

An Egyptian Princess — Volume 01 eBook

An Egyptian Princess — Volume 01 by Georg Ebers

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND GERMAN EDITION

Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae,
Aut simul et jucunda et idonea dicere vitae.
Horat. De arte poetica v. 333.

It is now four years since this book first appeared before the public, and I feel it my duty not to let a second edition go forth into the world without a few words of accompaniment. It hardly seems necessary to assure my readers that I have endeavored to earn for the following pages the title of a "corrected edition." An author is the father of his book, and what father could see his child preparing to set out on a new and dangerous road, even if it were not for the first time, without endeavoring to supply him with every good that it lay in his power to bestow, and to free him from every fault or infirmity on which the world could look unfavorably? The assurance therefore that I have repeatedly bestowed the greatest possible care on the correction of my Egyptian Princess seems to me superfluous, but at the same time I think it advisable to mention briefly where and in what manner I have found it necessary to make these emendations. The notes have been revised, altered, and enriched with all those results of antiquarian research (more especially in reference to the language and monuments of ancient Egypt) which have come to our knowledge since the year 1864, and which my limited space allowed me to lay before a general public. On the alteration of the text itself I entered with caution, almost with timidity; for during four years of constant effort as academical tutor, investigator and writer in those severe regions of study which exclude the free exercise of imagination, the poetical side of a man's nature may forfeit much to the critical; and thus, by attempting to remodel my tale entirely, I might have incurred the danger of removing it from the more genial sphere of literary work to which it properly belongs. I have therefore contented myself with a careful revision of the style, the omission of lengthy passages which might have diminished the interest of the story to general readers, the insertion of a few characteristic or explanatory additions, and the alteration of the proper names. These last I have written not in their Greek, but in their Latin forms, having been assured by more than one fair reader that the names Ibykus and Cyrus would have been greeted by them as old acquaintances, whereas the "Ibykos" and "Kyros" of the first edition looked so strange and learned, as to be quite discouraging. Where however the German k has the same worth as the Roman c I have adopted it in preference. With respect to the Egyptian names and those with which we have become acquainted through the cuneiform inscriptions, I have chosen the forms most adapted to our German modes of speech, and in the present edition have placed those few explanations which seemed to me indispensable to the right understanding of the text, at the foot of the page, instead of among the less easily accessible notes at the end.

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The fact that displeasure has been excited among men of letters by this attempt to clothe the hardly-earned results of severer studies in an imaginative form is even clearer to me now than when I first sent this book before the public. In some points I agree with this judgment, but that the act is kindly received, when a scholar does not scorn to render the results of his investigations accessible to the largest number of the educated class, in the form most generally interesting to them, is proved by the rapid sale of the first large edition of this work. I know at least of no better means than those I have chosen, by which to instruct and suggest thought to an extended circle of readers. Those who read learned books evince in so doing a taste for such studies; but it may easily chance that the following pages, though taken up only for amusement, may excite a desire for more information, and even gain a disciple for the study of ancient history.

Considering our scanty knowledge of the domestic life of the Greeks and Persians before the Persian war—of Egyptian manners we know more—even the most severe scholar could scarcely dispense with the assistance of his imagination, when attempting to describe private life among the civilized nations of the sixth century before Christ. He would however escape all danger of those anachronisms to which the author of such a work as I have undertaken must be hopelessly liable. With attention and industry, errors of an external character may be avoided, but if I had chosen to hold myself free from all consideration of the times in which I and my readers have come into the world, and the modes of thought at present existing among us, and had attempted to depict nothing but the purely ancient characteristics of the men and their times, I should have become unintelligible to many of my readers, uninteresting to all, and have entirely failed in my original object. My characters will therefore look like Persians, Egyptians, &c., but in their language, even more than in their actions, the German narrator will be perceptible, not always superior to the sentimentality of his day, but a native of the world in the nineteenth century after the appearance of that heavenly Master, whose teaching left so deep an impression on human thought and feeling.

The Persians and Greeks, being by descent related to ourselves, present fewer difficulties in this respect than the Egyptians, whose dwelling-place on the fruitful islands won by the Nile from the Desert, completely isolated them from the rest of the world.

To Professor Lepsius, who suggested to me that a tale confined entirely to Egypt and the Egyptians might become wearisome, I owe many thanks; and following his hint, have so arranged the materials supplied by Herodotus as to introduce my reader first into a Greek circle. Here he will feel in a measure at home, and indeed will entirely sympathize with them on one important point, viz.: in their ideas on

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the Beautiful and on Art. Through this Hellenic portico he reaches Egypt, from thence passes on to Persia and returns finally to the Nile. It has been my desire that the three nations should attract him equally, and I have therefore not centred the entire interest of the plot in one hero, but have endeavored to exhibit each nation in its individual character, by means of a fitting representative. The Egyptian Princess has given her name to the book, only because the weal and woe of all my other characters were decided by her fate, and she must therefore be regarded as the central point of the whole.

In describing Amasis I have followed the excellent description of Herodotus, which has been confirmed by a picture discovered on an ancient monument. Herodotus has been my guide too in the leading features of Cambyses' character; indeed as he was born only forty or fifty years after the events related, his history forms the basis of my romance.

"Father of history" though he be, I have not followed him blindly, but, especially in the development of my characters, have chosen those paths which the principles of psychology have enabled me to lay down for myself, and have never omitted consulting those hieroglyphic and cuneiform inscriptions which have been already deciphered. In most cases these confirm the statements of Herodotus.

I have caused Bartja's murder to take place after the conquest of Egypt, because I cannot agree with the usually received translation of the Behistun inscription. This reads as follows: "One named Cambujiya, son of Curu, of our family, was king here formerly and had a brother named Bartiya, of the same father and the same mother as Cambujiya. Thereupon Cambujiya killed that Bartiya." In a book intended for general readers, it would not be well to enter into a discussion as to niceties of language, but even the uninitiated will see that the word "thereupon" has no sense in this connection. In every other point the inscription agrees with Herodotus' narrative, and I believe it possible to bring it into agreement with that of Darius on this last as well; but reserve my proofs for another time and place.

It has not been ascertained from whence Herodotus has taken the name Smerdis which he gives to Bartja and Gaumata. The latter occurs again, though in a mutilated form, in Justin.

My reasons for making Phanes an Athenian will be found in Note 90. Vol. I. This coercion of an authenticated fact might have been avoided in the first edition, but could not now be altered without important changes in the entire text. The means I have adopted in my endeavor to make Nitetis as young as possible need a more serious apology; as, notwithstanding Herodotus' account of the mildness of Amasis' rule, it is improbable that King Hophra should have been alive twenty years after his fall. Even

this however is not impossible, for it can be proved that his descendants were not persecuted by Amasis.

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On a Stela in the Leyden Museum I have discovered that a certain Psamtik, a member of the fallen dynasty, lived till the 17th year of Amasis' reign, and died at the age of seventy-five.

Lastly let me be permitted to say a word or two in reference to Rhodopis. That she must have been a remarkable woman is evident from the passage in Herodotus quoted in Notes 10, and 14, Vol. