamp trembled in her hand as she leaned over the chest which ought to have contained every thing she possessed. There lay the old documents, carefully rolled together, side by side, but the two bags with Plutarch's money and the Emperor's, had vanished. She took out one roll after another; then she tossed them all out on to the floor till the bottom of the chest was bare—but the gold was really gone, nowhere to be found.

The new slave had forced open the lid of the chest and stolen the whole possessions of the orphans of the man who, to gratify his own vanity, had brought him into the house.

Arsinoe screamed aloud, called in her creditors, explained to them all that had occurred and implored them to pursue the thief; and when they only listened to her with an incredulous shrug, she swore that she was speaking the truth, and promised that whether the slave were caught or not she would pay them with the price of her own and her father's personal ornaments. She knew the name of the dealer of whom her father had bought the slave and told it to the unsatisfied dealers, who at last left her to follow up the thief as promptly as possible.

Once more Arsinoe was alone. Tearless, but shivering and scarcely mistress of herself from misery and agitation, she took out her veil, flung it over her head, and hurried through the court and along the streets to her sister.

Verily, since Sabina's visit to the palace all good spirits had deserted it.



## CHAPTER XI.

In a perfectly dark spot by the wall of the widow's garden, stood the cynic philosopher who had met Antinous with so little courtesy, defending himself eagerly, but in low tones against the rebukes of another man, who, dressed, like himself in a ragged cloak and bearing a beggar's wallet, appeared to be one of the same kidney.

"Do not deny," said the latter, "that you cling much to the Christians."

"But hear me out," urged the other.

"I need hear nothing, for I have seen you for the tenth time sneaking in to one of their meetings."

"And do I deny it? Do I not honestly confess that I seek truth wherever I may, where I see even a gleam of hope of finding it?"

"Like the Egyptian who wanted to catch the miraculous fish, and at last flung his hook into the sand."

"The man acted very wisely."

"What now!"

"A marvel is not to be found just where everything else is. In hunting for truth you must not be afraid of a bog."

"And the Christian doctrine seems to be very much such a muddy thicket."

"Call it so for aught I care."

"Then beware lest you find yourself sticking in the morass."

"I will take care of myself."

"You said just now that there were decent folks among them."

"A few no doubt. But the others! eternal gods! mere slaves, beggars, ruined handicraftsmen, common people, untaught and unphilosophical brains, and women, for the most part."

"Avoid them then."

"You ought to be the last to give me that advice."

"What do you mean?"

The other went close up to him and asked him in a whisper:

"Why, where do you suppose I get the money with which I pay for our food and lodging?"

"So long as you do not steal it, it is all the same to me."

"If I had no more, you would ask the question fast enough."

"Certainly not, we strive after virtue and ought to do everything to render ourselves independent of nature and her cravings. But to be sure she often asserts her rights—to return then: where do you get the money?"

"Why, it burns in the purses of the people in there. It is their duty to give to the poor, and to tell the truth, their pleasure also; and so week by week they give me a few drachmae for my suffering brother."

"Bah! you are the only son of your father, and he is dead."

"All men are brethren! say the Christians, consequently I may call you mine without lying."

"Join them then for aught I care," laughed the other. "How would it be if I followed you among the Christians? Perhaps they would give me weekly money too, for my suffering brother, and then we could have double meals."

The cynics laughed loudly and parted; one went back into the city, the other into the garden belonging to the Christian widow.

Arsinoe had entered here before the dishonest philosopher and had gone straight to Hannah's house without being detained by the gate-keeper. As she got nearer to her destination, she tried more and more earnestly to devise some way in which she might inform her

sister of all the dreadful things that had happened, and which she must learn sooner or later, without giving her too great a shock. Her dread was not much less than her grief. As she reflected on the last few days and on all that had occurred, it almost seemed as though she herself had been the cause of the misfortunes of her family.

On the way to see Selene she could shed no tears, but she could not help softly moaning to herself now and then. A woman, who for some distance had kept pace with her, thought she must be suffering some severe bodily pain, and when the girl passed her, she looked after her with sincere compassion, the wailing of the desolate young creature had sounded so piteous.

True, midway, Arsinoe had suddenly stopped and had thought that instead of going to Selene for advice, she would turn round and seek Pollux and ask him to help her. The thought of her lover forced its way through all her sorrow and anxiety, through the reproaches she heaped upon herself and the vague plans floating in the air which her brain – unaccustomed to any serious thought, vainly tried to sketch for the future. He was kind, and would certainly be ready to help her; but maidenly modesty held her back from seeking him at so late an hour; besides, how could she discover him or his parents?

The place where her sister was she was now familiar with, and no one could judge of their position better or give sounder counsel than prudent Selene. So she had not turned round, but had hurried on to reach her destination as soon as possible; and now she was standing before the little house in the garden. Before opening the door she once more considered in what way she could prepare Selene and tell her terrible news, and, as all that happened stood vividly before her mind's eye, she began to weep once more.

In front of her, and following her, men and veiled women, singly or in couples or in larger groups, passed into Paulina's garden. They came from workshops and writing-rooms, from humble houses in narrow lanes, and from the handsomest and largest in the main street. Each and all, from the wealthy merchant down to the slave who could not call the coarse tunic or scanty apron that he wore, his own, walked gravely and with a certain dignified reserve. All who met within that gate greeted each other as friends; the master gave a

brotherly kiss to the servant, the slave to his owner; for the congregation to which they all belonged was as one body, animated and dwelt in by Christ, so that each member was esteemed as equal to the others however different their gifts of body or mind might be, or the worldly possessions with which they were endowed. Before God and his Saviour the rich ship-owner or the grey-haired sage stood no higher than the defenceless widow and the ignorant slave crippled with blows. Still, the members of the community submitted to those more implicitly than to these, for the special talents which graced certain superior Christians were gifts of grace from the Lord, readily acknowledged as such and, so far as they concerned the inner man, deemed worthy of honor.

On Sunday, the day of the Resurrection of the Lord, all Christians, without exception, visited their place of assembly for divine worship. To-day, being the middle of the week, all who could or chose came to the love-feast at Paulina's suburban house. She herself dwelt in the city and she had placed the banqueting hall of her villa, which would hold more than a hundred souls, at the disposal of her fellow Christians in that quarter of the town. The regular service was held in the morning, but after the day's labor was ended the Christians met at one table to have an evening meal in common, or—on other occasions to partake of the sacramental supper. After sunset the elders, deacons, and deaconesses—most of whom, so long as it was light, had secular work to attend to—met to take counsel together.

Paulina, the widow of Pudeus and sister of Pontius the architect, was a woman of considerable property and at the same time a prudent steward, who did not consider herself justified in seriously impairing her son's inheritance. This son was residing at Smyrna as a partner in an uncle's business, and always avoided Alexandria, as he did not like his mother's intercourse with the Christians. Paulina took the most anxious care not to make any inroads on the capital intended for him, and never allowed her hospitality to her fellow-believers to cost her any more than it did the other wealthy members of the circle that met at her house. There the rich brought more than they needed for themselves and the poor were always welcome; not feeling themselves oppressed by the benevolence they profited by, for they were often told that their entertainer was not a

mortal, but the Saviour, who invited each one who followed him faithfully to be his guest.

The hour was approaching which would summon dame Hannah to join the assembly of her fellow Christians. She could not fail to appear, for she was one of the deaconesses entrusted with the distribution of alms and the care of the sick. She noiselessly made her preparations for going, carefully setting the lamp behind the water-pitcher so that it should not dazzle Selene, and she desired Mary to be exact in administering the medicine to her patient. She knew that the girl had yesterday attempted to make away with herself, and guessed the cause; but she asked no questions and disturbed the poor child, who slept a good deal or lay dreaming with open eyes, as little as possible. The old physician wondered at her sound constitution, for since her plunge into the water the fever had left her and even the injured foot was not much the worse. Hannah might now hope the best for Selene if no unforeseen contingency checked her recovery. To prevent this the unfortunate girl was never to be left alone, and Mary had gladly agreed with her friend to fill her place whenever she was obliged to leave the house.

The meeting of the elders and guardians had already begun when Hannah took her tablets in her hand, on which was noted the distribution she had made of the money entrusted to her during the last week. She greeted the sick girl and Mary with a kindly look and whispered to the deformed girl:

"I will think of thee in my prayers thou faithful soul. There is some food in the little cupboard—not much, for we must be sparing, the last medicine was so dear."

In the little anteroom a lamp was burning which Mary had lighted as it began to grow dark, and the widow paused for a moment, considering whether she should not extinguish it to save the oil. She had taken up the tongs that hung by it, and was about to put it out, when she heard a gentle tap at the house-door. Before she could enquire who it was that asked admission at so late an hour, the door was opened and Arsinoe entered the little hall. Her eyes were still full of tears and she had great difficulty in finding words to return Hannah's greeting.

"Why what ails you my child?" asked the Christian anxiously when by the dim light, she saw how tearful and sad the girl looked. Arsinoe was long before she could answer. At last she collected herself sufficiently to sob out amid her tears:

"Oh dame Hannah! It is all over with us—my father, our poor father—"

The widow guessed at the blow that had fallen on the sisters and full of anxiety on Selene's account she interrupted the weeping child saying:

"Hush, hush my child-Selene must not hear you. Come out with me and then you can tell me all." Once outside the door Hannah put her arm round Arsinoe drew her towards her, kissed her forehead, and said:

"Now speak and tell me every thing; think that I am your mother or your sister. Poor Selene is still too weak to advise or help you. Take courage. What happened to your poor father?"

"Struck by apoplexy, dead—dead!" wept the girl. "Poor, dear little orphan," said the widow in a husky voice and she clasped Arsinoe closely in her arms. For some time she allowed the girl to weep silently on her bosom; then she spoke:

"Give me your hand my daughter and tell me how it has all happened so suddenly. Your father was quite well yesterday and now? Yes my girl life is a grave matter, you have to learn it while you are still young. I know you have six little brothers and sisters and perhaps you may soon lack even the necessities of life. But that is no disgrace; I am certainly even poorer than you and yet, by God's help, I hope to be able to advise you and perhaps even to assist you. Every thing that I can possibly do shall be done, but first I must know how matters stand with you and what you need."

There was so much kindness and consolation in the Christian's tones, so much to revive hope that Arsinoe willingly complied with her demand and began her story.

At first, to be sure, her pride shunned confessing how poor, how absolutely destitute they were; but Hannah's questions soon brought the truth to light; and when Arsinoe perceived that the widow understood the misfortunes of their house in their fullest extent, and that it would be unavailing to conceal how matters stood with her and the children, she yielded to the growing impulse to relieve her soul by pouring out her griefs and described frankly and without reserve the whole position of the family, to the good woman who listened with attention and sympathy. The widow asked about each child separately, and ended by enquiring who, in Arsinoe's absence, was left in charge of the little ones; and when she heard that the old slave-woman to whose care the children were entrusted, was infirm and half-blind, she shook her head thoughtfully.

"Here help is needed and at once," she said decidedly. "You must go back to the little ones presently. Your sister must not at present hear of your father's death; when your future lot is to some extent secure we will tell her by degrees all that has occurred. Now come with me, it is by the Lord's guidance that you came here at the right moment."

Hannah conducted Arsinoe to Paulina's villa, first into a small room at the side of the entrance hall, where the deaconesses took off their veils and their warm wraps in winter evenings. There the girl could be alone, and safe from inquisitive questionings which could not fail to be painful to her. Hannah desired her to await her return, and then joined her colleagues.

In order to do so she had to pass through the room where the elders and deacons were sitting in council. The bishop, who presided over the assembly, sat on a raised seat at the head of an oblong table, and on his right hand and his left sat a number of elderly men, some of whom seemed to be of Jewish or Egyptian extraction but most of them were Greeks. In these the lofty intellectual brow was conspicuous, in those a bright, ecstatic expression particularly in the eyes. Hannah went past the assembly with a reverential greeting into the adjoining room in which the deaconesses sat waiting, for women were not admitted to join or hear the deliberations of the elders. The bishop, a fine old man with

a full white beard; raised his kindly eyes as the door closed upon Hannah, fixed them for a few moments on the tips of his fingers that he had raised and then addressed the presbyter who had presented for baptism several candidates who had been grounded during the past year in the Christian faith and doctrine, as follows:

"Most of the catechumens you have presented to me cling faithfully no doubt to the Redeemer. They believe in Him and love Him. But have they attained to that sanctification, that new birth in Christ, which alone can justify us in admitting them through baptism among the lambs of our Good Shepherd? Let us beware of the tainted sheep which may infect the whole flock. Verily, in these latter years there has been no lack of them, and they have been received among us and have brought the name of Christian into evil repute. Shall I give you an example? There was an Egyptian in Rhakotis; few seemed to strive so fervently as he for the remission of his sins. He could fast for many days, and yet no sooner was he baptized than he broke into a goldsmith's shop. He was condemned to death, and before his end he sent for me and confessed to me that in former years he had soiled his soul with many robberies and murders. He had hoped to win forgiveness of his sins by the act of baptism, the mere washing in water, not by repentance and a new birth to a pure and holy life; and he had gone on boldly in new sin because he confidently hoped that he might again count on the unwearying mercy of the Saviour. Others again, who had been brought up in the practice of the ablutions which have to be performed by those who are initiated into the deeper secrets of the heathen mysteries, regarded baptism as an act of purification, a mystical process of happy augury, or at the best a figurative purification of the soul, and crowded to receive it. Here, in Alexandria, the number of these deluded ones is especially great; for where could any superstition find a more favorable soil than in this seat of philosophical half-culture, or over-culture; of the worship of Serapis, of astrology, of societies of Mystics, of visionaries and exorcisers, and of incredulity—the twin-sister of credulity. Be cautious then to hold back from baptism all those who regard it as a preserving charm or an act of good omen—remembering that the same water which, sprinkled on sanctified hearts, leads them to holy living, brings death to the unclean soul. It is your turn to speak, Irenaeus."



"I only have to say," began the young Christian thus designated, "that I have recently met among the catechumens with some who have attached themselves to us from the basest motives. I mean the idlers who are glad to receive our alms. Have you noticed here a cynic philosopher whose starving brother we maintain? Our deacon Clemens has just ascertained that he is the only son of his father —"

"We will investigate this matter more closely when we discuss the distribution of alms," replied the bishop. "Here we have petitions from several women who desire to have their children baptized; this question we cannot decide here; it must be referred to the next Synod. So far as I am concerned, I should be inclined not to reject the prayer of the mothers. Wherein does the utmost aim of the Christian life consist? It seems to me in being perfectly conformable to the example of the Saviour. And was not he a Man among men, a Youth among the young, a Child among children? Did not His existence lend sanctity to every age, and especially childhood? He commanded that little children should be brought to Him, and He promised them the Kingdom of Heaven. Wherefore then should we exclude them and deny them baptism?"

"I cannot share your views," replied a presbyter with a high forehead and sunken eyes. "We ought no doubt to follow the Saviour, but those who tread in His steps should do so of their own free choice, out of love for Him, and after He has sanctified their souls. What is the sense of a new birth in a life that has scarcely begun.

"Your discourse," replied the bishop, "only confirms my opinion that this question is one for a higher assembly. We will now close our discussion of that point, and go on to the care of the poor. Call in the women, my good Justinus."

The deaconesses came into the room and took seats at the lower end of the table, Paulina, the widow of Pudeus, taking her place opposite the bishop in the middle of the other women. She had learnt from Selene's kind nurse in what pressing difficulties the children of the deceased steward now found themselves, and that Hannah had promised to assist them.

The deacons first gave their reports of what their works had been among the poor; after them the women were allowed to speak. Paulina, a tall, slight woman with black hair faintly streaked with gray, drew from her dress, which was perfectly plain, but made of particularly soft, fine white woollen stuff—a tablet that she placed before her, and slowly raising her eyes and looking at the assembly she said:

"Dame Hannah has a melancholy story to tell you, for which I crave your sympathy. Will you be so good as to allow her to speak?"

Paulina seemed to feel that she was the hostess to her brethren. She looked ill and suffering; a line of pain had settled about her lips, and there were always dark shades under her eyes; still, there was something firm and decisive in her voice, and her glance was anything rather than soft and winning. After her commanding tones Hannah's tale sounded as soft as a song. She described the different natures of the two sisters as lovingly as though they were her own daughters, each in her own way seemed to her so worthy of compassion, and she spoke with pathetic lament of the unprotected, helpless orphans abandoned to misery, and among them a pretty little blind boy. And she ended her speech by saying:

"The steward's second daughter—she is sixteen and so beautiful that she must be exposed to every temptation—has now the whole charge of the nourishment and care of her six young brothers and sisters. Ought we to withhold from them a protecting hand? No, so surely as we love the Saviour we ought not. You agree with me? Well then, do not let us delay our help. The second daughter of the deceased Keraunus is here, in this house; to-morrow early the children must all quit the palace, and now, while I am speaking, are at home alone and but ill tended."

The Christian woman's good words fell on kindly soil, and the presbyters and deacons determined to recommend the congregation who should assemble at the love-feast to give their assistance to the steward's children.

The elders had still much to discuss, so Hannah and Paulina were charged with the task of appealing to the hearts of the well-to-do members of the congregation to provide for the orphans. The poor

widow first conducted her wealthy friend and hostess to the little room where Arsinoe was waiting with growing impatience. She looked paler than usual but, in spite of her tear-reddened eyes which she kept fixed on the ground, she was so lovely, so touchingly lovely, that the mere sight of her moved Paulina's heart. She had once had two children, an only daughter besides her son. The girl had died in the spring-time of her maidenhood, and Paulina thought of her at every hour of her life. It was for her sake that she had been baptized and devoted her existence to a series of painful sacrifices. She strove with all her might to be a good Christian—for surely she, the self-denying woman who had taken up the cross of her own free will, the suffering creature who loved stillness and who had made her country-house, which she visited daily, a scene of unrest, could not fail to win Heaven, and there she hoped to meet her innocent child.

Arsinoe reminded her of her Helena, who certainly had been far less fair than the steward's lovely daughter, but whose image had assumed new and glorified forms in the mother's faithful heart. Since her son had left home for a foreign country she had often asked herself whether she might not find some young creature to take into her home, to attach to herself, to bring up as a Christian, and to bring as an offering to her Saviour's feet.

Her daughter had died a heathen, and nothing troubled Paulina so deeply as that her soul was lost, and that her own struggling and striving for grace could not lead her to the goal beyond the grave. No sacrifice seemed too great to purchase her child's beatitude, and now, standing before Arsinoe and looking at her with deep emotion and admiration, she was seized with an idea which swiftly ripened to resolve. She would win this sweet soul for the Redeemer, and implore Him with ceaseless prayers to save her hapless child as a reward for the work of grace in Arsinoe's soul; and she felt as if she had signed the compact with the Redeemer, when, fully determined on this course, she went up to the girl and asked her:

"You are quite forlorn, quite without relations?" Arsinoe bowed her head in assent, and Paulina went on:

"And do you bear your loss with resignation?"

"What is resignation?" asked the girl modestly. Hannah laid her hand on the widow's arm and whispered:

"She is a heathen."

"I know it," said Paulina shortly, and then went on kindly but positively:

"You and yours have lost both parents and a home by your father's death. You shall find a new home in my house, with me; I ask nothing of you in return but your love."

Arsinoe looked at the haughty lady in astonishment. She could not yet feel any impulse of affection towards her, and she did not as yet understand that what was required of her was the one gift which the best will, the most loving heart in the world, could not offer at a command. Paulina did not wait for her reply, but signed to Hannah to follow her to join the congregation now assembled at the evening meal.

A quarter of an hour later the two women returned. The steward's orphans were provided for. Two or three Christian families were ready and willing to take in some of them, and many a kindly house-mother had begged to have the blind child; but in vain, for Hannah had claimed the right to bring up the hapless little boy in her own house, at any rate for the present. She knew how Selene clung to him, and hoped by his presence to be able to work powerfully on the crushed and chilled heart of the poor girl.

Arsinoe did not contravene the arrangements of the two women. She thanked them, indeed, for she felt that she once more stood on firm ground, but she also was immediately aware that it would be strewn with sharp stones. The thought of parting from her little brothers and sisters was terrible and cruel, and never left her mind for an instant, while, accompanied by Hannah in person, she made her way back to Lochias.

The next morning her kind friend appeared again and led her and the little troupe to Paulina's town-house. The steward's creditors divided his little possessions; nothing but the chest of papyri followed the girl to her new home. The hour in which the fondly-

linked circle of children was riven asunder, when one child was taken here and another there, was the bitterest which Arsinoe had ever experienced or ever could experience through all the after years of her life.

## CHAPTER XII.

A lovely garden adjoined the Caesareum, the palace in which Sabina was residing. Balbilla was fond of lingering there, and as the morning of the twenty-ninth of December was particularly brilliant—the sky and its infinite mirror the sea, gleaming in indescribably deep blue, while the fragrance of a flowering shrub was wafted in at her window like an invitation to quit the house she had sought a certain bench which, though placed in a sunny spot, was slightly shaded by an acacia. This seat was screened from the more public paths by bushes; the promenaders who did not seek Balbilla could not observe her here, but she could command a view, through a gap in the foliage, of the path, which was strewn with small shells.

To-day, however, the young poetess was far from feeling any curiosity; instead of gazing at the shrubbery enlivened by birds, at the clear atmosphere or the sparkling sea, her eyes were fixed on a yellow roll of papyrus and she was impressing very dry details on her retentive memory.

She had determined to keep her word to learn to speak, write, and compose verses in the Aeolian dialect of the Greek tongue. She had chosen for her teacher Apollonius, the great grammarian, who was apt to call his scholars "the dullards;" and the work which was the present object of her studies was derived from the famous library of the Serapeum, which far exceeded in completeness that of the Museum since the siege of Julius Caesar in the Bruchiom, when the great Museum library was burnt.

Any one observing Balbilla at her occupation could hardly have believed that she was studying. There was no fixed effort in her eyes or on her brow; still, she read line for line, not skipping a single word; only she did it not like a man who climbs a mountain with sweat on his brow, but like a loungeur who walks in the main street of some great city, and is charmed at every new and strange thing that meets his eye. Each time she came upon some form of structure in the book she was reading that had been hitherto unknown to her, she was so delighted that she clapped her hands and laughed out softly. Her learned master had never before met with so cheerful a student, and it annoyed him, for to him science was a serious matter

while she seemed to make a joke of it, as she did of every thing, and so desecrated it in his eyes. After she had been sitting an hour on the bench, studying in her own way, she rolled up the book and stood up to refresh herself a little. Feeling sure that no one could see her, she stretched herself in all her limbs and then stepped up to the gap in the shrubbery in order to see who a man in boots might be who was pacing up and down in the broad path beyond.

It was the praetor — and yet it was not! Verus, under this aspect at any rate, she had never seen till now. Where was the smile that was wont to twinkle in his merry eye like the sparkle of a diamond and to play saucily about his lips — where the unwrinkled serenity of his brow and the defiantly audacious demeanor of his whole handsome person? He was slowly striding up and down with a gloomy fire in his eye, a deeply-lined brow, and his head sunk on his breast: and yet it was not bowed with sorrow. If so, could he have snapped his fingers in the air as he did just as he passed in front of Balbilla, as much as to say: "Come what may! to-day I live and laugh the future in the face!"

But this vestige of his old reckless audacity did not last longer than the time it took to part his fingers again, and the next time Verus passed Balbilla he looked, if possible, more gloomy than before. Something very unpleasant must have arisen to spoil the good humor of her friend's husband; and the poetess was sincerely sorry; for, though she herself had daily to suffer under the praetor's impertinence, she always forgave it for the sake of the graceful form in which he knew how to clothe his incivilities.

Balbilla longed to see Verus content once more, and she therefore came forth from her hiding place. As soon as he saw her he altered the expression of his features and cried out as brightly as ever:

"Welcome, fairest of the fair!"

She made believe not to recognize him, but, as she passed him and bowed her curly head, she said gravely and in deep tones:

"Good day to you, Timon."

"Timon?" he asked, taking her hand.

"Ah! is it you, Verus?" she answered, as though surprised. "I thought the Athenian misanthrope had quitted Hades and come to take the air in this garden."

"You thought rightly," replied the praetor. "But when Orpheus sings the trees dance, the Muse can turn dull, motionless stones into a Bacchante, and when Balbilla appears Timon is at once transformed into the happy Verus."

"The miracle does not astonish me," laughed the girl. "But is it permitted to ask what dark spirit so effectually produced the contrary result, and made a Timon of the fair Lucilla's happy husband?"

"I ought rather to beware of letting you see the monster, or our joyous muse Balbilla might easily become the sinister Hecate. But the malicious sprite is close at hand, for he is hidden in this little roll."

"A document from Caesar?"

"Oh! no, only a letter from a Jew."

"Possibly the father of some fair daughter!"

"Wrongly guessed – as wrong as possible!"

"You excite my curiosity."

"Mine has already been satisfied by this roll. Horace is wise when he says that man should never trouble himself about the future."

"An oracle!"

"Something of the kind."

"And can that darken this lovely morning to you? Did you ever see me melancholy? Yet my future is threatened by a prophecy – such a hideous prophecy."

"The fate of men is different to the destiny of women."



"Would you like to hear what was prophesied of me?"

"What a question!"

"Listen then; the saying I will repeat to you came to me from no less an oracle than the Delphic Pythia:

*"'That which thou boldest most precious and dear  
Shall be torn from thy keeping,  
And from the heights of Olympus,  
Down shalt thou fall in the dust.'"*

"Is that all?"

"Nay — two consolatory lines follow."

"And they are — ?"

*"Still the contemplative eye  
Discerns under mutable sand drifts  
Stable foundations of stone,  
Marble and natural rock."*

"And you are inclined to complain of this oracle?"

"Is it so pleasant to have to wade through dust? We have enough of that intolerable nuisance here in Egypt — or am I to be delighted at the prospect of hurting my feet on hard stones?"

"And what do the interpreters say?"

"Only silly nonsense."

"You have never found the right one; but I — I see the meaning of the oracle."

"You?"

"Ay, I! The stern Balbilla will at last descend from the lofty Olympus of her high-anti-mightiness and no longer disdain that immutable foundation-rock, the adoration of her faithful Verus."

"That foundation—that rock!" laughed the girl. "I should think it as well advised to try to walk on the surface of the sea out there as on that rock!"

"Only try."

"It is not necessary; Lucilla has made the experiment for me. Your interpretation is wrong; Caesar gave me a far better one."

"What was that?"

"That I should give up writing poetry and devote myself to strict scientific studies. He advised me to try astronomy."

"Astronomy," repeated Verus, growing graver. "Farewell, fair one; I must go to Caesar!"

"We were with him yesterday at Lochias. How everything is changed there! The pretty little gate house is gone, there is nothing more to be seen of all the cheerful bustle of builders and artists, and what were gay workshops are turned into dull, commonplace halls. The screens in the hall of the Muses had to go a week ago, and with them the young scatter-brain who set himself against my curls with so much energy that I was on the point of sacrificing them—"

"Without them you would no longer be Balbilla," cried Verus eagerly. "The artist condemns all that is not permanently beautiful, but we are glad to see any thing that is graceful, and can find pleasure in it with the other children of the time. The sculptor may dress his goddesses after the fashion of graver days and the laws of his art, but mortal women—if he is wise—after the fashion of the day. However, I am heartily sorry for that clever, genial young fellow. He has offended Caesar and was turned out of the palace, and now he is nowhere to be found."

"Oh!" cried Balbilla, full of regret, "poor man—and such a fine fellow! And my bust? we must seek him out. If the opportunity offers I will entreat Caesar—"

"Hadrian will hear nothing about him. Pollux has offended him deeply."

"From whom do you know that?"

"From Antinous."

"We saw him, too, only yesterday," cried Balbilla, eagerly.

"If ever a man was permitted to wear the form of a god among mortals, it is he."

"Romantic creature!"

"I know no one who could look upon him with indifference. He is a beautiful dreamer, and the trace of suffering which we observed yesterday in his countenance is probably nothing more than the outward expression of that obscure regret, felt by all that is perfect, for the joy of development and conscious ripening into an incarnation of the ideal in its own kind, of which he is an instance in himself."

The poetess spoke the last words in a rapt tone, as if the form of a god was then and there before her eyes. Verus had listened to her with a smile, but now he interrupted her, and, holding up a warning finger, he said:

"Poetess, philosopher, and sweetest maiden, beware of descending from your Olympus for the sake of this boy! When imagination and dreaminess meet half-way they make a pair which float in the clouds and never even suspect the existence of that firmer ground of which your oracle speaks."

"Nonsense," said Balbilla crossly. "Before we can fall in love with a statue, Prometheus must animate it with a soul and fire from heaven."

"But often," retorted the praetor, "Eros proves to be a substitute for that unhappy friend of the gods."

"The true or the sham Eros," asked Balbilla testily.

"Certainly not the sham Eros," replied Verus. "On this occasion he merely plays the part of a kindly monitor, taking the place of Pontius, the architect, of whom your worthy matron-companion is

so much afraid. During the tumult of the Dionysiac festival you are reported to have carried on as grave a discussion as any two gray-bearded philosophers walking in the Stoa among attentive students."

"With intelligent men, no doubt, we talk with intelligence!"

"Aye, and with stupid ones gayly. How much reason have I to be thankful that I am one of the stupid ones. Farewell, till we meet again, fair Balbilla," and the praetor hurried off.

Outside the Caesareum he got into his chariot and set out for Lochias. The charioteer held the reins, while he himself gazed at the roll in his hand which contained the result of the calculations of the astrologer, Rabbi Simeon Ben Jochai; and this was certainly likely enough to disturb the cheerfulness of the most reckless of men.

When, during the night which preceded the praetor's birthday, the Emperor should study the heavens with special reference to the position of the stars at his birth, he would find that, as far as till the end of the second hour after midnight all the favorable planets promised Verus a happy lot, success and distinction. But, with the commencement of the third hour—so said Ben Jochai—misfortune and death would take possession of his house of destiny; in the fourth hour his star would vanish, and anything further that might declare itself in the sky during that night would have nothing more to do with him, or his destiny. The Emperor's star would triumph over his. Verus could make out but little of the signs and calculations in the tables annexed by the Jew, but that little confirmed what was told in the written statement.

The praetor's horses carried him swiftly along while he reflected on what remained for him to do under these unfavorable circumstances, in order not to be forced to give up entirely the highest goal of his ambition. If the Rabbi's observations were accurate—and of this Verus did not for a moment doubt—all his hopes of adoption were at an end in spite of Sabina's support. How should Hadrian choose for his son and successor a man who was destined to die before him? How could he, Verus, expect that Caesar should ally his fortunate star with the fatal star of another doomed to die?

These reflections did nothing to help him, and yet he could not escape from them, till suddenly his charioteer pulled up the horses abruptly by the side of the footway to make room for a delegation of Egyptian priests who were going in procession to Lochias. The powerful hand with which his servant had promptly controlled the fiery spirit of the animals excited his approbation, and seemed to inspire him to put a clog boldly on the wheels of speeding fate. When they were no longer detained by the Egyptian delegates he desired the charioteer to drive slowly, for he wished to gain time for consideration.

"Until the third hour after midnight," said he to himself, "all is to go well; it is not till the fourth hour that signs are to appear in the sky which are of evil augury for me. Of course the sheep will play round the dead lion, and the ass will even spurn him with his hoof so long as he is merely sick. In the short space of time between the third and fourth hours all the signs of evil are crowded together. They must be visible; but"—and this "but" brought sudden illumination to the praetor's mind, "why should Caesar see them?"

The anxious aspirant's heart beat faster, his brain worked more actively, and he desired the driver to make a short circuit, for he wanted to gain yet more time for the ideas that were germinating in his mind to grow and ripen.

Verus was no schemer; he walked in at the front door with a free and careless step, and scorned to climb the backstairs. Only for the greatest object and aim of his life was he prepared to sacrifice his inclinations, his comfort and his pride, and to make unhesitating use of every means at hand. For the sake of that he had already done many things which he regretted, and the man who steals one sheep out of the flock is followed by others without intending it. The first degrading action that a man commits is sure to be followed by a second and a third. What Verus was now projecting he regarded as being a simple act of self-defence; and after all, it consisted merely in detaining Hadrian for an hour, interrupting him in an idle occupation—the observation of the stars.

There were two men who might be helpful to him in this matter—Antinous and the slave Mastor. He first thought of Mastor; but the Sarmatian was faithfully devoted to his master and could not be

bribed. And besides! — No! it really was too far beneath him to make common cause with a slave. But he could count even less on support from Antinous. Sabina hated her husband's favorite, and for her sake Verus had never met the young Bithynian on particularly friendly terms. He fancied, too, that he had observed that the quiet, dreamy lad kept out of his way. It was only by intimidation, probably, that the favorite could be induced to do him a service.

At any rate, the first thing to be done was to visit Lochias and there to keep a lookout with his eyes wide open. If the Emperor were in a happy frame of mind he might, perhaps, be induced to appear during the latter part of the night at the banquet which Verus was giving on the eve of his birthday, and at which all that was beautiful to the eye and ear was to be seen and heard; or a thousand favoring and helpful accidents might occur — and at any rate the Rabbi's forecast furnished him good fortune for the next few years.

As he dismounted from his chariot in the newly-paved forecourt and was conducted to the Emperor's anteroom he looked as bright and free from care as if the future lay before him sunny and cloudless.

Hadrian now occupied the restored palace, not as an architect from Rome but as sovereign of the world; he had shown himself to the Alexandrians and had been received with rejoicings and an unheard-of display in his honor. The satisfaction caused by the imperial visit was everywhere conspicuous and often found expression in exaggerated terms; indeed the council had passed a resolution to the effect that the month of December, being that in which the city had had the honor of welcoming the 'Imperator,' should henceforth be called:

"Hadrianus." The Emperor had to receive one deputation after another and to hold audience after audience, and on the following morning the dramatic representations were to begin, the processions and games which promised to last through many days, or — as Hadrian himself expressed it — to rob him of at least a hundred good hours. Notwithstanding, the monarch found time to settle all the affairs of the state, and at night to question the stars as to the fate

which awaited him and his dominions during all the seasons of the new year now so close at hand.

The aspect of the palace at Lochias was entirely changed. In the place of the gay little gate-house stood a large tent of gorgeous purple stuff, in which the Emperor's body-guard was quartered, and opposite to it another was pitched for lictors and messengers. The stables were full of horses. Hadrian's own horse, Borysthenes, which had had too long a rest, pawed and stamped impatiently in a separate stall, and close at hand the Emperor's retrievers, boar-hounds and harriers were housed in hastily-contrived yards and kennels.

In the wide space of the first court soldiers were encamped, and close under the walls squatted men and women—Egyptians, Greeks and Hebrews—who desired to offer petitions to the sovereign. Chariots drove in and out, litters came and went, chamberlains and other officials hurried hither and thither. The anterooms were crowded with men of the upper classes of the citizens who hoped to be granted audience by the Emperor at the proper hour. Slaves, who offered refreshments to those who waited or stood idly looking on, were to be seen in every room, and official persons, with rolls of manuscript under their arms, bustled into the inner rooms or out of the palace to carry into effect the orders of their superior.

The hall of the Muses had been turned into a grand banqueting-hall. Papias, who was now on his way to Italy by the Emperor's command, had restored the damaged shoulder of the Urania. Couches and divans stood between the statues, and under a canopy at the upper end of the vast room stood a throne on which Hadrian sat when he held audience. On these occasions he always appeared in the purple, but in his writing-room, which he had not changed for another, he laid aside the imperial mantle and was no more splendid in his garb than the architect Claudius Venator had been.

In the rooms that had belonged to the deceased Keraunus now dwelt an Egyptian without wife or children—a stern and prudent man who had done good service as house-steward to the prefect Titianus, and the living-room of the evicted family now looked dreary and uninhabited. The mosaic pavement which had indirectly caused the death of Keraunus, was now on its way to Rome, and the

new steward had not thought it worth while to fill up the empty, dusty, broken-up place which had been left in the floor of his room by the removal of the work of art, nor even to cover it over with mats. Not a single cheerful note was audible in the abandoned dwelling but the twitter of the birds which still came morning and evening to perch on the balcony, for Arsinoe and the children had never neglected to strew the parapet with crumbs for them at the end of each meal.

All that was gracious, all that was attractive in the old palace had vanished at Sabina's visit, and even Hadrian himself was a different man to what he had been a few days previously. The dignity with which he appeared in public was truly imperial and unapproachable, and even when he sat with his intimates in his favorite room he was grave, gloomy and taciturn. The oracle, the stars, and other signs announced some terrible catastrophe for the coming year with a certainty that he could not evade; and the few careless days that he had been permitted to enjoy at Lochias had ended with unsatisfactory occurrences.

His wife, whose bitter nature struck him in all its repellent harshness here in Alexandria—where everything assumed sharper outlines and more accentuated movement than in Rome—had demanded of him boldly that he should no longer defer the adoption of the praetor.

He was anxious and unsatisfied; the infinite void in his heart yawned before him whenever he looked into his soul, and at every glance at the future of his external life a long course of petty trifles started up before him which could not fail to stand in the way of his unwearying impulse to work. Even the vegetative existence of his handsome favorite Antinous, untroubled as it was by the sorrows or the joys of life, had undergone a change. The youth was often moody, restless and sad. Some foreign influences seemed to have affected him, for he was no longer content to hang about his person like a shadow; no, he yearned for liberty, had stolen into the city several times, seeking there the pleasures of his age which formerly he had avoided.



Nay, a change had even come over his cheerful and willing slave Mastor. Only his hound remained always the same in unaltered fidelity.

And he himself? He was the same to-day as ten years since: different every day and at every hour of the day.

### CHAPTER XIII.

When Verus entered the palace Hadrian had returned thither but a few minutes previously from the city. The praetor was conducted through the reception-rooms to the private apartments, and here he had not long to wait, for Hadrian wished to speak with him immediately. He found the sovereign so thoroughly out of tune that he could not think of inviting him to his banquet. The Emperor restlessly paced the room while Verus answered his questions as to the latest proceedings of the Senate in Rome, but he several times interrupted his walk and gazed into the adjoining room.

Just as the praetor had concluded his report Argus set up a howl of delight and Antinous came into the room. Verus at once withdrew into the window and pretended to be absorbed in looking out on the harbor.

"Where have you been?" asked the Emperor, disregarding the praetor's presence.

"Into the city a little way," was the Bithynian's answer.

"But you know I cannot bear to miss you when I come home."

"I thought you would have been longer absent."

"For the future arrange so that I may be able to find you at whatever time I may seek you. Tell me, you do not like to see me vexed and worried?"

"No, my lord," said the lad and he raised a supplicating hand and looked beseechingly at his master.

"Then let it pass. But now for something else; how did this little phial come into the hands of the dealer Hiram?" As he spoke the Emperor took from his table the little bottle of Vasa Murrhina which the lad had given to Arsinoe and which she had sold to the Phoenician, and held it up before the favorite's eyes. Antinous turned pale, and stammered in great confusion. "It is incomprehensible—I cannot in the least recollect—"

"Then I will assist your memory," said the Emperor decidedly. "The Phoenician appears to me to be an honest man than that rogue Gabinius. In his collection, which I have just been to see, I found this gem, that Plotina—do you hear me, boy—that Trajan's wife Plotina, my heart's friend, never to be forgotten, gave me years ago. It was one of my dearest possessions and yet I thought it not too precious to give to you on your last birthday."

"Oh, my lord, my dear lord!" cried Antinous in a low tone and again lifting his eyes and hands in entreaty.

"Now, I ask you," continued Hadrian, gravely, and without allowing himself to yield to the lad's beseeching looks, "how could this object have passed into the possession of one of the daughters of the wretched palace-steward Keraunus from whom Hiram confessed that he had bought it?"

Antinous vainly strove for utterance; Hadrian however came to his aid by asking him more angrily than before:

"Did the girl steal it from you? Out with the truth!"

"No, no," replied the Bithynian quickly and decidedly. "Certainly not. I remember—wait a minute—yes, that was it.—You know it contained excellent balsam, and when the big dog threw down Selene—the steward's daughter is called Selene—threw her down the steps so that she lay hurt on the stones I fetched the phial and gave her the balsam."

"With the bottle that held it?" asked the Emperor looking at Antinous.

"Yes, my lord—I had no other."

"And she kept it and sold it at once."

"You know, of course, her father—"

"A gang of thieves!" snarled Hadrian.

"Do you know what has become of the girl?"

"Yes my lord," said Antinous trembling with alarm. "I will have her taken by the lictors," asserted the infuriated sovereign.

"No," said the lad positively. "No, you positively must not do that."

"No — ? we shall see!"

"No, positively not, for at the same time you must know that Keraunus' daughter Selene —"

"Well?"

"She flung herself into the water in despair; yes, into the water, at night — into the sea."

"Oh!" said Hadrian more gently, "that certainly alters the case. The lictors would find it difficult to apprehend a shade and the girl has suffered the worst punishment of all. — But you? what shall I say to your perfidy? You knew the value of the gem. You knew how highly I valued it, and could part with it to such hands?"

"It contained the salve," stammered the boy. "How could I think?"

The Emperor interrupted the boy, striking his forehead with his hand as he spoke:

"Aye, think — we have known unfortunately too long that thinking is not your strong point. This little bottle has cost me a pretty sum; still, as it once belonged to you I give it back to you again; I only require you to take better care of it this time. I shall ask for it again before long! But in the name of all the gods, boy, what is the matter? Am I so alarming that a simple question from me is enough to drive all the blood out of your cheeks? Really and truly, if I had not had the thing from Plotina I should have left it in the Phoenician's hands and not have made all this coil about it."

Antinous went quickly up to the Emperor to kiss his hand, but Hadrian pressed his lips to his brow with fatherly affection.

"Simpleton," he said, "if you want me to be pleased with you, you must be again just what you were before we came to Alexandria."

Leave it to others to do things to vex me. You are created by the gods to delight me."

During Hadrian's last words a chamberlain had entered the room to inform the Emperor that the deputation of the Egyptian priesthood had arrived to do homage to him. He immediately assumed the purple mantle and proceeded to the hall of the Muses where, surrounded by his court, he received the high-priests and spiritual fathers of the different temples of the Nile Valley, to be hailed by them as the Son of Sun-god, and to assure them and the religion they cherished his gracious countenance. He vouchsafed his consent to their prayer that he would add sanctity and happiness to the temples of the immortals which they served by gracing them with his presence, but set aside for the moment the question as to which town might be permitted to have the care of the recently-discovered Apis.

This audience took up several hours. Verus shirked the duty of attending it with Titianus and the other dignitaries of the court, and remained sitting motionless by the window; it was not till Hadrian was gone from the room that he came forward into it again. He was quite alone, for Antinous had left the room with the Emperor. The praetor's remaining behind had not escaped the lad's notice, but he sought to avoid him, for the domineering, mocking spirit of Verus repelled him. Besides this the terror which he had gone through, as well as the consciousness that he had been guilty of a lie and had daringly deceived his kind master, had upset a soul hitherto untainted by any subterfuge and had thrown him off his balance. He longed to be alone, for it would have been keenly painful to him at this moment to discuss indifferent subjects, or to be forced to affect an easy demeanor. He sat in his little room, before a table, with his face buried in his hands that rested on it.

Verus did not immediately follow him, for he understood what was passing in his mind and knew that here he could not escape him. In a few minutes all was still alike in the large room and in the small one. Then the praetor heard the door between the smaller room and the corridor hastily opened and immediately the Bithynian's exclamation:

"At last, Mastor — have you seen Selene?"

With two long, noiseless steps Verus went close to the door leading into the adjoining room, and listened for the slave's answer, though a less sharp ear than that of the praetor might have heard every syllable.

"How should I have seen her?" asked the Sarmatian sharply. "She is still suffering and in bed. I gave your flowers to the deformed girl who takes care of her; but I will not do it again, you may rely upon it, not if you coax even more fondly than you did yesterday and promise me all Caesar's treasure into the bargain! And what can you want with that wretched, pale-faced, innocent creature? I am but a poor slave, but I can tell you this —"

Here the Sarmatian broke off abruptly, and Verus rightly guessed that Antinous had remembered his presence in the Emperor's room and had signed to the slave to be silent.

But the listener had learnt enough. The favorite had told his master a lie, and the suicide of the steward's daughter was a pure romance. Who would have believed that the silent, dreamy lad had so much presence of mind, and such cunning powers of invention? The praetor's handsome face was radiant with satisfaction as he made these reflections, for now he had the Bithynian under his thumb, and now he knew how to accomplish all he wished. Antinous himself had indicated the right course when he had hastened to the Emperor with a gush of tenderness, in which the warmth was certainly not affected, to kiss his hand.

The favorite loved his master, and Verus could ground his demands on this love without exposing himself, or having to dread the Emperor's avenging hand in case of betrayal. He knocked at the door of the adjoining room with a firm hand, and then went confidently and composedly up to the Bithyman, told him that he had an important matter to discuss with him, begged him to return with him into the Emperor's room and then said, as soon as they were alone together:

"I am so unfortunate as not to be able to number you among my particular friends; but one strong sentiment we have in common. We both love Caesar."

"I love him, certainly," replied the lad.

"Well then, you must have it at heart to spare him all great sorrow, and to prevent grave apprehensions from paralyzing the pinions of his free and noble soul."

"No doubt."

"I knew I should find a colleague in you. See this roll. It contains the calculations and diagrams of the greatest astrologer of our time, and from these it is to be discovered that this night, from the end of the second hour of the morning till the beginning of the fourth, the stars will announce fearful disasters to our Sovereign. Do you understand?"

"Alas! perfectly."

"After that the indications of evil disappear. Now if we could only succeed in preventing Hadrian observing the heavens merely during the third hour after midnight we should preserve him from trouble and anxiety, which will torment and spoil his life. Who knows whether the stars may not be? But even if they tell the truth, misfortune, when it does come, always comes much too soon. Do you agree with me?"

"Your suggestion sounds a very sensible one – still I think –"

"It is both sensible and wise," said the praetor, shortly and decidedly, interrupting the boy. "And it must be your part to hinder Hadrian from marking the course of the stars from the end of the second to the beginning of the fourth hour after midnight."

"My part?" cried Antinous, startled.

"Yours – for you are the only person who can accomplish it."

"I?" repeated the Bithynian, greatly perturbed. "I – disturb Caesar in his observations!"

"It is your duty."

"But he never allows any one to disturb him at his studies, and if I were to attempt it he would be very angry and send me off in no time. No, no, what you ask is impossible."

"It is not only possible but imperatively necessary."

"That it certainly cannot be," replied Antinous, clasping his forehead in his hand. "Only listen! Hadrian has known for several days past that some great misfortune threatens him. I heard it from his own lips. If you know him at all you must know that he gazes at the stars not merely to rejoice in future happiness, but also to fortify himself against the disasters which threaten him or the state. What would crush a weaker man only serves to arm his bold spirit. He can bear all that may befall, and it would be a crime to deceive him."

"To cloud his heart and mind would be a greater," retorted Verus. "Devise some means of taking him away from his star-gazing for only an hour."

"I dare not, and even if I wished it, it could not be done. Do you suppose he follows me whenever I call?"

"But you know him; invent something which will be sure to make him come down from his watchtower."

"I cannot invent or think of any thing."

"Nothing?" asked Verus, going close tip to the Bithynian. "You just now gave striking proof to the contrary."

Antinous turned pale and the praetor went on:

"When you wanted to rescue the fair Selene from the lictors your swift invention threw her into the sea!"

"She did throw herself in, as truly as that the gods —"

"Stay, stay," cried the praetor. "No perjury, at least! Selene is living, you send her flowers, and if I should think proper to conduct Hadrian to the house of Paulina —"



"Oh!" cried Antinous lamentably enough, and grasping the Roman's hand. "You will not—you can not. Oh Verus! you will not do that."

"Simpleton," laughed the praetor, slapping the alarmed youth lightly on the shoulder. "What good could it do me to ruin you? I have only one thing at heart just now, and that is to save Caesar from care and anxiety. Keep him occupied only during the third hour after midnight and you may count on my friendship; but if out of fear or ill-will you refuse me your assistance you do not deserve your sovereign's favor and then you will compel me —"

"No more, no more!" cried Antinous interrupting his tormentor in despair.

"Then you promise me to carry out my wish?"

"Yes, by Hercules! Yes, what you require shall be done. But eternal gods! how am I to get Caesar —"

"That, my young friend, I leave with perfect confidence to you and your shrewdness."

"I am not shrewd—I can devise nothing," groaned the lad.

"What you could do out of terror of your master you can do still better for love of him," retorted the praetor. "The problem is an easy one; and if after all you should not succeed I shall feel it no less than my duty to explain to Hadrian how well Antinous can take care of his own interests and how badly of his master's peace of mind. Till to-morrow, my handsome friend—and if for the future you have flowers to send, my slaves are quite at your service."

With these words the praetor left the room, but Antinous stood like one crushed, pressing his brow against the cold porphyry pillar by the window. What Verus required of him did not seem to have any harm in it, and yet it was not right. It was treason to his noble master, whom he loved with tender devotion as a father, a wise, kind friend, and preceptor, and whom he revered and feared as though he were a god. To plot to hide impending trouble from him, as if he were not a man but a feeble weakling, was absurd and

contemptible, and must introduce an error of unknown importance and extent into his sovereign's far-seeing predeterminations. Many other reasons against the praetor's demands crowded on him, and as each occurred to his mind he cursed his tardy spirit which never let him see or think the right thing till it was too late. His first deceit had already involved him in a second.

He hated himself; he hit his forehead with his fists and sobbed aloud bitterly again and again, though he shed no tears. Still, in the midst of his self-accusation, the flattering voice made itself heard in his soul: "It is only to preserve your master from sorrow, and it is nothing wrong that you are asked to do." And each time that his inward ear heard these words he began to puzzle his brain to discover in what way it might be possible for him to tempt the Emperor, at the hour named, down from his watch-tower in the palace. But he could hit on no practicable plan.

"It cannot be done, no — it cannot be done!" he muttered to himself and then he asked himself if it were not even his duty to defy the praetor and to confess to Hadrian that he had deceived him in the morning. If only it had not been for the little bottle! Could he ever confess that he had heedlessly parted with this gift of all others from his master? No, it was too hard, it might cost him his sovereign's affection for ever. And if he contented himself with a half-truth and confessed, merely to anticipate the praetor's accusation, that Selene was still living, then he would involve the daughters of the hapless Keraunus in persecution and disgrace Selene whom he loved with all the devotion of a first passion, which was enhanced and increased by the hindrances that had come in its way. It was impossible to confess his guilt — quite impossible. The longer he thought, tormenting himself to find some way out of it all, the more confused he became, and the more impotent his efforts at resistance. The praetor had entangled him with thongs and meshes, and at every struggle to escape they only seemed knotted more closely round him.

His head began to ache sadly; and what an endless time Caesar was absent! He dreaded his return, and yet he longed for it. When at last Hadrian came in and signed to Master to relieve him of his imperial robes, Antinous slipped behind him, and silently and

carefully fulfilled the slave's office. He felt uneasy and worried, and yet he forced himself to appear in good spirits during supper when he had to sit opposite the Emperor.

When, shortly before midnight, Hadrian rose from the table to go up to the watch-tower on the northern side of the palace, Antinous begged to be allowed to carry his instruments for him, and the Emperor, stroking his hair, said kindly:

"You are my dear and faithful companion. Youth has a right to go astray now and then so long as it does not entirely forget the path in which it ought to tread."

Antinous was deeply touched by these words, and he secretly pressed to his lips a fold of the Emperor's toga as he walked in front. It was as though he wanted to make amends in advance for the crime he had not yet committed.

Wrapped in his cloak he kept the Emperor silent company during his studies, till the close of the first hour after midnight. The sharp, north wind which blew through the darkness did his aching head good, and still he racked his wits for some pretext to attract Hadrian from his labors, but in vain. His tormented brain was like a dried-up well; bucket after bucket did he send down, but not one brought up the refreshing draught he needed. Nothing – nothing could he think of that could conduce to his end. Once he plucked up courage and said imploringly as he went close up to the Emperor: "Go down earlier to-night my lord; you really do not allow yourself enough rest and will injure your health."

Hadrian let him speak, and answered kindly:

"I sleep in the morning. If you are tired, go to bed now."

But Antinous remained, gazing, like his master, at the stars. He knew very few of the brilliant bodies by their names, but some of them were very dear to him, particularly the Pleiades which his father had pointed out to him and which reminded him of his home. There he had been so quiet and happy, and how wildly his anxious heart was throbbing now!

"Go to bed, the second hour is beginning," said Hadrian.

"Already!" said the boy; and as he reflected how soon that must be done which Verus had required of him, and then looked up again at the heavens, it seemed to him as though all the stars in the blue vault over his head had glided from their places and were dancing in wild and whirling confusion between the sky and the sea. He closed his eyes in his bewilderment; then, bidding his master good-night he lighted a torch and by its flaring and doubtful light descended from the tower.

Pontius had erected this slight structure expressly for Hadrian's nightly observations. It was built of timber and Nile-mud and stood up as a tall turret on the secure foundation of an ancient watch-tower built of hewn stone, which, standing among the low buildings that served as storehouses for the palace, commanded a free outlook over all the quarters of the sky. Hadrian, who liked to be alone and undisturbed when observing the heavens, had preferred this erection—even after he had made himself known to the Alexandrians—to the great observatory of the Serapeum, from which a still broader horizon was visible.

After Antinous had got out of the smaller and newer tower into the larger and older one he sat down on one of the lowest steps to collect his thoughts and to quiet his loudly-beating heart. His vain cogitations began all over again. Time slipped on-between the present moment and the deed to be done there were but a certain number of minutes. He told himself so, and his weary brain stirred more actively, suggesting to him to feign illness and bring the Emperor to his bedside. But Hadrian was physician enough to see that he was well, and even if he should allow himself to be deceived, he, Antinous, was a deceiver. This thought filled him with horror of himself and with dread for the future, and yet it was the only plan that gave any hope of success. And even when he sprang to his feet and walked hastily up and down among the out-houses he could hit upon no other scheme. And how fast the minutes flew! The third hour after midnight must be quite close at hand, and he had scarcely left himself time to rush back into the palace, throw himself on his couch, and call Mastor. Quite bewildered with agitation and tottering like a drunken man he hastened back into the old tower

where he had left his torch leaning against the wall and looked up the stone stairs; it suddenly flashed through his mind that he might go up again to fling himself down them. What did he care for his miserable life.

His fall, his cry, would bring the Emperor down from his observatory and he knew that he would not leave his bleeding favorite uncared for and untended he could count upon that. And if then Hadrian watched by his bed it would be that, perhaps, of a dying man, but not of a deceiver. Fully determined on extreme measures, he tightened the girdle which held his chiton above his hips and once more went out into the night to judge by the stars what hour it was. He saw the slender sickle of the waning moon-the same moon which at the full had been mirrored in the sea when he had gone into the water to save Selene. The image of the pale girl rose before him, tangibly distinct. He felt as if he held her once more in his arms—saw her once more lying on her bed-could once more press his lips to her cold brow. Then the vision vanished; instead he was possessed by a wild desire to see her, and he said to himself that he could not die without having seen her once more.

He looked about him in indecision. Before him lay one of the largest of the storehouses that surrounded the tower. With his torch in one hand he went in at the open door. In the large shed lay the chests and cases, the hemp, linseed, straw and matting that had been used in packing the vessels and works of art with which the palace had been newly furnished. This he knew; and now, looking up at the stars once more and seeing that the second hour after midnight had almost run to an end, a fearful thought flashed through his mind, and without daring to consider, he flung the torch into the open shed, crammed to the roof with inflammable materials, and stood motionless, with his arms crossed, to watch through the door of the shed the rapidly spreading flame, the soaring smoke, the struggle and mingling of the noiseless wreaths of black vapor from the various combustibles with the ruddy light, the victory of the fire and the leaping flames as they flew upward.

The roof, thatched with palm-leaves and reeds, had begun to crackle when Antinous rushed into the tower only a few paces off

crying: "Fire — fire!" and up the stairs which led to the observatory of the imperial stargazer.

## CHAPTER XIV.

The entertainment which Verus was giving on the eve of his birthday seemed to be far from drawing to an end, even at the beginning of the third hour of the morning. Besides the illustrious and learned Romans who had accompanied the Emperor to Alexandria, the most famous and distinguished Alexandrians had also been invited by the praetor. The splendid banquet had long been ended, but jar after jar of mixed wine was still being filled and emptied. Verus himself had been unanimously chosen as the king and leader of the feast. Crowned with a rich garland, he reclined on a couch strewn with rose-leaves, an invention of his own, and formed of four cushions piled one on another. A curtain of transparent gauze screened him from flies and gnats, and a tightly-woven mat of lilies and other flowers covered his feet and exhaled sweet odors for him and for the pretty singer who sat by his side.

Pretty boys dressed as little cupids watched every sign of the 'sham Eros.'

How indolently he lay on the deep, soft cushions! And yet his eyes were every where, and though he had not failed to give due consideration to the preparations for his feast, he devoted all the powers of his mind to the present management of it. As at the entertainments which Hadrian was accustomed to give in Rome, first of all short selections from new essays or poems were recited by their authors, then a gay comedy was performed; then Glycera, the most famous singer in the city, had sung a dithyramb to her harp, in a voice as sweet as a bell, and Alexander, a skilled performer on the trigonon, had executed a piece. Finally a troop of female dancers had rushed into the room and swayed and balanced themselves to the music of the double-flute and tambourine.

Each fresh amusement had been more loudly applauded than the last. With every jar of wine a new torrent of merriment went up through the opening in the roof, by which the scent of the flowers and of the perfume burnt on beautiful little altars found an exit into the open air. The wine offered in libations to the gods already lay in broad pools upon the hard pavement of the hall, the music and singing were drowned in shouts the feast had become an orgy.

Verus was inciting the more quiet or slothful of his guests to a freer enjoyment and encouraging the noisiest in their extravagant recklessness to still more unbridled license. At the same time he bowed to each one who drank to his health, entertained the singer who sat by his side, flung a sparkling jest into one and another silent group, and proved to the learned men who reclined on their couches near to his that whenever it was possible he took an interest in their discussions. Alexandria, the focus of all the learning of the East and the West, had seen other festivals than this riotous banquet. Indeed, even here a vein of grave and wise discourse flavored the meal of the circle that belonged to the Museum; but the senseless revelry of Rome had found its way into the houses of the rich, and even the noblest achievements of the human mind had been made, unawares, subservient to mere enjoyment. A man was a philosopher only that he might be prompt to discuss and always ready to take his share in the talk; and at a banquet a well-told anecdote was more heartily welcome than some profound idea that gave rise to a reflection or provoked a subtle discussion.

What a noise, what a clatter was storming in the hall by the second hour after midnight! How the lungs of the feasters were choked with overpowering perfumes! What repulsive exhibitions met the eye! How shamelessly was all decency trodden under foot! The poisonous breath of unchecked license had blasted the noble moderation of the vapor of wine which floated round this chaos of riotous toppers slowly rose the pale image of Satiety watching for victims on the morrow.

The circle of couches on which lay Florus, Favorinus and their Alexandrian friends stood like an island in the midst of the surging sea of the orgy. Even here the cup had been bravely passed round, and Florus was beginning to speak somewhat indistinctly, but conversation had hitherto had the upper hand.

Two days before, the Emperor had visited the Museum and had carried on learned discussions with the most prominent of the sages and professors there, in the presence of their assembled disciples. At last a formal disputation had arisen, and the dialectic keenness and precision with which Hadrian, in the purest Attic Greek, had succeeded in driving his opponents into a corner had excited the



greatest admiration. The Sovereign had quitted the famous institution with a promise to reopen the contest at an early date. The philosophers, Pancrates and Dionysius and Apollonius, who took no wine at all, were giving a detailed account of the different phases of this remarkable disputation and praising the admirable memory and the ready tongue of the great monarch.

"And you did not even see him at his best," exclaimed Favorinus, the Gaul, the sophist and rhetorician. "He has received an unfavorable oracle and the stars seem to confirm the prophecy. This puts him out of tune. Between ourselves let me tell you I know a few who are his superiors in dialectic, but in his happiest moments he is irresistible-irresistible. Since we made up our quarrel he is like a brother to me. I will defend him against all comers, for, as I say, Hadrian is my brother."

The Gaul had poured out this speech in a defiant tone and with flashing eyes. He grew pale in his cups, touchy, boastful and very talkative.

"No doubt you are right," replied Apollonius, "but it seemed to us that he was bitter in discussion. His eyes are gloomy rather than gay."

"He is my brother," repeated Favorinus, "and as for his eyes, I have seen them flash—by Hercules! like the radiant sun, or merry twinkling stars! And his mouth! I know him well! He is my brother, and I will wager that while he condescended—it is too comical—condescended to dispute with you—with you, there was a sly smile at each corner of his mouth—so—look now—like this he smiled."

"I repeat, he seemed to us gloomy rather than gay," retorted Apollonius, with annoyance; and Pancrates added:

"If he does really know how to jest he certainly did not prove it to us."

"Not out of ill-will," laughed the Gaul, "you do not know him, but I—I am his friend and may follow wherever—he goes. Now only wait and I will tell you a few stories about him. If I chose I could describe his whole soul to you as if it lay there on the surface of the

wine in my cup. Once in Rome he went to inspect the newly-decorated baths of Agrippa, and in the undressing-room he saw an old man, a veteran who had fought with him somewhere or other. My memory is greatly admired, but his is in no respect inferior. Scaurus was the old man's name—yes—yes, Scaurus. He did not observe Caesar at first, for after his bath his wounds were burning and he was rubbing his back against the rough stone of a pillar. Hadrian however called to him: 'Why are you scratching yourself, my friend?' and Scaurus, not at once recognizing Caesar's voice, answered without turning round: 'Because I have no slave to do it for me.' You should have heard Caesar laugh! Liberal as he is sometimes—I say sometimes—he gave Scaurus a handsome sum of money and two sturdy slaves. The story soon got abroad, and when Caesar, who—as you believe—cannot jest, a short time after again visited the bath, two old soldiers at once placed themselves in his way, scrubbed their backs against the wall like Scaurus, and called out to him 'Great Caesar, we have no slaves.'—'Then scratch each other,' cried he, and left the soldiers to rub themselves."

"Capital!" laughed Dionysius. "Now one more true story," interrupted the loquacious Gaul. "Once upon a time a man with white hair begged of him. The wretch was a low fellow, a parasite who wandered round from one man's table to another, feeding himself out of other folks' wallets and dishes. Caesar knew his man and warned him off. Then the creature had his hair dyed that he might not be recognized, and tried his luck a second time with the Emperor. But Hadrian has good eyes; he pointed to the door, saying, with the gravest face: 'I have just lately refused to give your father anything.' And a hundred such jokes pass from mouth to mouth in Rome, and if you like I can give you a dozen of the best."

"Tell us, go on, out with your stories. They are all old friends!" stammered Florus. "But while Favorinus chatters we can drink."

The Gaul cast a contemptuous glance at the Roman, and answered promptly:

"My stories are too good for a drunken man."

Florus paused to think of an answer, but before he could find one, the praetor's body-slave rushed into the hall crying out: "The palace at Lochias is on fire."

Verus kicked the mat of lilies off his feet on to the floor, tore down the net that screened him in, and shouted to the breathless runner.

"My chariot-quick, my chariot! To our next merry meeting another evening my friends, with many thanks for the honor you have done me. I must be off to Lochias."

Verus flew out of the hall, without throwing on his cloak and hot as he was, into the cold night, and at the same time most of his guests had started up to hurry into the open air, to see the fire and to hear the latest news; but only very few went to the scene of the conflagration to help the citizens to extinguish it, and many heavily intoxicated drinkers remained lying on the couches.

As Favorinus and the Alexandrians raised themselves on their pillows Florus cried:

"No god shall make me stir from this place, not if the whole house is burnt down and Alexandria and Rome, and for aught I care every nest and nook on the face of the earth. It may all burn together. The Roman Empire can never be greater or more splendid than under Caesar! It may burn down like a heap of straw, it is all the same to me – I shall lie here and drink."

The turmoil and confusion on the scene of the interrupted feast seemed inextricable, while Verus hurried off to Sabina to inform her of what had occurred. But Balbilla had been the first to discover the fire and quite at the beginning, for after sitting industriously at her studies, and before going to bed, she had looked out toward the sea. She had instantly run out, cried "Fire!" and was now seeking for a chamberlain to awake Sabina.

The whole of Lochias flared and shone in a purple and golden glow. It formed the nucleus of a wide spreading radiance of tender red of which the extent and intensity alternately grew and diminished. Verus met the poetess at the door that led from the

garden into the Empress' apartments. He omitted on this occasion to offer his customary greeting, but hastily asked her:

"Has Sabina been told?"

"I think not yet."

"Then have her called. Greet her from me — I must go to Lochias"

"We will follow you."

"No, stay here; you will be in the way there."

"I do not take much room and I shall go. What a magnificent spectacle."

"Eternal gods! the flames are breaking out too below the palace, by the King's harbor. Where can the chariots be?"

"Take me with you."

"No you must wake the Empress."

"And Lucilla?"

"You women must stay where you are."

"For my part I certainly will not. Caesar will be in no danger?"

"Hardly — the old stones cannot burn."

"Only look! how splendid! the sky is one crimson tent. I entreat you, Verus, let me go with you."

"No, no, pretty one. Men are wanted down there."

"How unkind you are."

"At last! here are the chariots! You women stay here; do you understand me?"

"I will not take any orders; I shall go to Lochias."

"To see Antinous in the flames! such a sight is not to be seen every day, to be sure!" cried Verus, ironically, as he sprang into his chariot, and took the reins into his own hand.

Balbilla stamped with rage.

She went to Sabina's rooms fully resolved to go to the scene of the fire. The Empress would not let herself be seen by any one, not even by Balbilla, till she was completely dressed. A waiting-woman told Balbilla that Sabina would get up certainly, but that for the sake of her health she could not venture out in the night-air.

The poetess then sought Lucilla and begged her to accompany her to Lochias; she was perfectly willing and ready, but when she heard that her husband had wished that the women should remain at the Caesareum she declared that she owed him obedience and tried to keep back her friend. But the perverse curly-haired girl was fully determined, precisely because Verus had forbidden her—and forbidden her with mocking words, to carry out her purpose. After a short altercation with Lucilla she left her, sought her companion Claudia, told her what she intended doing, dismissed that lady's remonstrance with a very positive command, gave orders herself to the house-steward to have horses put to a chariot and reached the imperilled palace an hour and a half after Verus.

An endless, many-headed crowd of people besieged the narrow end of Lochias on the landward side and the harbor wharves below, where some stores and shipyards were in flames. Boats innumerable were crowded round the little peninsula. An attempt was being made, with much shouting, and by the combined exertions of an immense number of men, to get the larger ships afloat which lay at anchor close to the quay of the King's harbor and to place them in security. Every thing far and wide was lighted up as brightly as by day, but with a ruddier and more restless light. The north-east breeze fanned the fire, aggravating the labors of the men who were endeavoring to extinguish it and snatching flakes of flame off every burning mass. Each blazing storehouse was a gigantic torch throwing a broad glare into the darkness of the night. The white marble of the tallest beacon tower in the world, on the island of Pharos, reflected a rosy hue, but its far gleaming light shone pale and colorless. The dark hulls of the larger ships and the flotilla of

boats in the background were afloat in a fiery sea, and the still water under the shore mirrored the illumination in which the whole of Lochias was wrapped.

Balbilla could not tire of admiring this varying scene, in which the most gorgeous hues vied with each other and the intensest light contrasted with the deepest shadows. And she had ample time to dwell on the marvellous picture before her eyes, for her chariot could only proceed slowly, and at a point where the street led up from the King's harbor to the palace, lictors stood in her way and declared positively that any farther advance was out of the question. The horses, much scared by the glare of the fire and the crowd that pressed round them, could hardly be controlled, first rearing and then kicking at the front board of the chariot. The charioteer declared he could no longer be answerable. The people who had hurried to the rescue now began to abuse the women, who ought to have staid at home at the loom rather than come stopping the way for useful citizens.

"There is time enough to go out driving by daylight!" cried one man; and another: "If a spark falls in those curls another conflagration will break out."

The position of the ladies was becoming every instant more unendurable and Balbilla desired the charioteer to turn round; but in the swarming mass of men that filled the street this was easier said than done. One of the horses broke the strap which fastened the yoke that rested on his withers to the pole, started aside and forced back the crowd which now began to scold and scream loudly. Balbilla wanted to spring out of the chariot, but Claudia clung tightly to her and conjured her not to leave her in the lurch in the midst of the danger. The spoilt patrician's daughter was not timid, but on this occasion she would have given much not to have followed Verus. At first she thought, "A delightful adventure! still, it will not be perfect till it is over." But presently her bold experiment lost every trace of charm, and repentance that she had ever undertaken it filled her mind. She was far nearer weeping than laughing already, when a man's deep voice said behind her, in tones of commanding decision:

"Make way there for the pumps; push aside whatever stops the way."

These terrible words reduced Claudia to sinking on to her knees, but Balbilla's quelled courage found fresh wings as she heard them, for she had recognized the voice of Pontius. Now he was close behind the chariot, high on a horse. He then was the man on horseback whom she had seen dashing from the sea-shore up to the higher storehouses that were burning, down to the lake, and hither and thither.

She turned full upon him and called him by his name. He recognized her, tried to pull up his horse as it was dashing forward, and smilingly shook his head at her, as much as to say: "She is a giddy creature and deserves a good scolding; but who could be angry with her?" And then he gave his orders to his subordinates just as if she had been a mere chattel, a bale of goods or something of the kind, and not an heiress of distinction.

"Take out the horses," he cried to the municipal guards; "we can use them for carrying water."—"Help the ladies out of the chariot."—"Take them between you Nonnus and Lucanus."—"Now, stow the chariot in there among the bushes."—"Make way there in front, make way for our pumps." And each of these orders was obeyed as promptly as if it was the word of command given by a general to his well-drilled soldiers.

After the pumps had been fairly started Pontius rode close up to Balbilla and said:

"Caesar is safe and sound. You no doubt wished to see the progress of the fire from a spot near it, and in fact the colors down there are magnificent. I have not time to escort you back to the Caesareum; but follow me. You will be safe in the harbor-guard's stone house, and from the roof you can command a view of Lochias and the whole peninsula. You will have a rare feast for the eye, noble Balbilla; but I beg you not to forget at the same time how many days of honest labor, what rich possessions, how many treasures earned by bitter hardship are being destroyed at this moment. What may delight you will cost bitter tears to many others,

and so let us both hope that this splendid spectacle may now have reached its climax, and soon may come to an end."

"I hope so — I hope it with all my heart!" cried the girl.

"I was sure you would. As soon as possible I will come to look after you. You Nonnus and Lucanus, conduct these noble ladies to the harbor-guard's house.

"Tell him they are intimate friends of the Empress. Only keep the pumps going! Till we meet again Balbilla!" and with these words the architect gave his horse the bridle and made his way through the crowd.

A quarter of an hour later Balbilla was standing on the roof of the little stone guard-house. Claudia was utterly exhausted and incapable of speech. She sat in the dark little parlor below on a rough-hewn wooden bench. But the young Roman now gazed at the fire with different eyes than before. Pontius had made her feel a foe to the flames which only a short time before had filled her with delight as they soared up to the sky, wild and fierce. They still flared up violently, as though they had to climb above the roof; but soon they seemed to be quelled and exhausted, to find it more and more difficult to rise above the black smoke which welled up from the burning mass. Balbilla had looked out for the architect and had soon discovered him, for the man on horseback towered above the crowd. He halted now by one and now by another burning storehouse. Once she lost sight of him for a whole hour, for he had gone to Lochias. Then again he reappeared, and wherever he stayed for a while, the raging element abated its fury.

Without her having perceived it, the wind had changed and the air had become still and much warmer. This circumstance favored the efforts of the citizens trying to extinguish the fire, but Balbilla ascribed it to the foresight of her clever friend when the flames subsided in some places and in others were altogether extinguished. Once she saw that he had a building completely torn down which divided a burning granary from some other storehouses that had been spared, and she understood the object of this order; it cut off the progress of the flames. Another time she saw him high on the top of a rise in the ground. Close before him in a sheet of flame was



a magazine in which were kept tow and casks of resin and pitch. He turned his face full towards it and gave his orders, now on this side, now on that. His figure and that of his horse, which reared uneasily beneath him, were flooded in a crimson glow—a splendid picture! She trembled for him, she gazed in admiration at this calm, resolute, energetic man, and when a blazing beam fell close in front of him and after his frightened horse had danced round and round with him, he forced it to submit to his guidance, the praetor's insinuation recurred to her mind, that she clung to her determination to go to Lochias because she hoped to enjoy the spectacle of Antinous in the flames. Here, before her, was a nobler display, and yet her lively imagination which often, sometimes indeed against her will, gave shape to her formless thoughts—called up the image of the beautiful youth surrounded by the glowing glory which still painted the horizon.

Hour after hour slipped by; the efforts of the thousands who endeavored to extinguish the blaze were crowned by increasing success; one burning mass after another was quenched, if not extinguished, and instead of flames smoke, mingled with sparks, rose from Lochias blacker and blacker—and still Pontius came not to look after her. She could not see any stars for the sky was overcast with clouds, but the beginning of a new day could not be far distant. She was shivering with cold, and her friend's long absence began to annoy her. When, presently, it began to rain in large drops, she went down the ladder that led from the roof and sat down by the fire in the little room where her companion had gone fast asleep.

She had been sitting quite half an hour and gazing dreamily into the warming glow, when she heard the sound of hoofs and Pontius appeared. His face was begrimed, and his voice hoarse with shouting commands for hours. As soon as she saw him Balbilla forgot her vexation, greeted him warmly, and told him how she had watched his every movement; but the eager girl, so readily fired to enthusiasm, could only with the greatest difficulty bring out a few words to express the admiration that his mode of proceeding had so deeply excited in her mind.

She heard him say that his mouth was quite parched and his throat was longing for a draught of some drink, and she—who

usually had every pin she needed handed to her by a slave, and on whom fate had bestowed no living creature whom she could find a pleasure in serving—she, with her own hand dipped a cup of water out of the large clay jar that stood in a corner of the room and offered it to him with a request that he would drink it. He eagerly swallowed the refreshing fluid, and when the little cup was empty Balbilla took it from his hand, refilled it, and gave it him again.

Claudia, who woke up when the architect came in, looked on at her foster-child's unheard-of proceedings with astonishment, shaking her head. When Pontius had drained the third cupful that Balbilla fetched for him he exclaimed, drawing a deep breath:

"That was a drink—I never tasted a better in the whole course of my life."

"Muddy water out of a nasty earthen pitcher!" answered the girl.

"And it tasted better than wine from Byblos out of a golden goblet."

"You had honestly earned the refreshment, and thirst gives flavor to the humblest liquor."

"You forget the hand that gave it me," replied the architect warmly.

Balbilla colored and looked at the floor in confusion, but presently raised her face and said, as gayly and carelessly as ever:

"So that you have been deliciously refreshed; and now that is done you will go home and the poor thirsty soul will once more become the great architect. But before that happens, pray inform us what god it was that brought you hither from Pelusium in the very nick of time when the fire broke out, and how matters look now in the palace at Lochias?"

"My time is short," replied Pontius, and he then rapidly told her that, after he had finished his work at Pelusium, he had returned to Alexandria with the imperial post. As he got out of the chariot at the post-house he observed the reflection of fire over the sea and was immediately after told by a slave that it was the palace that was

burning. There were horses in plenty at the post-house; he had chosen a strong one and had got to the spot before the crowd had collected. How the fire had originated, so far remained undiscovered. "Caesar," he said, "was in the act of observing the heavens when a flame broke out in a store-shed close to the tower. Antinous was the first to detect it, cried 'Fire,' and warned his master. I found Hadrian in the greatest agitation; he charged me to superintend the work of rescuing all that could be saved. At Lochias. Verus helped me greatly and indeed with so much boldness and judgment that I owe very much to him. Caesar himself kept his favorite within the palace, for the poor fellow burned both his hands."

"Oh!" cried Balbilla with eager regret. "How did that happen?"

"When Hadrian and Antinous first came down from the tower they brought with them as many of the instruments and manuscripts as they could carry. When they were at the bottom Caesar observed that a tablet with important calculations had been left lying up above and expressed his regret. Meanwhile the fire had already caught the slightly-built turret and it seemed impossible to get into it again. But the dreamy Bithynian can wake out of his slumbers it would seem, and while Caesar was anxiously watching the burning bundles of flax which the wind kept blowing across to the harbor the rash boy rushed into the burning building, flung the tablet down from the top of the tower and then hurried down the stairs. His bold action would indeed have cost the poor fellow his life if the slave Mastor; who meanwhile had hurried to the spot, had not dragged him down the stone stair of the old tower on which the new one stood and carried him into the open air. He was half suffocated at the top of them and had dropped down senseless."

"But he is alive, the splendid boy, the image of the gods! and he is out of danger?" cried Balbilla, with much anxiety.

"He is quite well; only his hands, as I said, are somewhat burnt, and his hair is singed, but that will grow again."

"His soft, lovely curls!" cried Balbilla. "Let us go home, Claudia. The gardener shall cut a magnificent bunch of roses, and we will send it to Antinous to please him."

"Flowers to a man who does not care about them?" asked Pontius, gravely.

"With what else can women reward men's virtues or do honor to their beauty?" asked Balbilla.

"Our own conscience is the reward of our honest actions, or the laurel wreath from the hand of some famous man."

"And beauty?"

"That of women claims and wins admiration, love too perhaps and flowers—that of men may rejoice the eye, but to do it Honor is a task granted to no mortal woman."

"To whom, then, if I may ask the question?"

"To Art, which makes it immortal."

"But the roses may bring some comfort and pleasure to the suffering youth."

"Then send them—but to the sick boy, and not to the handsome man," retorted Pontius.

Balbilla was silent, and she and her companion followed the architect to the harbor. There he parted from them, putting them into a boat which took them back to the Caesareum through one of the arch-gates under the Heptastadium.

As they were rowed along the younger Roman lady said to the elder:

"Pontius has quite spoilt my fun about the roses. The sick boy is the handsome Antinous all the same, and if anybody could think—well, I shall do just as I please; still it will be best not to cut the nosegay."

## CHAPTER XV.

The town was out of danger; the fire was extinct. Pontius had taken no rest till noonday. Three horses had he tired out and replaced by fresh ones, but his sinewy frame and healthy courage had till now defied every strain. As soon as he could consider his task at an end he went off to his own house, and he needed rest; but in the hall of his residence he already found a number of persons waiting, and who were likely to stand between him and the enjoyment of it.

A man who lives in the midst of important undertakings cannot, with impunity, leave his work to take care of itself for several days. All the claims upon him become pent up, and when he returns home they deluge him like water when the sluice-gates are suddenly opened behind which it has been dammed up.

At least twenty persons, who had heard of the architect's return, were waiting for him in his outer hall, and crowded upon him as soon as he appeared. Among them he saw several who had come on important business, but he felt that he had reached the farthest limit of his strength, and he was determined to secure a little rest at any cost. The grave man's natural consideration, usually so conspicuous, could not hold out against the demands made on his endurance, and he angrily and peevishly pointed to his begrimed face as he made his way through the people waiting for him.

"To-morrow, to-morrow," he cried; "nay, if necessary, to-day, after sunset. But now I need rest. Rest! Rest! Why, you yourselves can see the state I am in."

All—even the master-masons and purveyors who had come on urgent affairs, drew back; only one elderly man, his sister Paulina's house-steward, caught hold of his chiton, stained as it was with smoke and scorched in many places, and said quickly and in a low tone:

"My mistress greets you; she has things to speak of to you which will bear no delay; I am not to leave you till you have promised to go to see her to-day. Our chariot waits for you at the garden-door."

"Send it home," said Pontius, not even civilly; "Paulina must wait a few hours."

"But my orders are to take you with me at once."

"But in this state—so—I cannot go with you," cried the architect with vehemence. "Have you no sort of consideration? And yet—who can tell—well, tell her I will be with her in two hours."

When Pontius had fairly escaped the throng he took a bath; then he had some food brought to him, but even while he ate and drank, he was not unoccupied, for he read the letters which awaited him, and examined some drawings which his assistants had prepared during his absence.

"Give yourself an hour's respite," said the old housekeeper, who had been his nurse and who loved him as her own son.

"I must go to my sister," he answered with a shrug. "We know her of old," said the old woman. "For nothing, and less than nothing, she has sent for you be fore now; and you absolutely need rest. There—are your cushions right—so? And let me ask you, has the humblest stone-carrier so hard a life as you have? Even at meals you never have an hour of peace and comfort. Your poor head is never quiet; the nights are turned into day; something to do, always something to do. If one only knew who it is all for?"

"Aye—who for, indeed?" sighed Pontius, pushing his arm under his head, between it and the pillow. "But, you see, little mother, work must follow rest as surely as day follows night or summer follows winter. The man who has something he loves in the House—a wife and merry children, it may be, for aught I care—who sweeten his hours of rest and make them the best of all the day, he, I say is wise when he tries to prolong them; but his case is not mine —"

"But why is it not yours, my son Pontius?"

"Let me finish my speech. I, as you know full well, do not care for gossip in the bath nor for reclining long over a banquet. In the pauses of my work I am alone, with myself and with you, my very

worthy Leukippe. So the hours of rest are not for me the fairest scenes, but empty waits between the acts of the drama of life; and no reasonable man can find fault with me for trying to abridge them by useful occupation."

"And what is the upshot of this sensible talk? Simply this: you must get married."

Pontius sighed, but Leukippe added eagerly:

"You have not far to look! The most respectable fathers and mothers are running after you and would bring their prettiest daughters into your door."

"A daughter whom I do not know, and who might perhaps spoil the pauses between the acts, which at present I can at any rate turn to some account."

"They say," the old woman went on, "that marriage is a cast of the dice. One throws a high number, another a low one; one wins a wife who is a match for the busy bee, another gets a tiresome gnat. No doubt there is some truth in it; but I have grown grey with my eyes open and I have often seen it happen, that how the marriage turned out depended on the husband. A man like you makes a bee out of a gnat—a bee that brings honey to the hive. Of course a man must choose carefully."

"How, pray?"

"First see the parents and then the child. A girl who has grown up surrounded by good habits, in the house of a sensible father and a virtuous mother—"

"And where in this city am I to find such a miracle? Nay, nay, Leukippe, for the present all shall be left to my old woman. We both do our duty, we are satisfied with each other and—"

"And time is flying," said the housekeeper, interrupting her master in his speech. "You are nearly thirty-five years of age, and the girls"

"Let them be! let them be! They will find other men! Now send Cyrus with my shoes and cloak, and have my litter got ready, for Paulina has been kept waiting long enough."

The way from the architect's house to his sister's was long, and on his way he found ample time for reflection on various matters besides Leukippe's advice to marry. Still, it was a woman's face and form that possessed him heart and soul; at first, however, he did not feel inclined to feast his fancy on Balbilla's image, lovely as it appeared to him; on the contrary, with self-inflicted severity he sought everything in her which could be thought to be opposed to the highest standard of feminine perfections. Nor did he find it difficult to detect many defects and deficiencies in the Roman damsel; still he was forced to admit that they were quite inseparable from her character, and that she would no longer be what she was, if she were wholly free from them. Each of her little weaknesses presently began to appear as an additional charm to the stern man who had himself been brought up in the doctrine of the Stoics.

He had learnt by experience that sorrow must cast its shadow over the existence of every human being; but still, the man to whom it should be vouchsafed to walk through life hand-in-hand with this radiant child of fortune could, as it seemed to him, have nothing to look forward to but pure sunshine. During his journey to Pelusium and his stay there he had often thought of her, and each time that her image had appeared to his inward eye he had felt as though daylight had shone in his soul. To have met her he regarded as the greatest joy of his life, but he dared not aspire to claim her as his own.

He did not undervalue himself and knew that he might well be proud of the position he had won by his own industry and talents; and still she was the grandchild of the man who had had the right to sell his grandfather for mere coin, and was so high-born, rich and distinguished that he would have thought it hardly more audacious to ask the Emperor what he would take for the purple than to woo her. But to shelter her, to warn her, to allow his soul to be refreshed by the sight of her and by her talk — this he felt was permissible, this happiness no one could deprive him of. And this she would grant him — she esteemed him and would give him the right to protect her,



this he felt, with thankfulness and joy. He would, then and there, have gone through the exertions of the last few hours all over again if he could have been certain that he should once more be refreshed with the draught of water from her hand. Only to think of her and of her sweetness seemed greater happiness than the possession of any other woman.

As he got out of his litter at the door of his sister's town-house he shook his head, smiling at himself; for he confessed to himself that the whole of the long distance he had hardly thought of anything but Balbilla.

Paulina's house had but few windows opening upon the street and these belonged to the strangers' rooms, and yet his arrival had been observed. A window at the side of the house, all grown round with creepers, framed in a sweet girlish head which looked down from it inquisitively on the bustle in the street. Pontius did not notice it, but Arsinoe—for it was her pretty face that looked out—at once recognized the architect whom she had seen at Lochias and of whom Pollux had spoken as his friend and patron.

She had now, for a week, been living with the rich widow; she wanted for nothing, and yet her soul longed with all its might to be out in the city, and to inquire for Pollux and his parents, of whom she had heard nothing since the day of her father's death. Her lover was no doubt seeking her with anxiety and sorrow; but how was he to find her?

Three days after her arrival she had discovered the little window from which she had a view of the street. There was plenty to be seen, for it led to the Hippodrome and was never empty of foot-passengers and chariots that were proceeding thither or to Necropolis. No doubt it was a pleasure to her to watch the fine horses and garlanded youths and men who passed by Paulina's house; but it was not merely to amuse herself that she went to the bowery little opening; no, she hoped, on the contrary, that she might once see her Pollux, his father, his mother, his bother Teuker or some one else they knew pass by her new home. Then she might perhaps succeed in calling them, in asking what had become of her friends, and in begging them to let her lover know where to seek her.

Her adoptive mother had twice found her at the window and had forbidden her, not unkindly but very positively, to look out into the street. Arsinoe had followed her unresistingly into the interior of the house, but as soon as she knew that Paulina was out or engaged, she slipped back to the window again and looked out for him, who must at every hour of the day be thinking of her. And she was not happy amid her new and wealthy surroundings. At first she had found it very pleasant to stretch her limbs on Paulina's soft cushions, not to stir a finger to help herself, to eat the best of food and to have neither to attend to the children nor to labor in the horrible papyrus-factory; but by the third day she pined for liberty—and still more for the children, for Selene and Pollux. Once she went out driving with Paulina in a covered carriage for the first time in her life. As the horses started she had enjoyed the rapid movement and had leaned out at one side to see the houses and men flying past her; but Paulina had regarded this as not correct—as she did so many other things that she herself thought right and permissible—had desired her to draw in her head, and had told her that a well-conducted girl must sit with her eyes in her lap when out driving.

Paulina was kind, never was irritable, had her dressed and waited upon like her own daughter, kissed her in the morning and when she bid her good-night; and yet Arsinoe had never once thought of Paulina's demand that she should love her. The proud woman, who was so cool in all the friendly relations of life, and who, as she felt was always watching her, was to her only a stranger who had her in her power. The fairest sentiments of her soul she must always keep locked up from her.

Once, when Paulina, with tears in her eyes had spoken to her of her lost daughter, Arsinoe had been softened and following the impulse of her heart, had confided to her that she loved Pollux the sculptor and hoped to be his wife.

"You love a maker of images!" Paulina had exclaimed, with as much horror as if she had seen a toad; then she had paced uneasily up and down and had added with her usual calm decision:

"No, no, my child! you will forget all this as soon as possible; I know of a nobler Bridegroom for you; when once you have learned

to know Him you will never long for any other. Have you seen one single image in this house?"

"No," replied Arsinoe, "but so far as regards Pollux —"

"Listen to me" said the widow, "have I not told you of our loving Father in Heaven? Have I not told you that the gods of the heathen are unreal beings which the vain imaginings of fools have endowed with all the weaknesses and crimes of humanity? Can you not understand how silly it is to pray to stones? What power can reside in these frail figures of brass or marble?"

"Idols we call them. He who carves them, serves them and offers sacrifice to them; aye and a great sacrifice, for he devotes his best powers, to their service. Do you understand me?"

"No — Art is certainly a lofty thing, and Pollux is a good man, full of the divinity as he works."

"Wait a while, only wait — you will soon learn to understand," Paulina had answered, drawing Arsinoe towards her, and had added, at first speaking gently but then more sternly: "Now go to bed and pray to your gracious Father in Heaven that he may enlighten your heart. You must forget the carved image-maker, and I forbid you ever to speak in my presence again of such a man."

Arsinoe had grown up a heathen, she clung with affection to the gods of her fathers and hoped for happier days after the first bitterness of the loss of her father and the separation from her brothers and sisters was past. She was little disposed to sacrifice her young love and all her earthly happiness for spiritual advantages of which she scarcely comprehended the value. Her father had always spoken of the Christians with hatred and contempt. She now saw that they could be kind and helpful, and the doctrine that there was a loving God in Heaven who cared for all men as his children appealed to her soul; but that we ought to forgive our enemies, to remember our sins, and to repent of them, and to regard all the pleasure and amusement which the gay city of Alexandria could offer as base and worthless — this was absurd and foolish.

And what great sins had she committed? Could a loving God require of her that she should mar all her best days because as a child she had pilfered a cake or broken a pitcher; or, as she grew older had sometimes been obstinate or disobedient? Surely not. And then was an artist, a kind faithful soul like her tall Pollux, to be odious in the eyes of God the Father of all, because he was able to make such wonderful things as that head of her mother, for instance? If this really was so she would rather, a thousand times rather, lift her hands in prayer to the smiling Aphrodite, roguish Eros, beautiful Apollo, and all the nine Muses who protected her Pollux, than to Him.

An obscure aversion rose up in her soul against the stern woman who could not understand her, and of whose teaching and admonitions she scarcely took in half; and she rejected many a word of the widow's which might otherwise easily have found room in her heart, only because it was spoken by the cold-mannered woman who at every hour seemed to try to lay some fresh restraint upon her.

Paulina had never yet taken her with her to of the Christian assemblies in her suburban villa; wished first to prepare her and to open her soul to salvation. In this task no teacher of the congregation should assist her. She, and she alone, should win to the Redeemer the soul of this fair creature that had walked so resolutely in the ways of the heathen; this was required of her as the condition of the covenant that she felt she had made with Him, it was with the price of this labor that she hoped to purchase her own child's eternal happiness. Day after day she had Arsinoe into her own room, that was decked with flowers and with Christian symbols, and devoted several hours to her instruction. But her disciple proved less impressionable and less attentive every day; while Paulina was speaking Arsinoe was thinking of Pollux, of the children, of the festival prepared for the Emperor or of the beautiful dress she was to have worn as Roxana. She wondered what young girl would fill her place, and how she could ever hope to see her lover again. And it was the same during Paulina's prayers as during her instruction, prayers that often lasted more than hour, and which she had to attend, on her knees on Wednesday and Friday, and with hands uplifted on all the other days of the week.

When her adoptive mother had discovered how often she looked out into the street she thought she had found out the reason of her pupil's distracted attention and only waited the return of her brother, the architect, in order to have the window blocked up.

As Pontius entered the lofty hall of his sister's house, Arsinoe came to meet him. Her cheeks were flushed, she had hurried to fly down as fast as possible from her window to the ground floor, in order to speak to the architect before he went into the inner rooms or had talked with his sister, and she looked lovelier than ever. Pontius gazed at her with delight. He knew that he had seen this sweet face before, but he could not at once remember where; for a face we have met with only incidentally is not easily recognized when we find it again where we do not expect it.

Arsinoe did not give him time to speak to her, for she went straight up to him, greeted him, and asked timidly:

"You do not remember who I am?"

"Yes, yes," said the architect, "and yet — for the moment —"

"I am the daughter of Keraunus, the palace-steward at Lochias, but you know of course!"

"To be sure, to be sure! Arsinoe is your name; I was asking to-day after your father and heard to my great regret —"

"He is dead."

"Poor child! How everything has changed in the old palace since I went away. The gate-house is swept away, there is a new steward and there-but, tell me how came you here?"

"My father left us nothing and Christians took it in. There were eight of us."

"And my sister shelters you all?"

"No, no; one has been taken into one house and others into others. We shall never be together again." And as she spoke the tears ran

down Arsinoe's cheeks; but she promptly recovered herself, and before Pontius could express his sympathy she went on:

"I want to ask of you a favor; let me speak before any one disturbs us."

"Speak, my child."

"You know Pollux — the sculptor Pollux?"

"Certainly."

"And you were always kindly disposed toward him?"

"He is a good man and an excellent artist."

"Aye that he is, and besides all that — may I tell you something and will you stand by me?"

"Gladly, so far as lies in my power."

Arsinoe looked down at the ground in charming and blushing confusion and said in a low tone:

"We love each other — I am to be his wife."

"Accept my best wishes."

"Ah, if only we had got as far as that! But since my father's death we have not seen each other. I do not know where he and his parents are, and how are they ever to find me here?"

"Write to him."

"I cannot write well, and even if I could my messenger —"

"Has my sister had any search made for him?"

"No — oh, no. I may not even let his name pass my lips. She wants to give me to some one else; she says that making statues is hateful to the God of the Christians."

"Does she? And you want me to seek your lover?"

"Yes, yes, my dear lord! and if you find him tell him I shall be alone to-morrow early, and again towards evening, every day indeed, for then your sister goes to serve her God in her country house."

"So you want to make me a lover's go-between. You could not find a more inexperienced one."

"Ah! noble Pontius, if you have a heart —"

"Let me speak to the end, child! I will seek your lover, and if I find him he shall know where you are, but I cannot and will not invite him to an assignation here behind my sister's back. He shall come openly to Paulina and prefer his suit. If she refuses her consent I will try to take the matter in hand with Paulina. Are you satisfied with this?"

"I must need be. And tell me, you will let me know when you have found out where he and his parents have gone?"

"That I promise you. And now tell the one thing. Are you happy in this house?"

Arsinoe looked down in some embarrassment, then she hastily shook her head in vehement negation and hurried away. Pontius looked after her with compassion and sympathy.

"Poor, pretty little creature!" he murmured to himself, and went on to his sister's room.

The house-steward had announced his visit, and Paulina met him on the threshold. In his sister's sitting-room the architect found Eumenes, the bishop, a dignified old man with clear, kind eyes.

"Your name is in everybody's mouth to-day," said Paulina, "after the usual greetings. They say you did wonders last night."

"I got home very tired," said Pontius, "but as you so pressingly desired to speak to me, I shortened my hours of rest."

"How sorry I am!" exclaimed the widow.

The bishop perceived that the brother and sister had business to discuss together, and asked whether he were not interrupting it.

"On the contrary," cried Paulina. "The subject under discussion is my newly-adopted daughter who, unhappily, has her head full of silly and useless things. She tells me she has seen you at Lochias, Pontius."

"Yes, I know the pretty child."

"Yes, she is lovely to look upon," said the widow. "But her heart and mind have been left wholly untrained, and in her the doctrine falls upon stony ground, for she avails herself of every unoccupied moment to stare at the horsemen and chariots that pass on the way to the Hippodrome. By this inquisitive gaping she fills her head with a thousand useless and distracting fancies; I am not always at home, and so it will be best to have the pernicious window walled up."

"And did you send for me only to have that done?" cried Pontius, much annoyed. "Your house-slaves, I should think, might have been equal to that without my assistance."

"Perhaps, but then the wall would have to be freshly whitewashed—I know how obliging you always are."

"Thank you very much. To-morrow I will send you two regular workmen."

"Nay, to-day, at once if possible."

"Are you in such pressing haste to spoil the poor child's amusement? And besides I cannot but think that it is not to stare at the horsemen and chariots that she looks out, but to see her worthy lover."

"So much the worse. I was telling you, Eumenes, that a sculptor wants to marry her."

"She is a heathen," replied the bishop.



"But on the road to salvation," answered Paulina. "But we will speak of that presently. There is still something else to discuss, Pontius. The hall of my country villa must be enlarged."

"Then send me the plans."

"They are in the book-room of my late husband." The architect left his sister to go into the library, which he knew well.

As soon as the bishop was left alone with Paulina, he shook his head and said:

"If I judge rightly, my dear sister, you are going the wrong way to work in leading this child intrusted to your care. Not all are called, and rebellious hearts must be led along the path of salvation with a gentle hand, not dragged and driven. Why do you cut off this girl, who still stands with both feet in the world, from all that can give her pleasure? Allow the young creature to enjoy every permitted pleasure which can add to the joys of life in youth. Do not hurt Arsinoe needlessly, do not let her feel the hand that guides her. First teach her to love you from her heart, and when she knows nothing dearer than you, a request from you will be worth more than bolts or walled-up windows."

"At first I wished nothing more than that she should love me," interrupted Paulina.

"But have you proved her? Do you see in her the spark which may be fanned to a flame? Have you detected in her the germ which may possibly grow to a strong desire for salvation and to devotion to the Redeemer?"

"That germ exists in every heart-these are your own words."

"But in many of the heathen it is deeply buried in sand and stories; and do you feel yourself equal to clearing them away without injury to the seed or to the soil in which it lies?"

"I do, and I will win Arsinoe to Jesus Christ," said Paulina firmly.

Pontius interrupted the conversation; he remained with his sister some time longer discussing with her and with Eumenes the new

building to be done at her country house; then he and the bishop left at the same time and Pontius proceeded to the scene of the fire by the harbor and in the old palace.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Pontius did not find the Emperor at Lochias, for Hadrian had moved at mid-day to the Caesareum. The strong smell of burning in every room in the palace had sickened him and he had begun to regard the restored building as a doomed scene of disaster. The architect was waited for with much anxiety, for the rooms originally furnished for the Emperor in the Caesareum had been despoiled and disarranged to decorate the rooms at Lochias, and Pontius was wanted to superintend their immediate rehabilitation. A chariot was waiting for him and there was no lack of slaves, so he began this fresh task at once and devoted himself to it till late at night. It was in vain this time that his anteroom was filled with people waiting for his return.

Hadrian had retired to some rooms which formed part of his wife's apartments. He was in a grave mood, and when the prefect Titianus was announced he kept him waiting till, with his own hand, he had laid a fresh dressing on his favorite's burns.

"Go now, my lord," begged the Bithynian, when the Emperor had finished his task with all the skill of a surgeon: "Titianus has been walking up and down in there for the last quarter of an hour."

"And so he may," said the monarch. "And if the whole world is shrieking for me it must wait till these faithful hands have had their due. Yes, my boy! we will wander on through life together, inseparable comrades. Others indeed do the same, and each one who goes through life side by side with a companion sharing all he enjoys or suffers, comes to think at last that he knows him as he knows himself; still the inmost core of his friend's nature remains concealed from him. Then, some day Fate lets a storm come raging down upon them; the last veil is torn, under the wanderer's eyes, from the very heart of his companion, and at last he really sees him as he is, like a kernel stripped of its shell, a bare and naked body. Last night such a blast swept over us and let me see the heart of my Antinous, as plainly as this hand I hold before my eyes. Yes, yes, yes! for the man who will risk his young and happy existence for a thing his friend holds precious would sacrifice ten lives if he had them, for his friend's person. Never, my friend, shall that night be forgotten. It gives you the right to do much that might pain me, and

has graven your name on my heart, the foremost among those to whom I am indebted for any benefit. — They are but few."

Hadrian held out his hand to Antinous as he spoke. The boy, who had kept his eyes fixed on the ground in much confusion, raised it to his lips and pressed it against them in violent agitation. Then he raised his large eyes to the Emperor's and said:

"You must not speak to me so kindly, for I do not deserve such goodness. What is my life after all? I would let it go, as a child leaves go of a beetle it has caught, to spare you one single anxious day."

"I know it," answered Hadrian firmly, and he went to the prefect in the adjoining room.

Titianus had come in obedience to Hadrian's orders; the matter to be settled was what indemnification was to be paid to the city and to the individual owners of the storehouses that had been destroyed, for Hadrian had caused a decree to be proclaimed that no one should suffer any loss through a misfortune sent by the gods and which had originated in his residence. The prefect had already instituted the necessary inquiries and the private secretaries, Phlegon, Heliodorus and Celer, were now charged with the duty of addressing documents to the injured parties in which they were invited, in the name of Caesar, to declare the truth as to the amount of the loss they had suffered. Titianus also brought the information that the Greeks and Jews had determined to express their thankfulness for Caesar's preservation by great thank-offerings.

"And the Christians," asked Hadrian.

"They abominate the sacrifice of animals, but they will unite in a common act of thanksgiving."

"Their gratitude will not cost them much," said Hadrian.

"Their bishop, Eumenes, brought me a sum of money for which a hundred oxen might be bought, to distribute among the poor. He said the God of the Christians is a spirit and requires none but spiritual sacrifices; that the best offering a man can bring him is a prayer prompted by the spirit and proceeding from a loving heart."

"That sounds very well for us," said Hadrian. "But it will not do for the people. Philosophical doctrines do not tend to piety; the populace need visible gods and tangible sacrifices. Are the Christians here good citizens and devoted to the welfare of the state?"

"We need no courts of justice for them."

"Then take their money and distribute it among the needy; but I must forbid their meeting for a general thanksgiving; they may raise their hands to their great spirit in my behalf, in private. Their doctrine must not be brought into publicity; it is not devoid of a delusive charm and it is indispensable to the safety of the state that the mob should remain faithful to the old gods and sacrifices."

"As you command, Caesar."

"You know the account given of the Christians by Pliny and Trajan?"

"And Trajan's answer."

"Well then let us leave them to follow their own devices in private after their own fashion; only they must not commit any breach of the laws of the state nor force themselves into publicity. As soon as they show any disposition to refuse to the old gods the respect that is due to them, or to raise a finger against them, severity must be exercised and every excess must be punished by death."

During this conversation Verus had entered the room; he was following the Emperor everywhere to-day for he hoped to hear him say a word as to his observation of the heavens, and yet he did not dare to ask him what he had discovered from them.

When he saw that Hadrian was occupied he made a chamberlain conduct him to Antinous. The favorite turned pale as he saw the praetor, still he retained enough presence of mind to wish him all happiness on his birthday. It did not escape Verus that his presence had startled the lad; he therefore plied him at first with indifferent questions, introduced pleasing anecdotes into his conversation and then, when he had gained his purpose, he added carelessly:

"I must thank you in the name of the state and of every friend of Caesar's. You carried out your undertaking well to the end, though by somewhat overpowering means."

"I entreat you say no more," interrupted Antinous eagerly, and looking anxiously at the door of the next room.

"Oh! I would have sacrificed all Alexandria to preserve Caesar's mind from gloom and care. Besides we have both paid dearly for our good intentions and for those wretched sheds."

"Pray talk of something else."

"You sit there with your hands bound up and your hair singed, and I feel very unwell."

"Hadrian said you had helped valiantly in the rescue."

"I was sorry for the poor rats whose gathered store of provisions the flames were so rapidly devouring, and all hot as I was from my supper, I flung myself in among the men who were extinguishing the fire. My first reward was a bath of cold, icy-cold sea-water, which was poured over my head out of a full skin. All doctrines of ethics are in disgrace with me, and I have long considered all the dramatic poets, in whose pieces virtue is rewarded and crime punished, as a pack of fools; for my pleasantest hours are all due to my worst deeds; and sheer annoyance and misery, to my best. No hyena can laugh more hoarsely than I now speak; some portion of me inside here, seems to have been turned into a hedgehog whose spines prick and hurt me, and all this because I allowed myself to be led away into doing things which the moralists laud as virtuous."

"You cough, and you do not look well. He down awhile."

"On my birthday? No, my young friend. And now let me just ask you before I go: Can you tell me what Hadrian read in the stars?"

"No."

"Not even if I put my Perseus at your orders for every thing you may require of him? The man knows Alexandria and is as dumb as a fish."

"Not even then, for what I do not know I cannot tell. We are both of us ill, and I tell you once more you will be wise to take care of yourself." Verus left the room, and Antinous watched him go with much relief.

The praetor's visit had filled him with disquietude, and had added to the dislike he felt for him. He knew that he had been used to base ends by Verus, for Hadrian had told him so much as that he had gone up to the observatory not to question the stars for himself but to cast the praetor's horoscope, and that he had informed Verus of his intention.

There was no excuse, no forgiveness possible for the deed he had done; to please that dissolute coxcomb, that mocking hypocrite, he had become a traitor to his master and an incendiary, and must endure to be overwhelmed with praises and thanks by the greatest and most keen-sighted of men. He hated, he abhorred himself, and asked himself why the fire which had blazed around him had been satisfied only to inflict slight injuries on his hands and hair. When Hadrian returned to him he asked his permission to go to bed. The Emperor gladly granted it, ordered Mastor to watch by his side, and then agreed to his wife's request that he would visit her.

Sabina had not been to the scene of the fire, but she had sent a messenger every hour to inquire as to the progress of the conflagration and the well-being of her husband. When he had first arrived at the Caesareum she had met and welcomed him and then had retired to her own apartments.

It wanted only two hours of midnight when Hadrian entered her room; he found her reclining on a couch without the jewels she usually wore in the daytime but dressed as for a banquet.

"You wished to speak with me?" said the Emperor. "Yes, and this day—so full of remarkable events as it has been—has also a remarkable close since I have not wished in vain."

"You so rarely give me the opportunity of gratifying a wish."

"And do you complain of that?"

"I might – for instead of wishing you are wont to demand."

"Let us cease this strife of idle words."

"Willingly. With what object did you send for me?"

"Verus is to-day keeping his birthday."

"And you would like to know what the stars promise him?"

"Rather how the signs in the heavens have disposed you towards him."

"I had but little time to consider what I saw. But at any rate the stars promise him a brilliant future."

A gleam of joy shone in Sabina's eyes, but she forced herself to keep calm and asked, indifferently:

"You admit that, and yet you can come to no decision?"

"Then you want to hear the decisive word spoken at once, to-day?"

"You know that without my answering you."

"Well, then, his star outshines mine and compels me to be on my guard against him."

"How mean! You are afraid of the praetor?"

"No, but of his fortune which is bound up with you?"

"When he is our son his greatness will be ours."

"By no means, since if I make him what you wish him to be, he will certainly try to make our greatness his. Destiny –"

"You said it favored him; but unfortunately I must dispute the statement."

"You? Do you try too, to read the stars?"



"No, I leave that to men. Have you heard of Ammonius, the astrologer?"

"Yes. A very learned man who observes from the tower of the Serapeum, and who, like many of his fellows in this city has made use of his art to accumulate a large fortune."

"No less a man than the astronomer Claudius Ptolemaeus referred me to him."

"The best of recommendation."

"Well, then, I commissioned Ammonius to cast the horoscope for Verus during the past night and he brought it to me with an explanatory key. Here it is."

The Emperor hastily seized the tablet which Sabina held out to him, and as he attentively examined the forecasts, arranged in order according to the hours, he said:

"Quite right. That of course did not escape me! Well done, exactly the same as my own observations—but here—stay—here comes the third hour, at the beginning of which I was interrupted. Eternal gods! what have we here?"

The Emperor held the wax tablet prepared by Ammonius at arm's length from his eyes and never parted his lips again till he had come to the end of the last hour of the night. Then he dropped the hand that held the horoscope, saying with a shudder:

"A hideous destiny. Horace was right in saying the highest towers fall with the greatest crash."

"The tower of which you speak," said Sabina, "is that darling of fortune of whom you are afraid. Vouchsafe then to Verus a brief space of happiness before the horrible end you foresee for him."

While she spoke Hadrian sat with his eyes thoughtfully fixed on the ground, and then, standing in front of his wife, he replied:

"If no sinister catastrophe falls upon this man, the stars and the fate of men have no more to do with one another than the sea with

the heart of the desert, than the throb of men's pulses with the pebbles in the brook. If Ammonius has erred ten times over still more than ten signs remain on this tablet, hostile and fatal to the praetor. I grieve for Verus — but the state suffers with the sovereign's misfortunes. — This man can never be my successor."

"No?" asked Sabina rising from her couch. "No? Not when you have seen that your own star outlives his? Not though a glance at this tablet shows you that when he is nothing but ashes the world will still continue long to obey your nod?"

"Compose yourself and give me time. — Yes, I still say not even so."

"Not even so," repeated Sabina sullenly. Then, collecting herself, she asked in a tone of vehement entreaty:

"Not even so — not even if I lift my hands to you in supplication and cry in your face that you and Fate have grudged me the blessing, the happiness, the crown and aim of a woman's life, and I must and I will attain it; I must and I will once, if only for a short time, hear myself called by some dear lips by the name which gives the veriest beggar-woman with her infant in her arms preeminence above the Empress who has never stood by a child's cradle. I must and I will, before I die, be a mother, be called mother and be able to say, 'my child, my son — our son.'" And as she spoke she sobbed aloud and covered her face with her hands.

The Emperor drew back a step from his wife. A miracle had been wrought before his eyes. Sabina — in whose eyes no tear had ever been seen — Sabina was weeping, Sabina had a heart like other women. Greatly astonished and deeply moved he saw her turn from him, utterly shaken by the agitation of her feelings, and sink on her knees by the side of the couch she had quitted to hide her face in the cushions. He stood motionless by her side, but presently going nearer to her:

"Stand up, Sabina," he said. "Your desire is a just one. You shall have the son for whom your soul longs."

The Empress rose and a grateful look in her eyes, swimming in tears, met his glance. Sabina could smile too, she could look sweet! It had taken a lifetime, it had needed such a moment as this to reveal it to Hadrian.

He silently drew a seat towards her and sat down by her side; for some time he sat with her hand clasped in his, in silence. Then he let it go and said kindly:

"And will Verus fulfil all you expect of a son?" She nodded assent.

"What makes you so confident of that?" asked the Emperor. "He is a Roman and not lacking in brilliant and estimable gifts. A man who shows such mettle alike in the field and in the council-chamber and yet can play the part of Eros with such success will also know how to wear the purple without disgracing it. But he has his mother's light blood, and his heart flutters hither and thither."

"Let him be as he is. We understand each other and he is the only man on whose disposition I can build, on whose fidelity I can count as securely as if he were my favorite son."

"And on what facts is this confidence based?"

"You will understand me, for you are not blind to the signs which Fate vouchsafes to us. Have you time to listen to a short story?"

"The night is yet young."

"Then I will tell you. Forgive me if I begin with things that seem dead and gone; but they are not, for they live and work in me to this hour. I know that you yourself did not choose me for your wife. Plotina chose me for you — she loved you, whether your regard for her was for the beautiful woman or for the wife of Caesar to whom everything belonged that you had to look for — how should I know?"

"It was Plotina, the woman, that I honored and loved —"

"In choosing me she chose you a wife who was tall and so fitted to wear the purple, but who was never beautiful. She knew me well and she knew that I was less apt than any other woman to win hearts; in my parents' house no child ever enjoyed so slender a share

of the gifts of love, and none can know better than you that my husband did not spoil me with tenderness."

"I could repent of it at this moment."

"It would be too late now. But I will not be bitter—no, indeed I will not. And yet if you are to understand me I must own that so long as I was young I longed bitterly for the love which no one offered me."

"And you yourself have never loved?"

"No—but it pained me that I could not. In Plotina's apartments I often saw the children of her relations, and many a time I tried to attract them to me, but while they would play confidently with other women they seemed to shun me. Soon I even grew cross to them—only our Verus, the little son of Celonius Commodus, would give me frank answers when I spoke to him, and would bring me his broken toys that I might mend their injuries. And so I got to love the child."

"He was a wonderfully sweet, attractive boy."

"He was indeed. One day we women were all sitting together in Caesar's garden. Verus came running out with a particularly fine apple that Trajan himself had given him. The rosy-cheeked fruit was admired by every one. Then Plotina, in fun took the apple out of the boy's hand and asked him if he would not give his apple to her. He looked at her with wide-open puzzled eyes, shook his curly head, ran up to me and gave me—yes, me, and no one else—the fruit, throwing his arms round my neck and saying, 'Sabina you shall have it.'"

"The judgment of Paris."

"Nay, do not jest now. This action of an unselfish child gave me courage to endure the troubles of life. I knew now that there was one creature that loved me, and that one repaid all that I felt for him, all that I was never weary of doing for him with affectionate liking. He is the only being, of whom I know, that will weep when I die. Give him the right to call me his mother and make him our son."

"He is our son," said Hadrian, with dignified gravity, and held out his hand to Sabina. She tried to lift it to her lips but he drew it away and went on:

"Inform him that we accept him as our son. His wife is the daughter of Nigrinus – who had to go, as I desired to stay and stand firm. You do not love Lucilla, but we must both admire her for I do not know another woman in Rome whose virtue a man might vouch for. Besides, I owe her a father, and am glad to have such a daughter; thus we shall be blessed with children. Whether I shall appoint Verus my successor and proclaim to the world who shall be its future ruler I cannot now decide; for that I need a calmer hour. Till to-morrow, Sabina. This day began with a misfortune; may the deed with which we have combined to end it prosper and bring us happiness."

## CHAPTER XVII.

There are often fine warm days in February, but those who fancy the spring has come find themselves deceived. The bitter, hard Sabina could at times let soft and tender emotions get the mastery over her, but as soon as the longing of her languishing soul for maternal happiness was gratified, she closed her heart again and extinguished the fire that had warmed it. Every one who approached her, even her husband, felt himself chilled and repelled again by her manner.

Verus was ill. The first symptoms of a liver complaint which his physicians had warned him might ensue, if he, an European, persisted in his dissipated life at Alexandria as if it were Rome, now began to occasion him many uneasy hours, and this, the first physical pain that fate had ever inflicted on him, he bore with the utmost impatience. Even the great news which Sabina brought him, realizing his boldest aspirations, had no power to reconcile him to the new sensation of being ill. He learnt, at the same time, that Hadrian's alarm at the transcendent brightness of his star had nearly cost him his adoption, and as he firmly believed that he had brought on his sufferings by his efforts to extinguish the fire that Antinous had kindled, he bitterly rued his treacherous interference with the Emperor's calculations. Men are always ready to cast any burden, and especially that of a fault they have committed, on to the shoulders of another; and so the suffering praetor cursed Antinous and the learning of Simeon Ben Jochai, because, if it had not been for them the mischievous folly which had spoilt his pleasure in life would never have been committed.

Hadrian had requested the Alexandrians to postpone the theatrical displays and processions that they had prepared for him, as his observations as to the course of destiny during the coming year were not yet complete. Every evening he ascended the lofty observatory of the Serapeum and gazed from thence at the stars. His labors ended on the tenth of January; on the eleventh the festivities began. They lasted through many days, and by the desire of the praetor the pretty daughter of Apollodorus the Jew was chosen to represent Roxana. Everything that the Alexandrians had prepared to do honor to their sovereign was magnificent and costly. So many

ships had never before been engaged in any Naumachia as were destroyed here in the sham sea-fight, no greater number of wild beasts had ever been seen together on any occasion even in the Roman Circus; and how bloody were the fights of the gladiators, in which black and white combatants afforded a varied excitement for both heart and senses. In the processions, the different elements which were supplied by the great central metropolis of Egyptian, Greek and Oriental culture afforded such a variety of food for the eye that, in spite of their interminable length, the effect was less fatiguing than the Romans had feared. The performances of the tragedies and comedies were equally rich in startling effects; conflagrations and floods were introduced and gave the Alexandrian actors the opportunity of displaying their talents with such brilliant success that Hadrian and his companions were forced to acknowledge that even in Rome and Athens they had never witnessed any representations equally perfect.

A piece by the Jewish author Ezekiel who, under the Ptolemies, wrote dramas in the Greek language of which the subject was taken from the history of his own people, particularly claimed the Emperor's attention.

Titianus during all this festive season was unluckily suffering from an attack of old-standing breathlessness, and he also had his hands full; at the same time he did his best in helping Pontius in seeking out the sculptor Pollux. Both men did their utmost, but though they soon were able to find Euphorion and dame Doris, every trace of their son had vanished. Papias, the former employer of the man who had disappeared, was no longer in the city, having been sent by Hadrian to Italy to execute centaurs and other figures to decorate his villa at Tibur. His wife who remained at home, declared that she knew nothing of Pollux but that he had abruptly quitted her husband's service. The unfortunate man's fellow-workmen could give no news of him whatever, for not one of them had been present when he was seized; Papias had had foresight enough to have the man he dreaded placed in security without the presence of any witnesses. Neither the prefect nor the architect thought of seeking the worthy fellow in prison, and even if they had done so they would hardly have found him, for Pollux was not kept in durance in Alexandria itself. The prisons of the city had

overflowed after the night of the holiday and he had been transferred to Canopus and there detained and brought up for trial.

Pollux had unhesitatingly owned to having taken the silver quiver and to having been very angry at his master's accusation. Thus he produced from the first an unfavorable impression on the judge, who esteemed Papias as a wealthy man, universally respected. The accused had hardly been allowed to speak at all and judgment was immediately pronounced against him, on the strength of his master's accusation and his own admissions. It would have been sheer waste of time to listen to the romances with which this audacious rascal – who forgot all the respect he owed to his teacher and benefactor – wanted to cram the judges. Two years of reflection, the protectors of the law deemed, might suffice to teach this dangerous fellow to respect the property of others and to keep him from outbreaks against those to whom he owed gratitude and reverence.

Pollux, safe in the prison at Canopus, cursed his destiny and indulged in vain hopes of the assistance of his friends. These were at last weary of the vain search and only asked about him occasionally. He at first was so insubordinate under restraint that he was put under close ward from which he was not released until, instead of raging with fury he dreamed away his days in sullen brooding. The gaoler knew men well, and he thought he could safely predict that at the end of his two years' imprisonment this young thief would quit his cell a harmless imbecile.

Titianus, Pontius, Balbilla and even Antinous had all attempted to speak of him to the Emperor, but each was sharply repulsed and taught that Hadrian was little inclined to pardon a wound to his artist's vanity. But the sovereign also proved that he had a good memory for benefits he had received, for once, when a dish was set before him consisting of cabbage and small sausages he smiled, and taking out his purse filled with gold pieces, he ordered a chamberlain to take it in his name to Doris, the wife of the evicted gate-keeper. The old couple now resided in a little house of their own in the neighborhood of their widowed daughter Diotima. Hunger and external misery came not nigh them, still they had experienced a great change. Poor Doris' eyes were now red and



bloodshot, for they were accustomed to many tears, which were seldom far off and overflowed whenever a word, an object, a thought reminded her of Pollux, her darling, her pride and her hope; and there were few half-hours in the day when she did not think of him.

Soon after the steward's death she had sought out Selene, but dame Hannah could not and would not conduct her to see the sick girl, for she learnt from Mary that she was the mother of her patient's faithless lover; and on a second visit Selene was so shy, so timid and so strange in her demeanor, that the old woman was forced to conclude that her visit was an unpleasant intrusion.

And from Arsinoe, whose residence she discovered from the deaconess, she met with even a worse reception. She had herself announced as the mother of Pollux the sculptor and was abruptly refused admission, with the information that Arsinoe was not to be spoken with by her and that her visits were, once for all, prohibited. After the architect Pontius had been to seek her out and had encouraged her to make another attempt to see and speak to Arsinoe, who clung faithfully to Pollux, Paulina herself had received her and sent her away with such repellent words that she went home to her husband deeply insulted and distressed to tears. Nor had she resisted Euphorion's decision when he prohibited her ever again crossing the Christian's threshold.

The Emperor's donation had been most welcome and timely to the poor old couple, for Euphorion had completely lost the softness of his voice as well as his memory through the agitations and troubles of the last few months; he had been dismissed from the chorus of the theatre and could only find employment and very small pay of a few drachmae, in the mysteries of certain petty sectarians or in singing at weddings or in hymns of lamentation. At the same time the old folks had to maintain their daughter whom Pollux could no longer provide for, and the birds, the Graces and the cat all must eat. That it would be possible to get rid of them was an idea which never occurred to either Euphorion or Doris.

By day the old folks had ceased to laugh; but at night they still had many cheerful hours, for then Hope would beguile them with bright pictures of the future, and tell them all sorts of possible and

impossible romances which filled their souls with fresh courage. How often they would see Pollux returning from the distant city whither he had probably fled-from Rome, or even from Athens—crowned with laurels and rich in treasure. The Emperor, who still so kindly remembered them, could not always be angry with him; perhaps he might some day send a messenger to seek Pollux and to make up to him by large commissions for all he had made him suffer. That her darling was alive she was sure; in that she could not be mistaken, often as Euphorion tried to persuade her that he must be dead. The singer could tell many tales of luckless men who had been murdered and never seen or heard of again; but she was not to be convinced, she persisted in hope, and lived wholly in the purpose of sending her younger son, Teuker, on his travels to seek his lost brother as soon as his apprenticeship was over, which would be in a few months.

Antinous, whose burnt hands had soon got well under the Emperor's care, and who had never felt a liking and friendship for any other young man but Pollux, lamented the artist's disappearance and wished much to seek out dame Doris; but he found it harder than ever to leave his master, and was so eager always to be at hand that Hadrian often laughingly reproached him with making his slaves' duties too light.

When at last he really was master of an hour to himself he postponed his intention of seeing his friend's parents; for with him there was always a wide world between the purpose and the deed which he never could overleap, if not urged by some strong impulse; and his most pressing instincts prompted him, when the Emperor was disputing in the Museum or receiving instructions from the chiefs of the different religious communities as to the doctrines they severally professed, to visit the suburban villa where, when February had already begun, Selene was still living. He had often succeeded in stealing into Paulina's garden, but he could not at first realize his hope of being observed by Selene or obtaining speech with her. Whenever he went near Hannah's little house, Mary, the deformed girl, would come in his way, tell him how her friend was, and beg or desire him to go away. She was always with the sick girl, for now her mother was nursed by her sister, and dame

Hannah had obtained permission for her to work at home in gumming the papyrus-strips together.

The widow herself was obliged to be at her post in the factory, for her duties as overseer made her presence indispensable in the work-room.

Thus it came to pass that it was always by Mary and never by Hannah that Antinous was received and dismissed. A certain understanding had arisen between the beautiful youth and the deformed girl. When Antinous appeared and she called out to him: "What, again already!" he would grasp her hand and implore her only once to grant his wish; but she was always firm, only she never sent him away sternly but with smiles and friendly admonitions. When he brought rare and lovely flowers in his pallium and entreated her to give them to Selene in the name of her friend at Lochias, she would take them and promise to place them in her room; but she always said it would do neither him nor her any good at all that Selene should know from whom they came. After such repulses he well knew how to flatter and coax her with appealing words, but he had never dared to defy her or to gain his end by force. When the flowers were placed in the room Mary looked at them much oftener than Selene did, and when Antinous had been long absent the deformed girl longed to see him again, and would pace restlessly up and down between the garden gate and her friend's little house. She, like him, dreamed of an angel, and the angel of whom she dreamed was exactly like himself. In all her prayers she included the name of the handsome heathen and a soft tenderness in which a gentle pity was often infused, a grief for his unredeemed soul, was inseparable from all her thoughts of him.

Hannah was informed by her of each of the young man's visits, and as often as Mary mentioned Antinous the deaconess seemed anxious and desired her to threaten to call the gate-keeper to him. The widow knew full well who her patient's indefatigable admirer was, for she had once heard him speaking to Mastor, and she had asked the slave, who availed himself of every spare moment to attend the services of the Christians, who the lad was. All Alexandria, nay all the Empire, knew the name of the most beautiful youth of his time, the spoilt favorite of Caesar. Even Hannah had

heard of him and knew that poets sang his praises and heathen women were eager to obtain a glance from his eyes. She knew how devoid of all morality were the lives of the nobles at Rome, and Antinous appeared to her as a splendid falcon that wheels above a dove to swoop down upon it at a favorable moment and to tear it in its beak and talons. Hannah also knew that Selene was acquainted with Antinous, that it was he who had formerly rescued her from the big dog and afterward saved her from the water; but that Selene, who was now recovering, did not know who her preserver had been on this second occasion was clear from all that she said.

Towards the end of February Antinous had come on three days in succession, and Hannah now took the step of begging the bishop, Eumenes, to give the gate keeper strict injunctions to look out for the young man and to forbid his entering the garden, even with force if it should prove necessary.

But "love laughs at locksmiths" and finds its way through locked doors, and Antinous succeeded all the same in finding his way into Paulina's garden. On one of these occasions he was so happy to surprise Selene, as, supported on a stick and accompanied by a fair-haired boy and dame Hannah herself, she hobbled up and down.

Antinous had learnt to regard everything crippled or defective with aversion, as a monstrous failure of nature's plastic harmony, but to pity it tenderly; but now he felt quite differently. Mary with her humpback had at first horrified him; now he was always glad to see her though she always crossed his wishes; and poor lame Selene, who had been mocked at by the street boys as she limped along, seemed to him more adorable than ever. How lovely were her face and form, how peculiar her way of walking — she did not limp — no, she swayed along the garden. Thus, as he said to himself afterwards, the Nereids are borne along on the undulating waves. Love is easily satisfied, nor is this strange, for it raises all that comes within its embrace to a loftier level of existence. In the light of love weakness is a virtue and want an additional charm.

But the Bithynian's visits were not the widow's only cares; though she bore the others, it is true, not anxiously but with pleasure. Her household had increased by two living souls, and her income was very small. That her patient might not want, she had to work with

her own hands while she superintended the girls in the factory, and to carry home with her in the evening papyrus-leaves, not only for Mary, but for herself too, and to glue them together during the long hours of the night. As soon as Selene's condition improved, she too helped willingly and diligently, but for many weeks the convalescent had to give up every kind of employment.

Mary often looked at Hannah in silent trouble, for she looked very pale. After she had, on one occasion fallen in a fainting fit, the deformed girl had gathered courage and had represented to her that though she ought indeed to put out at interest the talent intrusted to her by the Lord, she ought not to spend it recklessly. She was giving herself no rest, working day and night; visiting the poor and sick in her hours of recreation just as she used, and if she did not give herself more rest would soon need nursing instead of nursing others.

"At any rate," urged Mary, "give yourself a little indispensable sleep at night."

"We must live," replied Hannah, "and I dare not borrow, for I may never be able to repay."

"Then beg Paulina to remit your house-rent; she will do so gladly."

"No," said Hannah, decidedly. "The rent of this little house goes to benefit my poor people, and you know how badly they want it. What we give we lend to the Lord, and he taxes no man above his ability."

Selene was now well, but the physician had said that no human skill could ever cure her of her lameness. She had become Hannah's daughter, and blind Helios the son of the house.

Arsinoe was only allowed to see her sister rarely and always accompanied by her protectress, and she and Selene never were able to have any unchecked and open conversation. The steward's eldest daughter was now contented and cheerful, while the younger was not only saddened by the disappearance of her lover, but also, from being unhappy in her new home, she had become fractious and easily moved to shed tears. All was well with the younger orphans;

they were often taken to see Selene, and spoke with affection of their new parents.

As she got well her help diminished the strain on her two friends, and in the beginning of March a call came to the widow which, if she followed it, must give their simple existence a new aspect.

In Upper Egypt certain Christian fraternities had been established, and one of these had addressed a prayer to the great mother-community at Alexandria, that it would send to them a presbyter, a deacon and a deaconess capable of organizing and guiding the believers and catechumens in the province of Hermopolis where they were already numbered by thousands. The life of the community and the care of the poor, and sick in the outlying districts required organization by experienced hands, and Hannah had been asked whether she could make up her mind to leave the metropolis and carry on the work of benevolence at Besa in an extended sphere.

She would there have a pleasant house, a palm-garden, and gifts from the congregation which would secure not merely her own maintenance, but that of her adopted children.

Hannah was bound to Alexandria by many ties; in the first place she clung to the poor and sick, many of whom had grown very dear to her, and how many girls who had gone astray had she rescued from evil in the factory alone! She begged for a short time for reflection, and this was granted to her. By the fifteenth of March she was to decide, but by the fifth she had already made up her mind, for while Hannah was in the papyrus-factory Antinous had succeeded in getting into Paulina's garden shortly before sunset and in stealing close up to Hannah's house. Mary again observed him as he approached and signed to him to go, in her usual pleasant way; but the Bithynian was more excited than usual; he seized her hand and clasped her with urgent warmth as he implored her to be merciful. She endeavored at once to free herself, but he would not let her go, but cried in coaxing tones:

"I must see her and speak to her to-day, dear, good Mary, only this once!" And before she could prevent it he had kissed her forehead and had flown into the house to Selene. The little hunchback did not

know what had happened to her; confused and almost paralyzed by conflicting feelings she stood shame-faced, gazing at the ground. She felt that something quite extraordinary had happened to her, but this wonderful something radiated a dazzling splendor, and since this had risen for her, for poor Mary, a feeling of pride quite new to her mingled with the shame and indignation that filled her soul. She needed a few minutes to collect herself and to recover a sense of her duty, and those few minutes were made good use of by Antinous.

He flew with long steps into the room in which, on that never-to-be-forgotten night, he had laid Selene on the couch, and even at the threshold he called her by her name. She started and laid aside the book out of which she was reading to her blind brother. He called a second time, beseechingly. Selene recognized him and asked calmly:

"Do you want me, or dame Hannah?"

"You, you!" he cried passionately. "Oh Selene, I pulled you out of the water, and since that night I have never ceased to think of you and I must die for love of you. Have your thoughts never, never met mine on the way to you? Are you still and always as cold, as passive as you were then when you belonged half to life and half to death? For months have I prowled round this house as the shade of a dead man haunts the spot where he had left all that was dear to him on earth, and I have never been able to tell you what I feel for you?" As he spoke the lad fell on the ground before her and tried to clasp her knees; but she said reproachfully:

"What does all this mean? Stand up and compose yourself."

"Oh! let me, let me — " he besought her. "Do not be so cold and so hard; have pity on me and do not reject me!"

"Stand up," repeated the girl. "I will certainly not reproach you — I owe you thanks on the contrary."

"Not thanks, but love — a little love is all I ask."

"I try to love all men," replied the girl, "and so I love you because you have shown me very much kindness."

"Selene, Selene!" he exclaimed in joyful triumph. He threw himself again at her feet and passionately seized her right hand; but hardly had he taken it in his own when Mary, scarlet with agitation, rushed into the room. In a husky voice, full of hatred and fury, she commanded him to leave the house at once, and when he attempted again to besiege her ear with entreaties she cried out:

"If you do not obey I will call the men in to help us, who are out there attending to the flowers. I ask you, will you obey or will you not?"

"Why are you so cruel, Mary?" asked the blind boy. "This man is good and kind and tells Selene he loves her."

Antinous pointed to the child with an imploring gesture but Mary was already by the window and was raising her hand to her mouth to make her call heard.

"Don't, don't," cried Antinous. "I am going at once."

And he went slowly and silently towards the door, still gazing at Selene with passionate ardor; then he quitted the room groaning with shame and disappointment, though still with a look of radiant pride as though he had achieved some great deed. In the garden he was met by Hannah, who immediately hastened with accelerated steps to her own house where she found Mary sobbing violently and dissolved in tears.

The widow was soon informed of all that had occurred in her absence, and an hour later she had announced to the bishop that she would accept the call to Besa and was ready to start for Upper Egypt.

"With your foster-children?" asked Eumenes.

"Yes. It was indeed Selene's most earnest wish to be baptized by you, but as a year of probation is required —"

"I will perform the rite to-morrow morning."

"To-morrow, Father?"



"Yes, Sister, in all confidence. She buried the old man in the waves of the sea, and before we were her teachers she had gone through the school and discipline of life. While she was yet a heathen she had taken up her cross and proved herself as faithful as though she were a child of the Lord. All that was lacking to her—Faith, Love and Hope—she has found under your roof. I thank thee for this soul thou hast found Sister, in the name of the Lord."

"Not I, not I," said the widow. "Her heart was frozen, but it is not I but the innocent faith of the blind child that has melted it."

"She owes her salvation to him and to you," replied the bishop, "and they both shall be baptized together. We will give the lovely boy the name of the fairest of the disciples, and call him John. Selene for the future, if she herself likes it, shall be known as Martha."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Selene and Helios were baptized, and two days after dame Hannah with her adopted children and Mary, escorted by the presbyter Hilarion and a deacon, embarked in the harbor of Mareotis on board a Nile-boat which was to convey them to their new home, the town of Besa in Upper Egypt. The deformed girl had hesitated as to her answer to the widow's question whether she would accompany her. Her old mother dwelt in Alexandria, and then—but it was this "then" which helped her abruptly to cut short all reflection and to pronounce a decided "yes," for it referred to Antinous.

For a few minutes it had seemed unendurable to think that she should never see him again, for she could not help often thinking of the beautiful youth, and her whole heart ought to belong solely to the One who had with His blood purchased peace for her on earth and bliss in the world to come.

The day after being baptized, Selene had gone to Paulina's town-house, and there, with many tears had taken leave of Arsinoe. All the affection which bound the sisters together found expression at this moment of parting. Selene had heard from Paulina that Pollux was dead, and she no longer grudged her rival sister that she grieved for him more passionately than herself, though at first her peace of mind had more than once been disturbed by memories of her old playfellow.

She felt it hard to leave Alexandria, where most of her brothers and sisters were left behind, and yet she rejoiced to think of a distant home, for she was no longer the same creature that she had been a few months since, and she longed for a remote scene of a new and sanctified life.

Eumenes and Hannah were in the right. It was not the widow but the little blind boy who had won her to Christianity. The child's influence had proceeded in a strange course. In the first instance the promises of the slave Master that Helios should some day meet his father again in a shining realm among beautiful angels had a powerful effect on the blind child's tender heart and vivid imagination. In Hannah's house his hopes had received fresh

nurture, and Mary and the widow told him much about their kind and loving God and His Son who loved children and had invited them to come to Him. When Selene began to recover and he was permitted to talk to her he poured out to her all his delight at what he had heard from the women. At first, to be sure, his sister took no pleasure in these fanciful fables and tried to shake his belief and lead back his heart to the old gods. But while she tried to guide the child, by degrees she felt compelled to follow in his path; at first with wavering steps, but dame Hannah helped her by her example and with many words of good counsel. She only taught her doctrine when the girl asked her questions and begged for information. All that here surrounded Selene breathed of love and peace, and the child felt this, spoke of it, forced her to acknowledge it, and, in his own person, was the first object on which to exercise a wish hitherto unknown to her, to be herself loving and lovable. The boy's firm faith, which was not to be shaken by any reasoning or by any of the myths which she knew, touched her deeply and led to her asking Hannah what was the real bearing of one and another of his statements. It had always seemed a comfort to her that the miseries of our earthly life would come to an end with death; but Helios left her without a reply when he said in a sad voice:

"Do you feel no longing, then, to see our father and mother again?"

To see her mother again! This thought gave her an interest in the next world, and dame Hannah fanned the spark of hope in her soul into flame.

Selene had seen and suffered much misery, and was accustomed to call the gods cruel. Helios told her that God and the Saviour were good and kind, and loved human beings as their children.

"Is it not good and kind," asked he, "of our Heavenly Father to lead us to dame Hannah?"

"Yes, but we have all been torn apart," said Selene. "Never mind," said the child confidently, "we shall all meet in Heaven."

As she got well Selene asked after each of the children and Hannah described all the families into which they had been

received. The widow did not look as if she spoke falsely, and the little ones, when they came to see her, confirmed her report, and yet Selene could hardly believe in the accuracy of the pictures drawn of their lives in the houses of the Christians.

The mother of a Christian family – says a great Christian teacher – should be the pride of her children, the wife the pride of her husband, husband and children the pride of the wife, and God the pride and glory of every member of the household. Love and faith in fact the bond, contentment and virtuous living the law of the family; and it was in just such a pure and beneficent atmosphere, as Selene herself and Helios felt the blessing of in Hannah's house, that each and all of her brothers and sisters were growing up. Her upright sense gave an honest answer when she asked herself what would have become of them all if her father had remained alive and had been dispossessed of his office? They must all have perished in misery and degradation.

And now?—Perhaps in truth the Divine Being had dealt in kindness with the children.

Love, love, and again love, was breathed from all she saw and heard, and yet—was it not love that had caused her greatest sorrows. Wherefore had it been her lot to endure so much through the same sentiment which beautified life to others? Had any one ever had more to suffer than she? Aye indeed! A vivacious, eager youth had duped her and had promised happiness to her sister instead of to her; it had been hard to bear—and yet, the Saviour of whom Hellos had told her, had been far more severely tried. Mankind, for whom He—the Son of God—had come down upon earth, to save from misery and guilt, had rewarded His loving kindness by hanging Him on the cross. In Him she could see a companion in suffering and she asked the widow to tell her all about Him. Selene had made many sacrifices to her family—she could never forget her walk to the papyrus-factory—but He had let them mock Him and had shed His blood for His own. And who was she?—and who was He? The Son of God. His image became dear to her; she was never weary of hearing about His life and fate, His words and deeds; and without her observing it the day came when her soul was free to receive the teaching of Christ with fervent

longing. With faith she acquired that consciousness of guilt which had previously been unknown to her. She had been busy and industrious out of pride and fear, but never from love; she had selfishly tried to fling from her the sacred gift of life without ever thinking what would become of those whom it was her duty to care for. She had cursed her lovely sister who needed her protection and care, and even Pollux, her childhood's playfellow; and a thousand times had she imprecated the ruler of human destinies. All this she now keenly felt with all the earnestness natural to her, but she was soothed by the tidings that there was One who had redeemed the world, and taken on Himself the sins of every repentant sinner.

After Selene had once expressed to the widow her desire to be a Christian, Hannah brought the bishop to see her. He himself undertook to instruct the girl and he found in her a disciple anxious and craving for knowledge. Just like those dried-up and dull-colored plants which, when they are plunged in water, open out and revive, so did her heart, untimely withered and dry; and she longed to be perfectly recovered that she, like Hannah, might tend the sick and exercise that love which Christ demands of His followers. That which most particularly appealed to her in her new faith was that it did not promise joys to the rich who could make great sacrifices, but to the miserable sinner who with a contrite heart yearned for forgiveness, to the poor and abject, towards whom she felt as though they belonged to the same family as herself. And her valiant spirit could not be satisfied with intentions but longed to act upon them. In Besa she could set to work with Hannah, and this prospect lightened her grief in quitting Alexandria.

A favoring wind bore the voyagers southward safe to their destination.

Two days after their departure Antinous once more stole into Paulina's garden. He went up to the widow's little house looking in vain for the deformed girl; the road was open; her absence could but be pleasing to him, and yet it disquieted him. His heart beat wildly, for to-day – perhaps he might find Selene alone. He opened the door without knocking, but he dared not cross the threshold, for in the anteroom stood a strange man, placing boards against the wall. The

carpenter, a Christian to whom Paulina had given this little house for his family to live in, asked Antinous what he wanted.

"Is dame Hannah at home?" stammered the Bithynian.

"She no longer lives here."

"And her adopted daughter, Selene?"

"She is gone with her into Upper Egypt. Have you any message for her?"

"No," said the lad, quite confounded.

"When did they go?"

"The day before yesterday."

"And they are not coming back."

"For the next few years, certainly not. Later may be, if it is the Lord's pleasure."

Antinous left the garden by the public gate, unmolested. He was very pale, and he felt like a wanderer in the desert who finds the spring choked where he had hoped to find a refreshing draught.

Next day, at the first moment he could dispose of, Antinous again knocked at the carpenter's door to inquire in what town of Upper Egypt the travellers proposed to settle and the artisan told him frankly, "In Besa."

Antinous had always been a dreamer, but Hadrian had never seen him so listless, so vaguely brooding as in these days. When he tried to rouse him and spur him to greater energy his favorite would look at him beseechingly, and though he made every effort to be of use to him and to show him a cheerful countenance it was always with but brief success. Even on the hunting excursions into the Libyan desert which the Emperor frequently made, Antinous remained apathetic and indifferent to the pleasures of the sport to which he had formerly devoted himself with enjoyment and skill.

The Emperor had remained in Alexandria longer than in any other place, and was weary of festivities and banquets, of the wordy war with the philosophers of the Museum, of conversing with the ecstatic mystics, the soothsayers; astrologers and empirics with whom the place swarmed. And the short audiences which he accorded to the heads of the different religious communities, and the inspection of the factories and workshops of this centre of industry, began to annoy him. One day he announced his intention of visiting the southern provinces of the Nile valley.

The high-priests of the native Egyptian faith had craved this favor of him, and he was prompted, not only by his love of information and passion for travelling, but also by considerations of state-craft, to gratify this desire of a hierarchy which was extremely influential in those rich and important provinces. The prospect of seeing with his own eyes those marvels of Pharaonic times which attracted so many travellers, was also an incitement, and his good spirits rose as soon as he observed what a reviving effect his determination to visit southern Egypt had upon Antinous.

His favorite had for the last few weeks expressed not the smallest pleasure at any single thing. The homage paid him no less by the Alexandrian than by the Roman ladies of rank sickened him. At banquets he sat a silent guest whose neighborhood could not add to anybody's pleasure, and even the most brilliant and exciting exhibitions in the Circus and the best contests and races in the Hippodrome had hardly sufficed to attract his gaze. Formerly he had been an eager and attentive spectator of the plays of Menander and of his imitators, Alexis, Apollodorus and Posidippus; but now when they were performed he stared into vacancy and thought of Selene. The prospect of going to the place where she was living excited him powerfully and revived his drooping courage for life. He could hope once more, and to the man who sees light shining in the future the present is no longer dark.

Hadrian rejoiced in this change in the lad and hastened the preparations for their departure; still, some months passed before he could begin his journey.

In the first place he had to provide for newly colonizing Libya, which had been depopulated by a revolt of the Jews. Then he had to

come to a determination as to certain new post-roads which were to connect the different parts of the empire more nearly, and finally he had to await the formal assent of the Roman Senate to some new resolutions concerning the hereditary reversion of conferred free-citizenship. This assent was, no doubt a matter of course, but the Emperor never issued an edict without it, and he was very desirous that his decree should come into operation as soon as possible.

In the course of his visits to the Museum the sovereign had informed himself as to the position of the several members of that institution, and he was occupied in making certain regulations which should relieve them of the more sordid cares of life; the condition of the aged teachers and educators of the young had also attracted his observation, and he had endeavored to improve it.

When Sabina represented to him what a large outlay these new measures would entail, he replied:

"We do not allow the veterans to perish who placed their lives, and limbs at the service of the state. Why then should those who serve it with their intellect be burdened with petty cares? Which should we rank the higher, power and poverty or mental wealth? The harder I—as the sovereign—find it to answer the question the more positively do I feel it to be my duty to mete out the same measure to all veterans alike, whether officials, warriors or instructors."

The Alexandrians themselves detained him too by a succession of new acts of homage. They raised him to the rank of a divinity, dedicated a temple to him, and instituted a series of new festivals in his honor; partly no doubt to win his partiality for their city and to express their pride and satisfaction in his long stay there, but also because the pleasure-loving community was glad to seize this opportunity as a favorable one for gratifying their own inclinations and revelling in mere unusual enjoyment. Thus the Imperial visit swallowed up millions, and Hadrian, who enquired into every detail and contrived to obtain information as to the sums expended by the city, blamed the recklessness of his lavish entertainers. He wrote afterwards to his brother-in-law, Servianus, his fullest recognition of both the wealth and the industry of Alexandrians, saying, with terms of praise, that among them not one was idle. One



made glass, another papyrus, another linen; and each of these restless mortals, said he, is busied in some handiwork. Even the lame, the blind and the maimed here sought and found employment. Nevertheless he calls the Alexandrians a contumacious and good-for-nothing community, with sharp and evil tongues that had spared neither Verus nor Antinous. Jews, Christians, and the votaries of Serapis, he adds in the same letter, serve but one God instead of the divinities of Olympus, and when he asserts of the Christians that they even worshipped Serapis he means to say that they were persuaded of the doctrine of the survival of the soul after death. The dispute as to which temple should be assigned as the residence of the newly-found Apis gave Hadrian much to do. From time immemorial this sacred bull had been kept in the temple of Ptah at Memphis, but this venerable city of the Pyramids had been outstripped by Alexandria, and the temple of Serapis outvied that at Memphis in the province of Sokari, tenfold in size and in magnificence. The Egyptians of Alexandria, who dwelt in the quarter called Rhakotis, close to the Serapeum, desired to have the incarnation of the god in the form of a bull, in their midst; but the Memphites would not abandon their old prescriptive rights, and the Emperor had found it far from easy to guide the contest, which proved a very exciting one to all parties, to a satisfactory issue. Memphis had its Apis, and the Serapeum was indemnified by certain endowments which had formerly been granted to the temple at Memphis.

At last, in June, the Emperor could set out. He wished to traverse the province on foot and on horseback, and Sabina was to follow by boat as soon as the inundation should begin.

The Empress would gladly have returned to Rome or to Tibur, for Verus had been obliged to quit Egypt by the orders of the physician as soon as the summer heat had set in. He departed with his wife, as the son of the Imperial couple, but no word on Hadrian's part had justified him in hoping confidently to be nominated as his successor to the sovereignty.

The handsome rake's unlimited dissipations were severely checked by his sufferings, but not altogether prevented, and on his return to Rome he continued to indulge in all the pleasures of life.

Hadrian's hesitation and reluctance often disquieted him, for that imperial Sphinx had, only too frequently, given the most unexpected solutions to his mystifications. But the fatal end with which he had been threatened caused him small anxiety; nay, Ben Jochai's prediction rather prompted him to enjoy to the utmost every hour of health and ease that Fate might still allow him.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Balbilla and her companion, Publius Balbinus and other illustrious Romans, Favorinus the sophist, and a numerous suite of chamberlains and servants, were to accompany the Empress by water, while Hadrian set forth on his land journey with a small escort to which he added a splendid array of huntsmen. Before he reached Memphis, in crossing the Libyan desert, through which his road lay, he had killed a few lions and many other beasts of prey, and here he had once more found Antinous the best of sporting companions. Cool headed in danger, indefatigable on foot, content and serviceable in all circumstances, the young fellow seemed to Hadrian to be a comrade created by the gods themselves for his special delectation. When Hadrian was in the humor to brood and be silent the whole day long, he never disturbed him by a word; but in these moods the Emperor found his favorite's society indispensable, for the mere consciousness of his presence soothed him.

Antinous too, was happy on these occasions, for he felt that he was of some use to his venerated master and could thus alleviate the burden which had never ceased to weigh on his own soul ever since the crime he had committed. Besides, he preferred dreaming to talking, and the exercise in the open air preserved him from listless lassitude.

In Memphis Hadrian was detained a whole month, for there he was expected to visit the Egyptian temples with Sabina, who had arrived before him, and to submit to many ceremonials invested with the regalia of the Pharaohs. Sabina often felt as if she must faint when, crowned with the ponderous vulture-headed fillet of the Queens of Egypt, weighed down with long robes and golden ornaments, she was conducted with her husband, in procession, through all the rooms, over the roof and finally into the holiest place of some vast sanctuary. What senseless ceremonials they had to go through in the course of these long circuits, and how many sacrifices had they to attend! When she returned from these visitations she was utterly exhausted, and indeed, it was no small exertion to undergo so many fumigations with incense and so many aspersions, to listen to so many litanies and hymns, to parade through such

endless halls and while being elevated to the rank of celestial beings, to be crowned with so many crowns in turn and decorated with all kinds of fillets and symbolic adornments.

Her husband set her a good example, however; through all the ceremonials he displayed the whole grave majesty of his nature, and among the Egyptians behaved as one of themselves. He even took pleasure in the mystical lore of the priests, with whom he often held long conversations.

As at Memphis, so in all the principal temples of the great cities to the southward, the Imperial pair accepted the homage of the hierarchy and the honors due to divinity. Wherever Hadrian granted money for the extension of a temple, he was required to perform the ceremony of laying a stone with his own hand. But he always found time to hunt in the desert, to manage the affairs of state, and to visit the most interesting monuments of past times, and at Memphis especially, the city of the dead, with the Pyramids, the great Sphinx, the Serapeum and the tombs of the Apis.

Before quitting the city he and his companions consulted the oracle of the sacred bull. The fairest future was promised to Balbilla; the bull to whom she had to offer a cake, with her face averted, had approved of her gift and had touched her hand with his moist muzzle. Hadrian was left in ignorance as to the sentence of the priests of Apis, for it was given to him in a sealed roll with an explanation of the signs it contained; but he was solemnly adjured not to open them before at least half a year had elapsed.

It was only in the cities that Hadrian met his wife, for he pursued his journey by land and she hers by water. The boats almost invariably reached their destination sooner than the land-travellers, and when they at last arrived, there was always a grand festival to welcome them, in which however Sabina but rarely took part. Balbilla proved herself all the more eager to make their arrival pleasant by some kindly surprise. She sincerely revered Hadrian, and his favorite's beauty had an irresistible charm for her artist's soul. It was a delight to her only to look at him; his absence troubled her, and when he returned she was always the first to greet him. And yet the bright girl troubled herself about him neither more nor less than the other ladies in Sabina's train; only Balbilla asked

nothing of him but the pleasure of looking at him and rejoicing in his beauty.

If he had dared to mistake her admiration for love and to have offered her his, the poetess would have indignantly brought him to his bearings; and yet she gave unqualified expression to her admiration of the Bithynian's splendid person, and indeed with rather remarkable demonstrativeness.

When the travellers made their appearance again after a prolonged absence Antinous would find in the room in the ship where he was to live flowers, and choice fruits sent by her, and verses in which she had sung his praises. He put it all aside with the rest and only esteemed the donor the less; but the poetess knew nothing of these sentiments in her beautiful idol, and indeed troubled herself very little about his feelings. She had hitherto found no difficulty in keeping within the limits of what was becoming. But lately there had been moments in which she had owned to herself that she might be carried away into overstepping these limits. But what did she care for the opinion of those around her, or about the inner life of the Bithyman, whose external perfection of form was all that pleased her. She did not shrink from the possibility of arousing hopes in him which she never could nor intended to fulfil, for the idea did not once enter her mind; still she felt dissatisfied with herself, for there was one person who might disapprove of her proceedings, one who had indeed in plain words reprehended her fancy for doing honor to the handsome boy with offerings of flowers, and the opinion of that one person weighed with her more than that of all the rest of the men and women she knew, put together.

This one was Pontius the architect; and yet, strangely enough, it was precisely her remembrance of him that urged her on from one folly to another. She had often seen the architect in Alexandria, and when they parted she had allowed him to promise to follow her and the Empress, and to escort them at any rate for a part of their voyage up the Nile. But he came not, nor had he sent any report of himself, though he was alive and well, and every express that overtook them brought documents for Caesar in his handwriting.

So he, on whose faithful devotion she had built as on a rock, was no less self-seeking and fickle than other men. She thought of him every day and every hour; and as soon as a vessel from the north cast anchor within sight, she watched the voyagers as they disembarked to detect him among them. She longed for Pontius as a traveller who has lost his way sighs for a sight of the guide who has deserted him; and yet she was angry with him, for he had betrayed by a thousand tokens that he esteemed and cared for her, that she had a certain power over his strong will – and now he had broken his word and did not come.

And she? She had not been unmoved by his devotion, and had been gentler to this grandson of her father's freed slave than to the best-born man of her own rank. And in spite of it all Pontius could spoil all the pleasure of her journey and stay in Alexandria instead of following in her wake. He could easily have intrusted his building to other architects – the great metropolis was swarming with them! Well, if he did not trouble himself about her she certainly need care even less about him. Perhaps at last, at the end of their travels he might yet come, and then he should see how much she cared for his admonitions.

But she sighed impatiently for the hour when she might read him all the verses she had addressed to Antinous, and ask him how he liked them. It gave her a childish pleasure to add to the number of these little poems, to finish them elaborately, and display in them all her knowledge and ability. She gave the preference to artificial and massive metres; some of the verses were in Latin, others in the Attic, and others again in the Aeolian dialects of Greek, for she had now learnt to use this, and all to punish Pontius – to vex Pontius – and at the same time to appear in his eyes as brilliant as she could. She belauded Antinous, but she wrote for Pontius, and for every flower she gave the lad she had sent a thought to the architect, though with a curl on her lips of scornful defiance.

But a young girl cannot be always praising the beauty of a youth in new and varied forms with complete impunity, and thus there were hours when Balbilla was inclined to believe that she really loved Antinous. Then she would call herself his Sappho, and he seemed destined to be her Phaon. During his long absences with the

Emperor she would long to see him—nay, even with tears; but, as soon as he was by her side again, and she could look at his inanimate beauty and into his weary eyes, when she heard the torpid "Yes" or "No" with which he replied to her questions, the spell was entirely broken and she honestly confessed to herself that she would as soon see him before her hewn in marble as clothed in flesh and blood.

In such moments as these her memory of the architect was particularly fresh, and once, when their ship was sailing through a mass of lotos leaves, above which one splendid full-blown flower raised its head, her apt imagination, which rapidly seized on everything noteworthy and gave it poetic form, entwined the incident in a set of verses, in which she designated Antinous as the lotos-flower which fulfils its destiny simply by being beautiful, and comparing Pontius to the ship which, well constructed and well guided, invited the traveller to new voyages in distant lands.

The Nile voyage came to an end at Thebes of the hundred gates, and here nothing that could attract the Roman travellers remained unvisited. The tombs of the Pharaohs extending into the very heart of the rocky hills, and the grand temples that stood to the west of the city of the dead, shorn though they were of their ancient glory, filled the Emperor with admiration. The Imperial travellers and their companions listened to the famous colossus of Memnon, of which the upper portion had been overthrown by an earthquake, and three times in the dawn they heard it sound.

Balbilla described the incident in several long poems which Sabina caused to be engraved on the stone of the colossus. The poetess imagined herself as hearing the voice of Memnon singing to his mother Eos while her tears, the fresh morning dew, fell upon the image of her son, fallen before the walls of Troy. These verses she composed in the Aeolian dialect, named herself as their writer and informed the readers—among whom she included Pontius—that she was descended from a house no less noble than that of King Antiochus.

The gigantic structures on each bank of the Nile fully equalled Hadrian's expectations, though they had suffered so much injury from earthquakes and sieges, and the impoverished priesthood of

Thebes were no longer in a position to provide for their preservation even, much less for their restoration. Balbilla accompanied Caesar on a visit to the sanctuary of Ammon, on the eastern shore of the Nile. In the great hall, the most vast and lofty pillared hall in the world, her impressionable soul felt a peculiar exaltation, and as the Emperor observed how, with a heightened color she now gazed upward, and then again, leaning against a towering column, looked at the scene around her, he asked her what she felt, standing in this really worthy abode of the gods.

"One thing—above all things one thing!" cried the girl. "That architecture is the sublimest of the arts! This temple is to me like some grand epode, and the poet who composed it conceived it not in feeble words but formed it out of almost immovable masses. Thousands of parts are here combined to form a whole, and each is welded with the rest into beautiful harmony and helps to give expression to the stupendous idea which existed in the brain of the builder of this hall. What other art is gifted with the power of creating a work so imperishable and so far transcending all ordinary standards?"

"A poetess crowning the architect with laurels!" exclaimed the Emperor. "But is not the poet's realm the infinite, and can the architect ever get beyond the finite and the limited?"

"Then is the nature of the divinity a measurable unit?" asked Balbilla. "No, it is not; and yet this hall gives one the impression that the very divinity might find space in it to dwell in."

"Because it owes its existence to a master-mind, which while it conceived it stood on the boundary line of eternity. But do you think this temple will outlast the poems of Homer?"

"No; but the memory of it will no more fade away than that of the wrath of Achilles or the wanderings of the experienced Odysseus."

"It is a pity that our friend Pontius cannot hear you," said Hadrian. "He has completed the plans for a work which is destined to outlive me and him and all of us."



"I mean my own tomb. Besides that I intend him to erect gates, courts and halls in the Egyptian style at Tibur, which may remind us of our travels in this wonderful country. I expect him to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" exclaimed Balbilla, and her face fired with a scarlet flush to her very brow.

## CHAPTER XX.

Shortly after starting from Thebes—on the second day of November—Hadrian came to a great decision. Verus should be acknowledged not merely as his son but also as his successor.

Sabina's urgency would not alone have sufficed to put a term to his hesitancy, especially as it had lately been farther increased by a wish that was all his own. His wife's heart had pined for a child, but he too had longed for a son, and he had found one in Antinous. His favorite was a boy he had picked up by chance, the son of humble though free parents, but it lay in the Emperor's power to make him great, to confer on him the highest posts of honor in the Empire, and at last to recognize him publicly as his heir. Antinous, if any one, had deserved this at his hands, and on no other man could he so ungrudgingly bestow everything that he possessed.

These ideas and hopes had now filled his mind for many months, but the nature and the mood of the young Bithyman had been more and more adverse to them.

Hadrian had striven more earnestly than his predecessors to raise the fallen dignity of the Senate, and still he could count securely on its consent to any measure. The leading official authorities of the Republic had been recognized and allowed the full exercise of their powers. To be sure, be they whom they might, they all had to obey the Emperor, still they were always there; and even with a weak ruler at its head the Empire might continue to subsist within the limits established by Hadrian, and restricted with wise moderation. Nevertheless, only a few months previously he would not have ventured to think of the adoption of his favorite. Now he hoped to find himself somewhat nearer to the fulfilment of his wishes. It is true Antinous was still a dreamer; but in their wanderings and hunting excursions through Egypt he had proved himself gallant and prompt, intelligent, and, after their departure from Thebes, even bold and lively at times. Antinous, under this aspect, he himself might take in hand, and even name him as his successor in due time, when he had risen from one post of honor to another. For the present this plan must remain unrevealed.

When he publicly adopted Verus any idea of a possible new selection of a son was excluded, and he might unhesitatingly venture to appoint Sabina's darling his successor, for the most famous of the Roman physicians had written to Hadrian, by his desire, saying that the praetor's undermined strength could not be restored, and that, at the best, he could only have a limited number of years to live. Well, then, Verus might die slowly and contentedly in the midst of the most splendid anticipations, and when he should have closed his eyes it would be time enough to set the dreamer – by that time matured to vigorous manhood – in the vacant place.

On the return journey from Thebes to Alexandria Hadrian met his wife at Abydos, and revealed to her his intention of proclaiming the son of her choice as his successor. Sabina thanked him with an exclamation of "At last!" which expressed partly her satisfaction, but partly too her annoyance at her husband's long delay. Hadrian gave her his permission to return to Rome from Alexandria, and on the very same day messages were despatched with letters both to the Senate and to the prefects of Egypt.

The despatch intended for Titianus charged him to proclaim publicly the adoption of the praetor, to arrange at the same time for a grand festival, and on that occasion to grant to the people, in Caesar's name, all the boons and favors which by the traditional law of Egypt the Sovereign was expected to bestow at the birth of an heir to the throne. The whole suite of the Imperial pair celebrated Hadrian's decision by splendid banquets, but the Emperor did not himself take part in them, but crossed to the other bank of the Nile and went to Antaeopolis in the desert, meaning to penetrate from thence into the gorges of the Arabian desert and to chase wild beasts. No one was to accompany him but Antinous, Mastor, and a few huntsmen and some dogs.

He meant to rejoin the ships at Besa. He had postponed his visit to this place till the return journey, because he had travelled up by the western shore of the Nile, and the passage across the river would have taken up too much time.

The travellers' tents were pitched one sultry evening in November, between the Nile and the limestone range, in which was arrayed a long row of tombs of the period of the Pharaohs. Hadrian

had gone to visit these, for the remarkable pictures on the walls delighted him, but Antinous remained behind, for he had already looked at similar works oftener than he cared for, in Upper Egypt. He found these pictures monotonous and unlovely, and he had not the patience to investigate their meaning as his master did. He had been a hundred times into the ancient rock-tombs, only not to leave Hadrian and not for his own amusement; but to-day—he could hardly bear himself for impatience and excitement, for he knew that a ride, a walk, of a few hours, would carry him to Besa and to Selene. The Emperor would remain absent three or four hours at any rate, and if he made up his mind to it he could have sought out the girl for whom his heart was longing before his return, and still be back again before his master.

But before acting he must reflect. There was the Emperor climbing the hill-side where he could see him, and messengers were expected and he had been charged to receive them. If they should bring bad news, his master must on no account be alone. Ten times did he go up to his good hunter to leap upon his back; once he even took down the horse's head-gear to put on his bridle, but in the very act of slipping the complicated bit between the teeth of his steed his resolution gave way. During all this delay and hesitation the minutes slipped away, and at last it was so late that Hadrian might return and it was folly to think of carrying his plan into execution. The expected express arrived with several letters, but the Emperor did not come back. It grew dark, and heavy rain-drops fell from the overcast sky, and still Antinous was alone. His anxious longing was mingled with regret for the lost opportunity of seeing Selene and alarm at the Emperor's prolonged absence.

In spite of the rain, which began to fall more violently, he went out into the open air, of which the sweltering oppressiveness had helped to fetter his feeble volition, and called to the dogs, with whose help he proposed seeking the Emperor; but just then he heard the bark of Argus, and soon after Hadrian and Mastor stepped out of the darkness into the brightness which shone out from the tent, where lights were burning.

The Emperor gave his favorite but a brief greeting and silently submitted while Antinous dried his hair and brought him some

refreshments, and Mastor bathed his feet and dressed him in fresh garments. As he reclined with the Bithyman, before the supper which was standing ready, he said:

"A strange evening! how hot and oppressive the atmosphere is. We must be on the lookout, something serious is brewing."

"What happened to you, my Lord?"

"Many things. At the door of the very first tomb that I was about to enter I found an old black woman who stretched out her hands against us to keep us out and shrieked out words that sounded horrible."

"Did you understand her?"

"No – who can learn Egyptian."

"Then you do not know what she said?"

"I was to find out – she cried out 'Dead!' and again 'Dead!' and in the tomb which she was watching there were I know not how many persons attacked by the plague."

"You saw them?"

"Yes, I had only heard of this disease till then. It is frightful, and quite answers to the descriptions I had read of it."

"But Caesar!" cried Antinous reproachfully and in alarm.

"When we turned our backs on the tombs," continued Hadrian, paying no heed to the lad's exclamation, "we were met by an elderly man dressed in white and a strange-looking maiden. She was lame but of remarkable beauty."

"And she was going to the sick?"

"Yes, she had brought medicine and food to them."

"But she did not go in among them?" asked Antinous eagerly.

"She did, in spite of my warnings. In her companion I recognized an old acquaintance."

"An old one?"

"At any rate older than myself. We had met in Athens when we still were young. At that time he was one of the school of Plato and the most zealous, nay, perhaps the most gifted of us all."

"How came such a man among the plague-stricken people of Besa? Is he become a physician?"

"No. But at Athens he sought fervently and eagerly for the truth, and now he asserts that he has found it."

"Here, among the Egyptians?"

"In Alexandria among the Christians."

"And the lame girl who accompanied the philosopher—does she too believe in the crucified God?"

"Yes. She is a sick-nurse or something of the kind. Indeed there is something grand in the ecstatic craze of these people."

"Is it true that they worship an ass and a dove?"

"Nonsense!"

"I did not want to believe it; and at any rate they are kind, and succor all who suffer, even strangers who do not belong to their sect."

"How do you know?"

"One hears a great deal about them in Alexandria."

"Alas! alas!—I never persecute an imaginary foe, as such I reckon the creeds and ideas of other men; still, I cannot but ask myself whether it can add to the prosperity of the state when citizens cease to struggle against the pressure and necessity of life and console themselves for them instead, by the hope of visionary happiness in

another world which perhaps only exists in the fancy of those who believe in it."

"I should wish that life might end with death," said Antinous thoughtfully; "and yet—"

"Well?"

"If I were sure that in that other world I should find those I long to see again, then I might long for a future life."

"And would you really like, throughout all eternity, to push and struggle in the crowd of old acquaintances which death does not diminish but rather multiplies?"

"Nay, not that—but I should like to be permitted to live for ever with a few chosen friends."

"And should I be one of them?"

"Yes—indeed," cried Antinous warmly and pressing his lips to Hadrian's hand.

"I was sure of it—but even with the promise of never being obliged to part with you my darling, I would never sacrifice the only privilege which man enjoys above the immortals."

"What privilege can you mean?"

"The right of withdrawing from the ranks of the living as soon as annihilation seems more endurable than existence and I choose to call death to release me."

"The gods, it is true, cannot die."

"And the Christians only to link a new life on to death."

"But a fairer and a happier than this on earth. They say it is a life of bliss. But the mother of this everlasting life is the ineradicable love of existence in even the most wretched of our race, and hope is its father. They believe in a complete freedom from suffering in that

other world because He whom they call their Redeemer, the crucified Christ, has saved them from all sufferings by His death."

"And can a man take upon him the sufferings of others, think you, like a garment or a burden?"

"They say so, and my friend from Athens is quite convinced. In books of magic there are many formulas by which misfortunes may be transferred not merely from men to beasts, but from one human being to another. Very remarkable experiments have even been carried out with slaves, and to this day I have to struggle in several provinces to suppress human sacrifices by which the gods are to be reconciled or propitiated. Only think of the innocent Iphigenia who was dragged to the altar; did not the gulf in the Forum close when Curtius had leaped into it? When Fate shoots a fatal arrow at you and I receive it in my breast, perhaps she is content with the chance victim and does not enquire as to whom she has hit."

"The gods would be exorbitant indeed if they were not content with your blood for mine!"

"Life is life, and that of the young is of better worth than that of the old. Many joys will yet bloom for you."

"And you are indispensable to the whole world."

"After me another will come. Are you ambitious, boy?"

"No, my Lord."

"What then can be the meaning of this: that every one wishes me joy of my son Verus excepting you. Do you not like my choice?"

Antinous colored and looked at the ground, and Hadrian went on:

"Say honestly what you feel."

"The praetor is ill."

"He can have but a few years to live, and when he is dead — "

"He may recover — "



"When he is dead, I must look out for another son. What do you think now? Who is the being that every man, from a slave to a consul, would soonest hear call him 'Father?'"

"Some one he tenderly loved."

"True—and particularly when that one clung to him with unchangeable fidelity. I am a man like any other, and you, my good fellow, are always nearest to my heart, and I shall bless the day when I may authorize you, before all the world, to call me 'Father.' Do not interrupt me. If you resolutely concentrate your will and show as keen a sense for ruling men as you do for the chase, if you try to sharpen your wits and take in what I teach you, it may some day happen that Antinous instead of Verus —"

"Nay, not that, only not that!" cried the lad, turning very pale and raising his hands beseechingly.

"The greatness with which Destiny surprises us seems terrible so long as it is new to us," said Hadrian. "But the seaman is soon accustomed to the storms, and we come to wear the purple as you do your chiton."

"Oh, Caesar, I entreat you," said Antinous, anxiously, "put aside these ideas; I am not fit for great things."

"The smallest saplings grow to be palms."

"But I am only a wretched little herb that thrives awhile in your shadow. Proud Rome —"

"Rome is my handmaid. She has been forced before now to be ruled by men of inferior stamp, and I should show her how the handsomest of her sons can wear the purple. The world may look for such a choice from a sovereign whom it has long known to be an artist, that is a high-priest of the Beautiful. And if not, I will teach it to form its taste on mine."

"You are pleased to mock me, Caesar," cried the Bithynian. "You certainly cannot be in earnest, and if it is true that you love me —"

"What now, boy?"

"You will let me live unknown for you, care for you; you will ask nothing of me but reverence and love and fidelity."

"I have long had them, and I now would fain repay my Antinous for all these treasures."

"Only let me stay with you, and if necessary let me die for you."

"I believe, boy, you would be ready to make the sacrifice we were speaking of for me!"

"At any moment without winking an eyelash."

"I thank you for those words. It has turned out a pleasant evening, and what a bad one I looked forward to —"

"Because the woman by the tomb startled you?"

"'Dead,' is a grim word. It is true that 'death' — being dead — can frighten no wise man; but the step out of light into darkness is fearful. I cannot get the figure of the old hag and her shrill cry out of my mind. Then the Christian came up, and his discourse was strange and disturbing to my soul. Before it grew dark he and the limping girl went homewards; I stood looking after them and my eyes were dazzled by the sun which was sinking over the Libyan range. The horizon was clear, but behind the day-star there were clouds. In the west, the Egyptians say, lies the realm of death. I could not help thinking of this; and the oracle, the misfortunes that the stars threatened me with in the course of this year, the cry of the old woman — all these crowded into my mind together. But then, as I observed how the sun struggled with the clouds and approached nearer and nearer to the hill-tops on the farther side of the river, I said to myself: If it sets in full radiance you may look confidently to the future; if it is swallowed up by clouds before it sinks to rest, then destiny will fulfil itself; then you must shorten sail and wait for the storm."

"And what happened?"

"The fiery globe burnt in glowing crimson, surrounded by a million rays. Each seemed separate from the rest and shone with glory of its own; it was as though the sinking disc had been the

centre of bow-shots innumerable and golden arrow-shafts radiated to the sky in every direction. The scene was magnificent and my heart beat high with happy excitement, when suddenly and swiftly a dark cloud fell, as though exasperated by the wounds it had received from those fiery darts; a second followed, and a third, and sinister Daimons flung a dark and fleecy curtain over the glorious head of Helios, as the executioner throws a coarse black cloth over the head of the condemned, when he sets his knee against him to strangle him."

At this narrative Antinous covered his face with both hands, and murmured in terror:

"Frightful, frightful! What can be hanging over us? Only listen, how it thunders, and the rain thrashes the tent."

"The clouds are pouring out torrents; see the water is coming in already. The slaves must dig gutters for it to run off. Drive the pegs tighter you fellows out there or the whirlwind will tear down the slight structure."

"And how sultry the air is!"

"The hot wind seems to warm even the flood of rain. Here it is still dry; mix me a cup of wine, Antinous. Have any letters come?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"Give them to me, Mastor."

The slave, who was busily engaged in damming up with earth and stones, the trickling stream of rain-water that was soaking into the tent, sprang up, hastily dried his hands, took a sack out of the chest in which the Emperor's despatches were kept and gave it to his master. Hadrian opened the leather bag, took out a roll, hastily broke it open, and then, after rapidly glancing at the contents, exclaimed:

"What is this? I have opened the record of the oracle of Apis. How did it come among to-day's letters?"

Antinous went up to Hadrian, looked at the sack, and said:

"Mastor has made a mistake. These are the documents from Memphis. I will bring you the right despatch-bag."

"Stay!" said Hadrian, eagerly seizing his favorite's hand. "Is this a mere trick of chance or a decree of Fate? Why should this particular sack have come into my hands to-day of all others? Why, out of twenty documents it contains, should I have taken out this very one? Look here.—I will explain these signs to you. Here stand three pairs of arms bearing shields and spears, close by the name of the Egyptian month that corresponds to our November. These are the three signs of misfortune. The lutes up there are of happier omen. The masts here indicate the usual state of affairs. Three of these hieroglyphics always occur together. Three lutes indicate much good fortune, two lutes and one mast good fortune and moderate prosperity, one pair of arms and two lutes misfortune, followed by happiness, and so forth. Here, in November, begin the arms with weapons, and here they stand in threes and threes, and portend nothing but unqualified misfortune, never mitigated by a single lute. Do you see, boy? Have you understood the meaning of these signs?"

"Perfectly well; but do you interpret them rightly? The fighting arms may perhaps lead to victory."

"No. The Egyptians use them to indicate conflict, and to them conflict and unrest are identical with what we call evil and disaster."

"That is strange!"

"Nay, it is well conceived; for they say that everything was originally created good by the gods, but that the different portions of the great All changed their nature by restless and inharmonious mingling. This explanation was given me by the priest of Apis, and here—here by the month of November are the three fighting arias—a hideous token. If one of the flashes which light up this tent so incessantly, like a living stream of light were to strike you, or me, and all of us—I should not wonder. Terrible—terrible things hang over us! It requires some courage under such omens as these, to keep an untroubled gaze and not to quail."

"Only use your own arms against the fighting arms of the Egyptian gods; they are powerful," said Antinous; but Hadrian let his head sink on his breast, and said, in a tone of discouragement:

"The gods themselves must succumb to Destiny."

The thunder continued to roar. More than once the storm snapped the tent-ropes, and the slaves were obliged to hold on to the Emperor's fragile shelter with their hands; the chambers of the clouds poured mighty torrents out upon the desert range which for years had not known a drop of rain, and every rift and runlet was filled with a stream or a torrent.

Neither Hadrian nor Antinous closed their eyes that fearful night. The Emperor had as yet opened only one of the rolls that were in the day's letter-bag; it contained the information that Titianus the prefect was cruelly troubled by his old difficulty of breathing, with a petition from that worthy official to be allowed to retire from the service of the state and to withdraw to his own estate. It was no small matter for Hadrian to dispense for the future with this faithful coadjutor, to lose the man on whom he had had his eye to tranquillize Judaea—where a fresh revolt had raised its head, and to reduce it again to subjection without bloodshed. To crush and depopulate the rebellious province was within the power of other men, but to conquer and govern it with kindness belonged only to the wise and gentle Titianus. The Emperor had no heart to open a second letter that night. He lay in silence on his couch till morning began to grow gray, thinking over every evil hour of his life—the murders of Nigrinus, of Tatianus and of the senators, by which he had secured the sovereignty—and again he vowed to the gods immense sacrifices if only they would protect him from impending disaster.

When he rose next morning Antinous was startled at his aspect, for Hadrian's face and lips were perfectly bloodless. After he had read the remainder of his letters he started, not on foot but on horseback, with Antinous and Mastor for Besa, there to await the rest of the escort.

## CHAPTER XXI.

The unchained elements had raged that night with equal fury over the Nile city of Besa. The citizens of this ancient town had done all they could to give the Imperial traveller a worthy reception. The chief streets had been decked with ropes of flowers strung from mast to mast and from house to house, and by the harbor, close to the river shore, statues of Hadrian and his wife had been erected. But the storm tore down the masts and the garlands, and the lashed waters of the Nile had beaten with irresistible fury on the bank; had carried away piece after piece of the fertile shore, flung its waves, like liquid wedges into the rifts of the parched land; and excavated the high bank by the landing-quay.

After midnight the storm was still raging with unheard-of fury; it swept the palm thatch from many of the houses, and beat the stream with such violence that it was like a surging sea. The full unbroken force of the flood beat again and again on the promontory on which stood the statues of the Imperial couple. Shortly before the first dawn of light the little tongue of land, which was protected by no river wall, could no longer resist the furious attack of the waters; huge clods of soil slipped and fell with a loud noise into the river and were followed by a large mass of the cliff, with a roar as of thunder the plateau behind sank, and the statue of the Emperor which stood upon it began to totter and lean slowly to its fall. When day broke it was lying with the pedestal still above ground, but the head was buried in the earth.

At break of day the citizens left their houses to inquire of the fishermen and boatmen what had occurred in the harbor during the night. As soon as the storm had abated, hundreds, nay thousands, of men, women and children thronged the landing-place round the fallen statue—they saw the land-slip and knew that the current had torn the land from the bank and caused the mischief. Was it that Hapi, the Nile-god, was angry with the Emperor? At any rate the disaster that had befallen the image of the sovereign boded evil, that was clear.

The Toparch, the chief municipal authority, at once set to work to reinstate the statue which was itself uninjured, for Hadrian might arrive in a few hours. Numerous men, both free and slaves,

crowded to undertake the work, and before long the statue of Hadrian, executed in the Egyptian style, once more stood upright and gazing with a fixed countenance towards the harbor. Sabina's was also put back by the side of her husband's and the Toparch went home satisfied. With him most of the starers and laborers left the quay, but their place was taken by other curious folks who had missed the statue from its place, where the land had fallen, and now expressed their opinions as to the mode and manner of its fall.

"The wind can never have overturned this heavy mass of limestone," said a ropemaker: "And see how far it stands from the broken ground."

"They say it fell on the top of land-slip," answered a baker.

"That is how it was," said a sailor.

"Nonsense!" cried the ropemaker. "If the statue had stood on the ground now carried away, it must have fallen at once into the water and have sunk to the bottom—any child can see that other powers have been at work here."

"Very likely," said a temple-servant who devoted himself to the interpretation of signs: "The gods may have overset the proud image to give a warning token to Hadrian."

"The immortals do not mix in the affairs of men in our day," said the sailor; "but in such a fearful night as this peaceful citizens remain within doors and so leave a fair field for Caesar's foes."

"We are all faithful subjects," said the baker indignantly.

"You are a pack of rebellious rabble," retorted a Roman soldier, who like the whole cohort quartered in the province of Hermopolis, had formerly served in Judaea under the cruel Tinnius Rufus. "Among you worshippers of beasts squabbles never cease, and as to the Christians, who have made their nests out there on the other side of the valley, say the worst you can of them and still you would be flattering them."

"Brave Fuscus is quite right!" cried a beggar. "The wretches have brought the plague into our houses; wherever the disease shows

itself there are Christian men and women to be seen. They came to my brother's house; they sat all night by his sick children and of course both died."

"If only my old governor Tinnius Rufus were here," growled the soldier, "they would none of them be any better off than their own crucified god."

"Well, I certainly have nothing in common with them," replied the baker. "But what is true must continue true. They are quiet, kind folks and punctual in payment, who do no harm and show kindness to many poor creatures."

"Kindness?" cried the beggar, who had received alms himself from the deacon of the church at Besa, but had also been exhorted to work. "All the five priests of Sekket of the grotto of Artemis have been led away by them and have basely abandoned the sanctuary of the goddess. And is it good and kind that they should have poisoned my brother's children with their potions?"

"Why should they not have killed the children?" asked the soldier. "I heard of the same things in Syria; and as to this statue, I will never wear my sword again —"

"Hark! listen to the bold Fuscus," cried the crowd. "He has seen much."

"I will never wear my sword again if they did not knock over the statue in the dark."

"No, no," cried the sailor positively. "It fell with the land that was washed away; I saw it lying there myself."

"And are you a Christian, too?" asked the soldier, "or do you suppose that I was in jest when I swore by my sword? I have served in Bithynia, in Syria, and in Judaea. I know these villains, good people. There were hundreds of Christians to be seen there who would throw away life like a worn-out shoe because they did not choose to sacrifice to the statues of Caesar and the gods."



"There, you hear!" cried the beggar. "And did you see a single man of them among the citizens who set to work to restore the statue to its place?"

"There were none of them there," said the sailor, who was beginning to share the soldier's views.

"The Christians threw down the Emperor's statue," the beggar shouted to the crowd. "It is proved, and they shall suffer for it. Every man who is a friend of the divine Hadrian come with me now and have them out of their houses."

"No uproar!" interrupted the soldier to the furious man. "There is the tribune, he will hear you."

The Roman officer, who now came past with a troop of soldiers to receive the Emperor outside the city, was greeted by the crowd with loud shouting. He commanded silence and made the soldier tell him what had so violently excited the people.

"Very possibly," said the tribune, a sinewy and stern-looking man, who, like Fuscus, had served under Tinnius Rufus, and had risen from a sutler to be an officer, "Very possibly – but where are your proofs?"

"Most of the citizens helped in reerecting the statue, but the Christians held aloof from the work," cried the beggar. "There was not one to be seen. Ask the sailor, my lord; he was by and he can bear witness to it."

"That certainly is more than suspicious. This matter must be strictly inquired into. Pay heed, you people."

"Here comes a Christian girl!" cried the sailor.

"Lame Martha; I know her well," interrupted the beggar. "She goes into all the plague-stricken houses and poisons the people. She stayed three days and three nights at my brother's turning the children's pillows till they were carried out. Wherever she goes death follows."

Selene, now known as Martha, paid no heed to the crowd, but with her blind brother Helios, now called John, went calmly on her way which led from the raised bank down to the landing-quay. There she wished to hire a boat to take her across the stream, for in a village on the island over against the town dwelt some sick Christians to whom she was carrying medicines and whom she was intending to watch. For months past her whole life had been devoted to the suffering. She had carried help even into heathen homes, and shrunk from neither fever nor plague. Her cheeks had gained no color, but her eyes shone with a gentler and purer light which glorified the severe beauty of her features. As the girl approached the captain he fixed his eyes on her, and called out:

"Hey! pale-face — are you a Christian?"

"Yes, my lord," replied Selene, and she went on quietly and indifferently with her brother.

The Roman looked after her, and as she passed by Hadrian's statue, and, as she did so, dropped her head rather lower than before, he roughly ordered her to stop and to tell him why she had averted her face from the statue of Caesar.

"Hadrian is our ruler as well as yours," answered the young girl. "I am in haste for there are sick people on the island."

"You will bring them no good!" cried the beggar. "Who knows what is hidden there in the basket?"

"Silence!" interrupted the tribune. "They say, girl that your fellow-believers overthrew the statue of Caesar in the night."

"How should that be? We honor Caesar no less than you do."

"I will believe you, and you shall prove it. There stands the statue of the divine Caesar. Come with me and worship it." Selene looked with horror in the face of the stern man, and could not find a word of reply.

"Well!" asked the captain, "will you come? Yes or no?"

Selene struggled for self-possession, and when the soldier held out his hand to her she said with a trembling voice:

"We honor the Emperor but we pray to no statue—only to our Father in Heaven."

"There you have it!" laughed the beggar.

"Once more I ask you," cried the tribune. "Will you worship this statue, or do you refuse to do so?"

A fearful struggle possessed Selene's soul. If she resisted the Roman her life was in danger, and the fury of the populace would be aroused against her fellow-believers—if, on the other hand, she obeyed him, she would be blaspheming God, breaking her faith to the Saviour who loved her, sinning against the truth and her own conscience. A fearful dread fell upon her, and deprived her of the power to lift her soul in prayer. She could not, she dared not, do what was required of her, and yet the overweening love of life which exists in every mortal led her feet to the base of the idol and there stayed her steps.

"Lift up your hands and worship the divine Caesar," cried the tribune, who with the rest of the lookers-on had watched her movements with keen excitement.

Trembling, she set her basket on the ground and tried to withdraw her hand from her brother's; but the blind boy held it fast. He fully understood what was required of his sister, he knew full well, from the history of many martyrs that had been told him, what fate awaited her and him if they resisted the Roman's demand; but he felt no fear and whispered to her:

"We will not obey his desires Martha; we will not pray to idols, we will cling faithfully to the Redeemer. Turn me away from the image, and I will say 'Our Father.'"

With a loud voice and his lustreless eyes upraised to Heaven, the boy said the Lord's prayer. Selene had first set his face towards the river, and then she herself turned her back on the statue; then, lifting her hands, she followed the child's example.

Helios clung to her closely, her loudly uttered prayer was one with his, and neither of them saw or heard anything more of what befell them.

The blind boy had a vision of a distant but glorious light, the maiden of a blissful life made beautiful by love, as she was flung to the ground in front of the statue of Hadrian, and the excited mob rushed upon her and her faithful little brother. The military tribune tried in vain to hold back the populace, and by the time the soldiers had succeeded in driving the excited mob away from their victims, both the young hearts, in the midst of the triumph of their faith, in the midst of their hopes of an eternal and blissful life, had ceased to beat for ever.

The occurrence disturbed the captain and made him very uneasy. This girl, this beautiful boy, who lay before him pale corpses, had been worthy of a better fate, and he might be made to answer for them; for the law forbade that any Christian should be punished for his faith without a judge's sentence. He therefore commanded that the dead should be carried at once to the house to which they belonged, and threatened every one, who should that day set foot in the Christian quarter, with the severest punishment.

The beggar went off, shrieking and shouting, to his brother's house to tell the mistress that lame Martha, who had nursed her daughter to death, was slain; but he gained an evil reward, for the poor woman bewailed Selene as if she had been her own child, and cursed him and her murderers.

Before sundown Hadrian arrived at Besa, where he found magnificent tents pitched to receive him and his escort. The disaster that had befallen his statue was kept a secret from him, but he felt anxious and ill. He wished to be perfectly alone, and desired Antinous to go to see the city before it should be dark. The Bithynian joyfully embraced this permission as a gift of the gods; he hurried through the decorated high streets, and made a boy guide him from thence into the Christian quarter. Here the streets were like a city of the dead; not a door was open, not a man to be seen.

Antinous paid the lad, sent him away, and with a beating heart went from one house to another. Each looked neat and clean, and

was surrounded by trees and shrubs, but though the smoke curled up from several of the roofs every house seemed to have been deserted. At last he heard the sound of voices. Guided by these he went through a lane to an open place where hundreds of people, men, women and children, were assembled in front of a small building which stood in the midst of a palm grove.

He asked where dame Hannah lived, and an old man silently pointed to the little house on which the attention of the Christians seemed to be concentrated. The lad's heart throbbed wildly and yet he felt anxious and embarrassed, and he asked himself whether he had not better turn back and return next morning when he might hope to find Selene alone.

But no! Perhaps he might even now be allowed to see her.

He modestly made his way through the throng, which had set up a song in which he could not determine whether it was intended to express feelings of sadness or of triumph. Now he was standing at the gate of the garden and saw Mary the deformed girl. She was kneeling by a covered bier and weeping bitterly. Was dame Hannah dead? No, she was alive, for at this moment she came out of her house, leaning on an old man, pale, calm and tearless. Both came forward, the old man uttered a short prayer and then stooping down, lifted the sheet which covered the dead.

Antinous pushed a step forward but instantly drew two steps back—then covering his eyes with his hand he stood as if rooted to the spot.

There was no vehement lamentation. The old man began a discourse. All around were sounds of suppressed weeping, singing and praying but Antinous saw and heard nothing. He had dropped his hand and never took his eyes off the white face of the dead till Hannah once more covered it with the sheet. Even then he did not stir.

It was not till six young girls lifted Selene's modest bier and four matrons took up that of little Helios on their shoulders and the whole assembly moved away after them, that he too turned and followed the mourning procession. He looked on from a distance

while the larger and the smaller coffins were carried into a rocktomb, while the entrance was carefully closed, and the procession dispersed some here and some there.

At last he found himself alone and in front of the door of the vault. The sun went down, and darkness spread rapidly over hill and vale. When no one was to be seen who could observe him, he threw up his arms, clasped the pillar at the entrance of the tomb, pressed his lips against the rough wooden door and struck his forehead against it while his whole body trembled with the tearless anguish of his spirit.

For some minutes he stood so and did not hear a light step which came up behind him. It was Mary, who had come once more to pray by the grave of her beloved friend. She at once recognized the youth and softly called him by his name.

"Mary," he answered, clasping her hand eagerly. "How did she die?"

"Slain," she said, sadly. "She would not worship Caesar's image."

Antinous shuddered at the words, and asked, "And why would she not?"

"Because she was faithful to our belief, and so hoped for the mercy of the Saviour. Now she is a blessed angel."

"Are you sure of that?"

"As sure as I live in hope of meeting the martyr who rests here, again in Heaven!"

"Mary."

"Leave go of my hand!"

"Will you do me a service, Mary?"

"Willingly, Antinous — but pray do not touch me."

"Take this money and buy the loveliest wreath that is to be had here. Hang it on this tomb, and say as you do so—call out—, From Antinous to Selene."

The deformed girl took the money he gave her and said:

"She often prayed for you."

"To her God?"

"To our Redeemer, that he might give you also joy. She died for Christ Jesus; now she is with him, and he will grant her prayers."

Antinous was silent for a while, then he said:

"Once more give me your hand, Mary, and now farewell. Will you sometimes think of me, and pray for me too, to your Redeemer?"

"Yes, yes, and you will not quite forget me, the poor cripple?"

"Certainly not, you good, kind girl! Perhaps we may some day meet again." With these words Antinous hurried down the hill and through the town to the Nile.

The moon had risen and was mirrored in the rough water. Just so had its image played upon the waves when Antinous had rescued Selene from the sea. The lad knew that Hadrian would be expecting him, still he did not seek his tent. A violent emotion had overpowered him; he restlessly paced up and down the river-bank rapidly reviewing in his memory the more prominent incidents of his past life. He seemed to hear again every word of the dialogue that had taken place yesterday between Hadrian and himself. Before his inward eye he saw once more his humble home in Bithynia, his mother, his brothers and sisters whom he should never see again. Once more he lived through the dreadful hour when he had deceived his beloved master and had been an incendiary. An overmastering dread fell upon him as he thought of Hadrian's wish to put him in the place of the man whom the prudent sovereign had chosen as his successor—a choice that was perhaps the direct outcome of his own crime. He, Antinous, who to-day could not think of the morrow, who always kept out of the way of the discourse of grave men because he found it so hard to follow their

meaning, he who knew nothing but how to obey, he who was never happy but alone with his master and his dreaming, far from the bustle of the world—he, to be burdened with the purple, with anxiety, with a mountain-load of responsibility!

No, no; the idea was unheard-of—impossible! And yet Hadrian never gave up a wish he had once expressed in words. The future loomed before his soul like some overpowering foe. Suffering, unrest, and misfortune stared him in the face, turn which way he would.

What was the hideous fatality that threatened his sovereign? It was approaching, it must come if no one—aye, if no one should be found to stand between him and the impending blow, and to receive in his own breast—in his own heart, bared to receive the wound—the spear hurled by the vengeful god. And he—he, and he alone was the one who might do this.

The thought flashed into his mind like a sudden blaze of light; and if he should find the courage to devote himself to death for his dear master all his sins against him would be expiated; then—then—oh, how lovely a thought!—then might he not find entrance into the gates of that realm of bliss which Selene's prayers had opened to him? There he would see his mother again and his father, and by and bye his brothers and sisters—but now, at once in a few minutes Her whom he loved and who had trodden the ways of death before him.

An exquisite sense of hope such as he had never felt before flooded his soul. There lay the Nile—here was a boat. He gave it a strong push into the stream and with a powerful leap, as when hunting he had often sprung from rock to rock, he jumped into the boat. He had just seized an oar when Mastor, who had been desired by the Emperor to seek him, recognized him in the moonlight and desired him to return with him to the tents.

But Antinous did not obey. As he pushed out into the stream he called out:

"Greet my Lord from me—greet him lovingly, a thousand times, and tell him Antinous loved him more than his life. Fate demands a



victim. The world cannot dispense with Hadrian, but Antinous is a mere nonentity, whom none will miss but Caesar, and for him Antinous flings himself into the jaws of death."

"Stay-stop! hapless boy, come back!" shouted the slave, and leaping into a boat he followed that of the Bithynian, which, impelled by strong and steady strokes, flew away into the current.

Mastor rowed with all his might, but he could not gain upon the boat he was pursuing. Thus in a wild race both reached the middle of the stream. There, the slave saw Antinous fling away his oar, and an instant later he heard Antinous call loudly on the name of Selene, and then, in helpless inactivity, he saw the lad glide into the waters, and the Nile swallowed in its flood the noblest and fairest of victims.

## CHAPTER XXII

A night and a day had slipped away since the death of the Bithynian. Ships and boats from every part of the province had collected before Besa to seek for the body of the drowned youth, the shores swarmed with men, and cressets and torches had dimmed the moonlight on river and shore all through the night; but they had not yet succeeded in finding the body of the beautiful youth.

Hadrian had heard in what way Antinous had perished. He had required Mastor to repeat to him more than once the last words of his faithful companion and neither to add nor to omit a single syllable. Hadrian's accurate memory cherished them all and now he had sat till dawn and from dawn till the sun had reached the meridian, repeating them again and again to him self. He sat gloomily brooding and would neither eat nor drink. The misfortune which had threatened him had fallen—and what a grief was this! If indeed Fate would accept the anguish he now felt in the place of all other suffering it might have had in store for him he might look forward to years free from care, but he felt as though he would rather have spent the remainder of his existence in sorrow and misery with his Antinous by his side than enjoy, without him, all that men call happiness, peace and prosperity.

Sabina and her escort had arrived—a host of men; but he had strictly ordered that no one, not even his wife, was to be admitted to his presence. The comfort of tears was denied him, but his grief gripped him at the heart, clouded his brain and made him so irritably sensitive that an unfamiliar voice, though even at a distance, disturbed him and made him angry.

The party who had arrived by water were not allowed to occupy the tents which had been pitched for them not far from his, because he desired to be alone, quite alone, with his anguish of spirit. Mastor, whom he had hitherto regarded rather a useful chattel than as a human creature, now grew nearer to him—had he not been the one witness of his darling's strange disappearance. Towards the close of this, the most miserable night he had ever known, the slave asked him whether he should not fetch the physician from the ships, he looked so pale; but Hadrian forbade it.

"If I could only cry like a woman," he said, "or like other fathers whose sons are snatched away by death, that would be the best remedy. You poor souls will have a bad time now, for the sun of my life has lost its light and the trees by the way-side have lost their verdure."

When he was alone once more he sat staring into vacancy and muttered to himself:

"All mankind should mourn with me for if I had been asked yesterday how perfect a beauty might be bestowed on one of their race I could have pointed proudly to you, my faithful boy and have said, 'Beauty like that of the gods.' Now the crown is cut off from the trunk of the palm and the maimed thing can only be ashamed of its deformity; and if all humanity were but one man it would look like one who has had his right eye torn out. I will not look on the monsters, lean and fat, that they may not spoil my taste for the true type! Oh faithful, lovable, beautiful boy! What a blind, mad fool have you been! And yet I cannot blame your madness. You have pierced my soul with the deepest thrust of all and yet I cannot even be angry with you. Superhuman! godlike was your faithful devotion. Aye, indeed, it was!" As he thus spoke he rose from his seat and went on resolutely and decidedly:

"Here I stretch out this my right hand-hear me, ye Immortals! Every city in the Empire shall raise an altar to Antinous, and the friend of whom you have robbed me I will make your equal and companion. Receive him tenderly, oh, ye undying rulers of the world! Which among you can boast of beauty greater than his? and which of you ever displayed so much goodness and faithfulness as your new associate?"

This vow seemed to have given Hadrian some comfort. For above half an hour he paced his tent with a firmer tread, then he desired that Heliodorus his secretary might be called.

The Greek wrote what his sovereign dictated. This was nothing less than that henceforth the world should worship a new divinity in the person of Antinous.

At noonday a messenger in breathless haste came to say that the body of the Bithynian had been found. Thousands flocked to see the corpse, and among them Balbilla, who had behaved like a distracted creature when she heard to what an end her idol had come. She had rushed up and down the river-bank, among the citizens and fishermen, dressed in black mourning robes and with her hair flying about her. The Egyptians had compared her to the mourning Isis seeking the body of her beloved husband, Osiris. She was beside herself with grief, and her companion implored her in vain to calm herself and remember her rank and her dignity as a woman. But Balbilla pushed her vehemently aside, and when the news was brought that Nile had yielded up his prey she rushed on foot to see the body, with the rest of the crowd.

Her name was in every mouth, everyone knew that she was the Empress' friend, and so she was willingly and promptly obeyed when she commanded the bearers who carried the bier on which the recovered body lay to set it down and to lift up the sheet which shrouded it. Pale and trembling, she went up to it and gazed down at the drowned man; but only for a moment could she endure the sight. She turned away with a shudder, and desired the bearers to go on. When the funeral procession had disappeared and she could no longer hear the shrill wailing of the Egyptian women, and no longer see them streaking their breast, head, and hair with damp earth and flinging up their arms wildly in the air, she turned to her companion and said calmly: "Now, Claudia, let us go home."

In the evening at supper she appeared dressed in black, like Sabina and all the rest of the suite, but she was calm and ready with an answer to every observation.

Pontius had travelled with them from Thebes to Besa, and she had spared him nothing that could punish him for his long absence, and had mercilessly compelled him to listen to all her verses on Antinous.

He meanwhile had been perfectly cool about it, and had criticised her poems exactly as if they had referred not to a man of flesh and blood but to some statue or god. This epigram he would praise, the next he would disparage, a third condemn. Her confession that she had been in the habit of complimenting Antinous with flowers and

fruit he heard with a shrug of the shoulders, saying pleasantly: "Give him as many presents as you will; I know that you expect no gifts from your divinity in return for your sacrifices."

His words had surprised and delighted her. Pontius always understood her, and did not deserve that she should wound him. So she let him gaze into her soul, and told him how much she loved Antinous so long as he was absent. Then she laughed and confessed that she was perfectly indifferent to him as soon as they were together.

When, after the Bithynian's death, she lost all self-control he simply let her alone, and begged Claudia to do the same.

The same day that the body was found it was burnt on a pile of precious wood. Hadrian had refused to see it when he learnt that the death by drowning had terribly distorted the lad's features.

A few hours after the ashes of the Bithynian had been collected and brought in a golden vase to Hadrian, the Nile fleet was once more under sail, this time with the Emperor on board one of the boats, to proceed without farther halt to Alexandria.

Hadrian remained alone with only his slave and his secretary on the boat that conveyed him; but he several times sent to Pontius to desire him to come from the ship on which he was and visit him on his. He liked to hear the architect's deep voice, and discussed with him the plans which Pontius had sketched for his mausoleum in Rome and the monument to his lost favorite which he proposed to have erected from designs of his own in the large city which he intended should stand on the site of the little town of Besa, and which he had already named Antinoe. But these discussions only took up a limited number of hours, and then the architect was at liberty to return to Sabina's boat, on which Balbilla also lived.

A few days after they had quitted Besa he was sitting alone with the poetess on the deck of the Nile boat which, borne by the current and propelled by a hundred oars, was rapidly and steadily nearing its destination. Ever since the death of the hapless favorite Pontius had avoided mentioning him to her. She had now become as observant and as talkative as before, and in her eyes there even

shone at times a ray of the old sunny gayety of her nature. The architect thought he comprehended the characteristic change in her sentiments, and would not allude to the cause of the violent but transient fever under which she had suffered. "What did you discuss with Caesar to-day?" asked Balbilla of her friend. Pontius looked down at the ground and considered whether he could venture to utter the name of Antinous before the poetess. Balbilla observed his hesitation and said:

"Speak on; I can hear anything. That folly is past and over."

"Caesar is at work at the plans for a new town to be built and called Antinoe, and a sketch for a monument to his ill-fated favorite," said Pontius. "He will not accept any help, but I have to teach him to discriminate what is possible from what is impossible."

"Ah! he is always gazing at the stars and you look steadily at the road on which you are walking."

"An architect can make no use of anything that is unsteady or that has no firm foundation."

"That is a hard saying, Pontius. It is true that during the last few weeks I have behaved like a fool."

"I only wish that every tottering structure could recover its balance as quickly and as certainly as you! Antinous was a demigod for beauty, and a good faithful fellow besides."

"Do not speak of him any more," exclaimed Balbilla shuddering. "He looked dreadful. Can you forgive me for my conduct?"

"I never was angry with you."

"But I lost your esteem."

"No, Balbilla. Beauty, which is dear to us all, and which the Muse has kissed, attracted your easily moved poet's soul and it fluttered off at random. Let it fly! My friend's true womanly nature was never carried away by it. She stands on a rock, that I am sure of."

"How good and kind in you to say so—too good, too kind! for I am a feeble creature, turned by every breeze that blows, a vain little fool who does not know one hour what she may do the next, a spoilt child that likes best to do the thing it ought to leave undone, a weak girl who finds a pleasure in doing battle with men. For all in all —"

"For all in all a darling of the gods who to-day can climb the rocks with a firm step and to-morrow lies dreaming in the sunshine among flowers—for all in all a nature that has no equal and which lacks nothing, nothing whatever that constitutes a true woman excepting —"

"I know what I lack," cried Balbilla. "A strong man on whom I can depend, whose warnings I can respect. You, you are that man; you and none other, for as soon as I feel you by my side I find it difficult to do what I know to be wrong. Here I am, Pontius! Will you have me with all my moods, with all my faults and weaknesses?"

"Balbilla!" cried the architect, beside himself with heartfelt agitation and surprise, and he pressed her hand long and fervently to his lips.

"You will? You will take me? You will never leave me, you will warn, support me and protect me?"

"Till my last day, till death, as my child, as the apple of my eye, as—dare I say it and believe it?—as my love, my second self, my wife."

"Oh! Pontius, Pontius," she exclaimed, grasping his broad, right hand in both her own. "This hour restores to the orphaned Balbilla, father and mother and gives her besides the husband that she loves."

"Mine, mine!" cried the architect. "Immortal gods! During half a lifetime I have never found time, in the midst of labor and fatigue, to indulge in the joys of love and now you give me with interest and compound interest the treasure you have so long withheld."

"How can you, a reasonable man, so over-estimate the value of your possession? But you shall find some good in it. Life can no longer be conceived of as worth having without the possessor."

"And to me it has so long seemed empty and cold without you, you strange, unique, incomparable creature."

"But why did you not come sooner, and so give me no time to behave like a fool?"

"Because, because," said Pontius, gravely, "such a flight towards the sun seemed to me too bold; because I remember that my father's father —"

"He was the noblest man that the ancestor of my house attracted to its greatness."

"He was—consider it duly at this moment—he was your grandfather's slave."

"I know it, but I also know, that there is not a man on earth who is worthier of freedom than you are, or whom I could ask as humbly as I ask you: Take me, poor, foolish Balbilla, to be your wife, guide me and make of me whatever you can, for your own honor and mine."

The brief Nile voyage brought days and hours of the highest happiness to Balbilla and her lover. Before the fleet sailed into the Mareotic harbor of Alexandria, Pontius revealed his happy secret to the Emperor. Hadrian smiled for the first time since the death of his favorite, and desired the architect to bring Balbilla to him.

"I was wrong in my interpretation of the Pythian oracle," said he, as he laid the poetess's hand in that of Pontius. "Would you like to know how it runs Pontius—do not prompt me, my child. Anything that I have read through once or twice I never forget. Pythia said:

*'That which thou boldest most precious and dear shall be torn from*

*thy keeping,*

*And from the heights of Olympus, down shalt thou fall in the dust;*



*Still the contemplative eye discerns under mutable sand-drifts*

*Stable foundations of stone, marble and natural rock.'*

"You have chosen well girl. The oracle guaranteed you a safe road to tread through life. As to the dust of which it speaks, it exists no doubt in a certain sense, but this hand wields the broom that will sweep it away. Solemnize your marriage in Alexandria as soon as you will, but then come to Rome, that is the only condition I impose. A thing I always have at heart is the introduction of new and worthy members into the class of Knights, for it is in that way alone that its fallen dignity can be restored. This ring, my Pontius, gives you the rank of eques, and such a man as you are, the husband of Balbilla and the friend of Caesar may no doubt by-and-bye find a seat in the Senate. What this generation can produce in stone and marble, my mausoleum shall bear witness to. Have you altered the plan of the bridge?"

## CHAPTER XXIII.

In Alexandria the news of the nomination of the "sham Eros" to be the Emperor's successor was hailed with joy, and the citizens availed themselves gladly of his fresh and favorable opportunity to hold one festival after another. Titianus took care to provide for the due performance of the usual acts of grace, and among others he threw open the prison-gates of Canopus, and the sculptor Pollux was set at liberty.

The hapless artist had grown pale, it is true, in durance vile, but neither leaner nor enfeebled in body; on the other hand all the vigor of his intellect, all his bright courage for life and his happy creative instinct, seemed altogether crushed out of him. His face, as in his dirty and ragged chiton, he journeyed from Canopus to Alexandria, revealed neither eager thankfulness for the unexpected boon of liberty, nor happiness at the prospect of seeing again his own people and Arsinoe.

In the town he went, unintelligently dreaming as he walked, from one street to another, but he was familiar with every stone of the way, and his feet found their way to his sister's house. How happy was Diotima, how her children rejoiced, how impatient was each one to conduct him to the old folks! How high in the air the Graces frisked and leaped in front of the new little home to welcome the returned absentee! And Doris, poor Doris, almost fainted with joyful surprise and her husband had to support her in his arms when her long vanished son, whom she had never given up for lost, however, suddenly stood before her and said: "Here am I." How fondly she kissed and caressed her dear, cruel, restored fugitive. The singer too loudly expressed his joy alike in verse and in prose, and fetched his best theatrical dress out of the chest to put it on his son in the place of his ragged chiton.

A mighty torrent of curses and execrations flowed from the old man's lips as Pollux told his story. The sculptor found it difficult to bring it to an end, for his father interrupted him at every word, and all the while he was talking his mother forced him to eat and drink incessantly, even when he could no more. After he had assured her that he was long since replete, she pushed two more pots on to the fire, for he must have been half-starved in prison, and what he did

not want now he would find room for two hours hence. Euphorion himself conducted Pollux to the bath in the evening, and as they went home together he never for an instant left his side; the sense of being near him did him good and was like some comfortable physical sensation.

The singer was not usually inquisitive, but on this occasion he never ceased asking questions till Doris led her son to the bed she had freshly made for him. After the artist had gone to rest, the old woman once more slipped into his room, kissed his forehead, and said:

"To-day you have still been thinking too much of that hideous prison—but to-morrow my boy, to-morrow you will be the same as before, will you not?"

"Only leave me alone mother; I shall soon be better," he replied. "This bed is as good as a sleeping-draught; the plank in the prison was quite a different thing."

"You have never asked once for your Arsinoe," said Doris.

"What can she matter to me? Only let me sleep." But the next morning Pollux was just the same as he had been the previous evening, and as the days went on his condition remained unchanged. His head drooped on his breast, he never spoke but when he was spoken to, and when Doris or Euphorion tried to talk to him of the future, he would ask: "Am I a burden to you?" or begged them not to worry him.

Still, he was gentle and kind, took his sister's children in his arms, played with the Graces, whistled to the birds, went in and out, and played a valiant part at every meal. Now and again he would ask after Arsinoe. Once he allowed himself to be guided to the house where she lived, but he would not knock at Paulina's door and seemed overawed by the grandeur of the house. After he had been brooding and dreaming for a week, so idle, listless, and absent that his mother's heart was filled with anxious fears every time she looked at him, his brother Teuker hit upon a happy idea.

The young gem-cutter was not usually a frequent visitor to his parents' house, but since the return of the hapless Pollux he called there almost daily. His apprenticeship was over and he seemed on the high-road to become a great master in his art; nevertheless he esteemed his brother's gifts as far beyond his own and had tried to devise some means of reawakening the dormant energies of the luckless man's brain.

"It was at this table," said Teuker to his mother, "that Pollux used to sit. This evening I will bring in a lump of clay and a good piece of modelling wax. Just put it all on the table and lay his tools by the side of it; perhaps when he sees them he will take a fancy again to work. If he can only make up his mind to model even a doll for the children he will soon get into the vein again, and he will go on from small things to great."

Teuker brought the materials, Doris set them out with the modelling tools, and next morning watched her son's proceedings with an anxious heart. He got up late, as he had always done since his return home, and sat a long time over the bowl of porridge which his mother had prepared for his breakfast. Then he sauntered across to his table, stood in front of it awhile, broke off a piece of clay and kneaded and moulded it in his fingers into balls and cylinders, looked at one of them more closely and then, flinging it on the ground, he said, as he leaned across the table supporting himself on both hands to put his face near his mother's:

"You want me to work again; but it is of no use—I could do no good with it."

The old woman's eyes filled with tears, but she did not answer him. In the evening Pollux begged her to put away the tools.

When he was gone to bed she did so, and while she was moving about with a light in the dark, lumber-room in which she had kept them with other disused things, her eye fell on the unfinished wax model which had been the last work of her ill-starred son. A new idea struck her. She called Euphorion, made him throw the clay into the court-yard and place the model on the table by the side of the wax. Then she put out the very same tools as he had been using on the fateful day of their expulsion from Lochias, close to the cleverly-

sketched portrait, and begged her husband to go out with her quite early next morning and to remain absent till mid-day.

"You will see," she said, "when he is standing face to face with his last work and there is no one by to disturb him or look at him, he will find the ends of the threads that have been cut and perhaps be able to gather them up again and go on with the work where it was interrupted."

The mother's heart had hit upon the right idea. When Pollux had eaten his breakfast he went to his table exactly as he had done the day before; but the sight of the work in hand had quite a different effect to the mere raw clay and wax. His eyes sparkled; he walked round the table with an attentive gaze examining his work as keenly and as eagerly as if it were some fine thing he saw for the first time. Memory revived in his mind. He laughed aloud, clasped his hands and said to himself, "Capital! Something may be made of that!"

His dull weariness slipped off him, as it were; a confident smile parted his lips and he seized the wax with a firm hand. But he did not begin to work at once; he only tried whether his fingers had not lost their cunning, and whether the yielding material was obedient to his will. The wax was no less docile to his touch than in former days, as he pinched or pulled it. Perhaps then the tormenting thought that blighted his life, the dread that in the prison he had ceased to be an artist, and had lost all his faculty was nothing more than a mad delusion! He must at any rate try how he could get on at the work.

No one was by to observe him—he might dare the attempt at once. The sweat of anguish stood in large beads on his brow as he finally concentrated his volition, shook back the hair from his face and took up a lump of the wax in both hands. There stood the portrait of Antinous with the head only half-finished. Now—could he succeed in modelling that lovely head free-hand and from memory?

His breath came fast, and his hands trembled as he set to work; but soon his hand was as steady as ever, his eye was calm and keen again, and the work progressed. The fine features of the young Bithynian were distinct to his mind's eye, and when, about four

hours after, his mother looked in at the window to see what Pollux was doing, whether her little stratagem had succeeded, she cried out with surprise, for the favorite's bust, a likeness in every feature, stood on a plinth side by side with the original sketch. Before she could cross the threshold her son had run to meet her, lifted her in his arms, and kissing her forehead and lips he exclaimed, radiant with delight:

"Mother, I still can work. Mother, mother, I am not lost!"

In the afternoon his brother came in and saw what he had been doing, and now—and not till now—could Teuker honestly be glad to have found his brother again.

While the two artists were sitting together, and the gem-cutter was suggesting to the sculptor, who had complained of the bad light in his parent's house, that he should carry the statue to his master's workshop—which was much lighter—to complete it, Euphorion had quietly gone to some remote corner of his provision-shed and brought to light an amphora full of noble Chian wine which had been given to him by a rich merchant, for whose wedding he had performed the part of Hymenaeus with a chorus of youths. For twenty years had he still preserved this jar of wine for some specially happy occasion. This jar and his best lute were the only objects which Euphorion had carried with his own hand from Lochias to his daughter's house and then again to his own new abode. With an air of dignified pride the singer set the old amphora before his sons, but Doris laid hands upon it at once and said:

"I am glad to bestow the good gift upon you, and would willingly drink a cup of it with you; but a prudent general does not celebrate his triumph before he has won the battle. As soon as the statue of the beautiful lad is completed, I myself, will wreath this venerable jar with ivy, and beg you spare it to us, my dear old man—but not before."

"Mother is right," said Pollux. "And if the amphora is really destined for me, if you will allow it, my father shall not remove the pitch wig from its venerable head, till Arsinoe is mine once more!"

"That is well my boy," cried Doris, "and then I will crown, not merely the jar but all of us too, with nothing but sweet roses."

The next day Pollux, with his unfinished statue, removed to the workshop of his brother's master. The worthy man cleared the best place for the young sculptor, for he thought highly of him and wished to make good, as far as lay in his power, the injustice the poor fellow had suffered from the treachery of Papias. Now, from sunrise till evening fell, Pollux was constant to his work. He gave himself up to the resuscitated pleasure and power of creation with real passion. Instead of using wax he had recourse to clay, and formed a tall figure which represented Antinous as the youthful Bacchus, as the god might have appeared to the pirates. A mantle fell in light folds from his left shoulder to his ankles, leaving the broad breast and right arm entirely free; vine-leaves and grapes wreathed his flowing locks, and a pine-cone, flame-shaped, crowned his brow. The left arm was raised in a graceful curve, and his fingers lightly grasped a thyrsus which rested on the ground and stood taller than the god's head; by the side of this magnificent figure stood a mighty wine-jar, half hidden by the drapery.

For a whole week Pollux had devoted himself to this task during all the hours of daylight with unflagging zeal and diligence. Before night fell he was accustomed to leave his work and walk up and down in front of Paulina's house, but for the present he refrained from knocking at the door and asking after the girl he loved. He had heard from his mother how anxiously she was guarded from him and his; still Paulina's severity would certainly not have hindered the artist from making the attempt to possess himself of his dearest treasure. What held him back from even approaching Arsinoe, was the vow he had made to himself never to tempt her to quit her new and sheltered home till he had acquired a firm certainty of being once for all an artist, a true artist, who might hope to do something great, and who might dare to link the fate of the woman he loved, with his own.

When, on the eighth morning of his labors, he was taking a few minutes rest, his brother's master came past the rapidly advancing work, and after contemplating it for some time exclaimed:

"Splendid, splendid! Our time has produced nothing to compare with it!"

An hour later Pollux was standing at the door of Paulina's town-house, and let the knocker fall heavily on the door. The steward opened to him and asked him what he wanted. He asked to speak with dame Paulina, but she was not at home. Then he asked after Arsinoe, the daughter of Keraunus, who had found a home with the rich widow. The servant shook his head.

"My mistress is having her searched for," he said. "She disappeared yesterday evening. The ungrateful creature! She has tried to run away several times before now."

The artist laughed, slapped the steward on the back, and said:

"I will soon find her!" and he sprang away down the street, and back to his parents.

Arsinoe had received much kindness in Paulina's house, but she had also gone through many bad hours. For months she had been obliged to believe that her lover was dead. Pontius had told her that Pollux had entirely vanished and her benefactress persisted in all ways speaking of him as of one dead. The poor child had shed many tears for him, and when the longing to talk of him with some one who had known him had taken possession of her she had entreated Paulina to allow her to go to see his mother or to let Doris visit her. But the widow had desired her to give up all thought of the idol-maker and his belongings, speaking with contempt of the gate-keeper's worthy wife. Just at that time Selene also left the city, and now Arsinoe's longing for her old friends grew to a passionate craving to see them again.

One day she yielded to the promptings of her heart and slipped out into the street to seek Doris; but the door-keeper, who had been charged by Paulina never to allow her to go outside the door without his mistress's express permission, noticed her and brought her back to her protectress—not this time only, but, on several subsequent occasions when she attempted to escape.



It was not merely her longing to talk about Pollux which made her new home unendurable to Arsinoe, but many other reasons besides. She felt like a prisoner; and in fact she was one, for after each attempt at flight her freedom of movement was still farther impeded. It is true that she had soon ceased to submit patiently to all that was required of her and even had often opposed her adoptive mother with vehement words, tears and execrations, but these unpleasant scenes, which always ended by a declaration on Paulina's part that she forgave the girl, had always resulted in a long break in her drives and in a variety of small annoyances. Arsinoe was beginning to hate her benefactress and everything that surrounded her, and the hours of catechising and of prayer, which she could not escape, were a positive martyrdom. Ere long the doctrine to which Paulina sought to win her was confounded in her mind with that which it was intended to drive out, and she defiantly shut her heart against it.

Bishop Eumenes, who had been elected in the spring Patriarch of the Christians of Alexandria, visited her oftener than usual during the summer when Paulina lived in her suburban villa. Paulina, it is true, had fancied she could do without his help, and that she could and must carry her task through to the end by herself; but the worthy old man had felt sympathetically drawn to the poor ill-guided child, and sought to soothe and calm her mind and show her the goal, towards which Paulina desired to lead her, in all its beauty. After such discourses Arsinoe would be softened and felt inclined to believe in God and to love Christ, but no sooner had her protectress called her again into the school-room and put the very same things before her in her own way than the girl's heartstrings drew close again; and when she was desired to pray she raised her hands, indeed, but out of sheer defiance, she prayed in spirit to the Greek gods.

Frequently Paulina received visits from heathen acquaintances in rich dresses and the sight of them always reminded Arsinoe of former days. How poor she had been then! and yet she had always had a blue or a red ribbon to plait in her hair and trim the edge of her peplum. Now she might wear none but white dresses and the least scrap of colored ornament to dress her hair or smarten her robe was strictly forbidden. Such vain trifles, Paulina would say, were

very well for the heathen, but the Lord looked not at the body but at the heart.

Ah! and the poor little heart of the hapless child could not offer a very pleasing sight to the Father in Heaven, for hatred and disgust, sadness, impatience, and blasphemy seethed in it from morning till night. This young nature was surely formed for love and contentment, and both had left her weeping. Still Arsinoe never ceased to yearn for them.

When November had begun and another attempt to run away during their move back to the town-house had failed, Paulina tried to punish her by never speaking a word to her for a fortnight, and forbidding even the slave-women to speak to her. In these two weeks the talkative girl was reduced almost to desperation, and she even thought of throwing herself off the roof down into the courtyard. But she clung too dearly to life to carry this horrible project into execution. On the first of December Paulina once more spoke to her, forgave her ingratitude, as usual in a long, kind speech, and told her how many hours she had spent in praying for her enlightenment and improvement.

Paulina spoke the truth, and yet but half the truth, for she had never felt a real love for Arsinoe, and had now for a long time watched her come and go with actual dislike; but she required her conversion in order that the warmest wish of her heart might find fulfilment. It was for the happiness of her daughter, and not for the sake of her recalcitrant companion, that she prayed for her enlightenment and never ceased in her efforts to open the callous heart of her adopted child to the true faith.

In the afternoon preceding that morning when Pollux had at last knocked at the Christian widow's door, the sun shone with particular brilliancy, and Paulina had allowed the girl to go out with her. They spent some little time with a Christian family who dwelt on the shore of Lake Mareotis, and so it fell out that they did not return home till late in the evening. Arsinoe had long learnt, while she sat apparently gazing at the ground, to keep her eyes out of the carriage and to see everything that was going on around her; and as the chariot turned into their own street she spied in the distance a tall man who looked like her long-wept Pollux. She fixed her eyes

upon him, and had some difficulty in keeping herself from calling out aloud, for he it was who walked slowly down the street. She could not be mistaken, for the torches of two slaves who were walking in front of a litter had broadly lighted up his face and figure.

He was not lost—he was living, and seeking her. She could have shouted aloud for joy, but she did not stir till Paulina's chariot was standing still in front of her house. The door-keeper bustled out as usual to help his mistress to step out of the high-slung vehicle. Thus Paulina for an instant turned her back, and in that moment Arsinoe sprang out of the opposite side of the chariot, and was flying down towards the street where she had seen her lover. Before Paulina could discover that she was gone the runaway found herself in the midst of the throng which, when the day's work was over, poured out from the workshops and factories on their way home.

Paulina's slaves, who were sent out at once to seek the fugitive, had to return home this time empty-handed; but Arsinoe, on her part, had not succeeded in finding him she sought. For an hour she looked round and about her in vain; then she perceived that her search must be unsuccessful, and wondered how she might find her way to his parents' house. Rather than return to her benefactress she would have joined the roofless crew who passed the night on the hard marble pavement of the forecourts of the temple.

At first she rejoiced in the sense of recovered liberty, but when none of the passers-by could tell her where Euphorion, the singer, lived, and some young men followed her and addressed her with impudent speeches, terror made her turn aside into a street which led to the Bruchiom; her persecutors had not even then ceased to follow her, when a litter, escorted by lictors and several torch-bearers, was carried past. It was Julia, the kind wife of the prefect, who sat in it; Arsinoe recognized her at once, followed her, and reached the door of her residence at the same moment as she herself. As the matron got out of her litter she observed the girl who placed herself modestly, but with hands uplifted in entreaty, at the side of her path. Julia greeted the pretty creature in whom she had once taken a motherly interest with affectionate sympathy, beckoned

Arsinoe to her, smiled as she listened to her request for a night's shelter, and led her with much satisfaction to her husband.

Titianus was ill; still he was glad once more to see the ill-fated palace-steward's pretty daughter; he listened to her story of her flight with many signs of disapprobation, but kindly withal, and expressed the warmest satisfaction at hearing that the sculptor Pollux was still in the land of the living.

The grand and lordly bed in one of the strangers' rooms in the prefect's house had held many a more illustrious guest, but never one whose sleep was brightened by happier dreams than the poor orphaned "little fugitive," who, no longer ago than yesterday, had cried herself to sleep.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Arsinoe was up betimes on the following morning; much embarrassed by all the splendor that surrounded her, she walked up and down her room thinking of Pollux. Then she stopped to take pleasure in her own image displayed in a large mirror which stood on a dressing-table, and between whiles she compared the couch, on which she lay clown again at full length, with those in Paulina's house. Once more she felt herself a prisoner, but this time she liked her prison, and presently, when she heard slaves passing by her room, she flew to the door to listen, for it was just possible that Titianus might have sent to fetch Pollux, and would allow him to come to see her. At last a slave-woman came in, brought her some breakfast, and desired her from Julia to go into the garden and look at the flowers and aviaries till she should be sent for.

Early that morning the news had reached the prefect that Antinous had sought his death in the Nile, and it had shocked him greatly, less on account of the hapless youth than for Hadrian's sake. When he had given the proper official orders to announce the melancholy news and to desire the citizens to give some public expression of their sympathy with the Emperor's sorrow, he gave audience to the Patriarch Eumenes.

This venerable man, ever since the transactions which he had conducted—with reference to the thanksgiving of the Christians for the safety of the Emperor after the fire, had been one of the most esteemed friends of Titianus and Julia. The prefect discussed with the Patriarch the inauspicious effects that the death of the young fellow might be expected to have on the Emperor, and as a result, on the government, although the favorite had had no qualities of mind to distinguish him.

"Whenever Hadrian," continued Titianus, "would give his unresting brain an hour's relaxation, and release himself from disappointment and vexation and the severe toil and anxiety of which his life is overfull, he would go out hunting with the bold youth or would have the handsome, good-hearted boy into his own room. The sight of the Bithynian's beauty delighted his eye, and how well Antinous knew how to listen to him—silent, modest and attentive! Hadrian loved him as a son, and the poor fellow clung to

his master in return with more than a son's fidelity; his death itself proved it. Caesar himself said to me once; 'In the midst of the turmoil of waking life, when I see Antinous a feeling comes over me as if a beautiful dream stood incorporate before my eyes.'

"Caesar's grief at losing him must indeed be great," said the Patriarch.

"And the loss will add to the gloom of his grave and brooding nature, render his restless scheming and wandering still more capricious, and increase his suspiciousness and irritability."

"And the circumstances under which Antinous perished," added Eumenes, "will afford new ground for his attachment to superstitions."

"That is to be feared. We have not happy days before us; the revolt in Judaea, too, will again cost thousands of lives."

"If only it had been granted to you to assume the government of that province."

"But you know, my worthy friend, the condition I am in. On my bad days I am incapable of commanding a thought or opening my lips. When my breathlessness increases I feel as if I were being suffocated. I have placed many decades of my life at the disposal of the state, and I now feel justified in devoting the diminished strength which is left me to other things. I and my wife think of retiring to my property by lake Larius, and there to try whether we may succeed, she and I, in becoming worthy of the salvation and capable of apprehending the truth that you have offered us. You are there Julia? As the determination to retire from the world has matured in us, we have, both of us, remembered more than once the words of the Jewish sage, which you lately told us of. When the angel of God drove the first man out of Paradise, he said: 'Henceforth your heart must be your Paradise.' We are turning our backs on the pleasure of a city life —"

"And we do so without regret," said Julia, interrupting her husband, "for we bear in our minds the germ of a more indestructible, purer, and more lasting happiness."

"Amen!" said the Patriarch. "Where two such as you dwell together there the Lord is third in the bond." "Give us your disciple Marcianus to be our travelling-companion," said Titianus.

"Willingly," said Eumenes. "Shall he come to visit you when I leave you?"

"Not immediately," replied Julia. "I have this morning an important and at the same time pleasant business to attend to. You know Paulina, the widow of Pudeus. She took into her keeping a pretty young creature — "

"And Arsinoe has run away from her."

"We took her in here," said Titianus. "Her protectress seems to have failed in attracting her to her, or in working favorably on her nature."

"Yes," said the Patriarch. "There was but one key to her full, bright heart—Love—but Paulina tried to force it open with coercion and persistent driving. It remained closed—nay, the lock is spoiled.—But, if I may ask, how came the girl into your house?"

"That I can tell you later, we did not make her acquaintance for the first time yesterday."

"And I am going to fetch her lover to her," cried the prefect's wife.

"Paulina will claim her of you," said the Patriarch. "She is having her sought for everywhere; but the child will never thrive under her guidance."

"Did the widow formally adopt Arsinoe?" asked Titianus.

"No; she proposed doing so as soon as her young pupil — "

"Intentions count for nothing in law, and I can protect our pretty little guest against her claim."

"I will fetch her," said Julia. "The time must certainly have seemed very long to her already. Will you come with me, Eumenes?"

"With pleasure," replied the old man, "Arsinoe and I are excellent friends; a conciliatory word from me will do her good, and my blessing cannot harm even a heathen. Farewell, Titianus, my deacons are expecting me."

When Julia returned to the sitting-room with her protegee, the child's eyes were wet with tears, for the kind words of the venerable old man had gone to her heart and she knew and acknowledged that she had experienced good as well as evil from Paulina.

The matron found her husband no longer alone. Wealthy old Plutarch with his two supporters was with him, and in black garments, which were decorated with none but white flowers, instead of many colored garments; he presented a singular appearance. The old man was discoursing eagerly to the prefect; but as soon as he saw Arsinoe he broke off his harangue, clapped his hands and was quite excited with the pleasure of seeing once more the fair Roxana for whom he had once visited in vain all the gold-workers' shops in the city.

"But I am tired," cried Plutarch, with quite youthful vivacity, "I am quite tired of keeping the ornaments for you. There are quite enough other useless things in my house. They belong to you, not to me, and this very day I will send them to the noble Julia, that she may give them to you. Give me your hand, dear child; you have grown paler but more womanly. What do you think, Titianus, she would still do for Roxana; only your wife must find a dress for her again. All in white, and no ribband in your hair! — like a Christian."

"I know some one who will find out the way to fitly crown these soft tresses," replied Julia. "Arsinoe is the bride of Pollux, the sculptor."

"Pollux!" exclaimed Plutarch, in extreme excitement. "Move me forward, Antaeus and Atlas, the sculptor Pollux is her lover? A great, a splendid artist! The very same, noble Titianus, of whom I just now speaking to you."

"You know him?" asked the prefect's wife.



"No, but I have just left the work-shop of Periander, the gem-cutter, and there I saw the model of a statue of Antinous that is unique, marvellous, incomparable! The Bithynian as Dionysus! The work would do no discredit to a Phidias, to a Lysippus. Pollux was out of the way, but I laid my hand at once on his work; the young master must execute it immediately in marble. Hadrian will be enchanted with this portrait of his beautiful and devoted favorite. You must admire it, every connoisseur must! I will pay for it, the only question is whether I or the city should present it to Caesar. This matter your husband must decide."

Arsinoe was radiant with joy at these words, but she stepped modestly into the background as an official came in and handed Titianus a dispatch that had just arrived.

The prefect read it; then turning to his friend and his wife, he said:

"Hadrian ascribes to Antinous the honors of a god."

"Fortunate Pollux!" exclaimed Plutarch. "He has executed the first statue of the new divinity. I will present it to the city, and they shall place it in the temple to Antinous of which we must lay the first stone before Caesar is back here again. Farewell, my noble friends! Greet your bridegroom from me, my child. His work belongs to me. Pollux will be the first among his fellow-artists, and it has been my privilege to discover this new star—the eighth artist whose merit I have detected while he was still unknown. Your future brother-in-law too, Teuker, will turn out well. I am having a stone cut by him with a portrait of Antinous. Once more farewell; I must go to the Council. We shall have to discuss the subject of a temple to the new divinity. Move on you two!"

An hour after Plutarch had quitted the prefect's house Julia's chariot was standing at the entrance of a lane, much too narrow to admit a vehicle with horses, and which ended in a little plot on which stood Euphorion's humble house. Julia's outrunners easily found out the residence of the sculptor's parents, led the matron and Arsinoe to the spot, and showed them the door they should knock at.

"What a color you have, my little girl!" said Julia. "Well, I will not intrude on your meeting, but I should like to deliver you with my own hand into those of your future mother. Go to that little house, Arctus, and beg dame Doris to step out here. Only say that some one wishes to speak with her, but do not mention my name."

Arsinoe's heart beat so violently that she was incapable of saying a word of thanks to her kind protectress. "Step behind this palm-tree," said the lady. Arsinoe obeyed; but she felt as though it was some outside volition, and not her own, that guided her to her hiding-place. She heard nothing of the first words spoken by the Roman lady and Doris. She only saw the dear old face of her Pollux's mother, and in spite of her reddened eyes and the wrinkles which trouble had furrowed in her face, she could not tire of looking at it. It reminded her of the happiest days of her childhood, and she longed to rush forward and throw her arms round the neck of the kindly, good-hearted woman. Then she heard Julia say: "I have brought her to you. She is just as sweet and as maidenly and lovely as she was the first time we saw her in the theatre."

"Where is she? Where is she?" asked Doris in a trembling voice.

Julia pointed to the palm, and was about to call Arsinoe, but the girl could no longer restrain her longing to fall on the neck of some one dear to her, for Pollux had come out of the door to see who had asked for his mother, and to see him and to fly to his breast with a cry of joy had been one and the same act to Arsinoe.

Julia gazed at the couple with moistened eyes, and when, after many kind words for old and young alike, she took leave of the happy group, she said:

"I will provide for your outfit my child, and this time I think you will wear it, not merely for one transient hour but through a long and happy life."

Joyful singing sounded out that evening from Euphorion's little home. Doris and her husband, and Pollux and Arsinoe, Diotima and Teuker, decked with garlands, reclined round the amphora which was wreathed with roses, drinking to pleasure and joy, to art and

love, and to all the gifts of the present. The sweet bride's long hair was once more plaited with handsome blue ribbons.

Three weeks after these events Hadrian was again in Alexandria. He kept aloof from all the festivals instituted in honor of the new god Antinous, and smiled incredulously when he was told that a new star had appeared in the sky, and that an oracle had declared it to be the soul of his lost favorite.

When Plutarch conducted the Emperor and his friends to see the Bacchus Antinous, which Pollux had completed in the clay, Hadrian was deeply struck and wished to know the name of the master who had executed this noble work of art. Not one of his companion's had the courage to speak the name of Pollux in his presence; only Pontius ventured to come forward for his young friend. He related to Hadrian the hapless artist's history and begged him to forgive him. The Emperor nodded his approval, and said:

"For the sake of this lost one he shall be forgiven."

Pollux was brought into his presence, and Hadrian, holding out his hand said as he pressed the sculptor's:

"The Immortals have bereft me of his love and faithfulness, but your art has preserved his beauty for me and for the world —"

Every city in the Empire vied in building temples and erecting statues to the new god, and Pollux, Arsinoe's happy husband, was commissioned to execute statues and busts of Antinous for a hundred towns; but he refused most of the orders, and would send out no work as his own that he had not executed himself on a new conception. His master, Papias, returned to Alexandria, but he was received there by his fellow-artists with such insulting contempt, that in an evil hour he destroyed himself. Teuker lived to be the most famous gem-engraver of his time.

Soon after Selene's martyrdom dame Hannah quitted Besa; the office of Superior of the Deaconesses at Alexandria was intrusted to her, and she exercised it with much blessing till an advanced age. Mary, the deformed girl, remained behind in the Nile-port, which

under Hadrian was extended into the magnificent city of Antmoe. There were there two graves from which she could not bear to part.

Four years after Arsinoe's marriage with Pollux, Hadrian called the young sculptor to Rome; he was there to execute the statue of the Emperor in a quadriga. This work was intended to crown and finish his mausoleum constructed by Pontius, and Pollux carried it out in so admirable a manner, that when it was ended, Hadrian said to him with a smile:

"Now you have earned the right to pronounce sentence of death on the works of other masters." Euphorion's son lived in honor and prosperity to see his children, the children of his faithful wife Arsinoe—who was greatly admired by the Tiber-grow up to be worthy citizens. They remained heathen; but the Christian love which Eumenes had taught Paulina's foster-daughter was never forgotten, and she kept a kindly place for it in her heart and in her household. A few months before the young couple left Alexandria, Doris had peacefully gone to her last rest, and her husband died soon after her; the want of his faithful companion was the complaint he succumbed to.

On the shores of the Tiber, Pontius was still the sculptor's friend. Balbilla and her husband gave their corrupt fellow-citizens the example of a worthy, faithful marriage on the old Roman pattern. The poetess's bust had been completed by Pollux in Alexandria, and with all its tresses and little curls, it found favor in Balbilla's eyes.

Verus was to have enjoyed the title of Caesar even during Hadrian's lifetime, but after a long illness he died the first. Lucilla nursed him with unfailing devotion and enjoyed the longed-for monopoly of his attentions through a period of much suffering. It was on their son that in later years the purple devolved.

The predictions of the prefect Titianus were fulfilled, for the Emperor's faults increased with years and the meaner side of his mind and nature came into sharper relief. Titianus and his wife led a retired life by lake Larius, far from the world, and both were baptized before they died. They never pined for the turmoil of a pleasure-seeking world or its dazzling show, for they had learnt to cherish in their own hearts all that is fairest in life.

It was the slave Mastor who brought to Titianus the news of the sovereign's death. Hadrian had given him his freedom before he died and had left him a handsome legacy.

The prefect gave him a piece of land to farm and continued in friendly relations with his Christian neighbor and his pretty daughter, who grew up among her father's co-religionists.

When Titianus had told his wife the melancholy news he added solemnly:

"A great sovereign is dead. The pettinesses which disfigured the man Hadrian will be forgotten by posterity, for the ruler Hadrian was one of those men whom Fate sets in the places they belong to, and who, true to their duty, struggle indefatigably to the end. With wise moderation he was so far master of himself as to bridle his ambition and to defy the blame and prejudice of all the Romans. The hardest, and perhaps the wisest, resolution of his life was to abandon the provinces which it would have exhausted the power of the Empire to retain. He travelled over every portion of his dominion within the limits he himself had set to it, shrinking from neither frost nor heat, and he tried to be as thoroughly acquainted with every portion of it as if the Empire were a small estate he had inherited. His duties as a sovereign forced him to travel, and his love of travel lightened the duty. He was possessed by a real passion to understand and learn everything. Even the Incomprehensible set no limits to his thirst for knowledge, but ever striving to see farther and to dig deeper than is possible to the mind of man, he wasted a great part of his mighty powers in trying to snatch aside the curtain which hides the destinies of the future. No one ever worked at so many secondary occupations as he, and yet no former Emperor ever kept his eye so unerringly fixed on the main task of his life, the consolidation and maintenance of the strength of the state and the improvement and prosperity of its citizens."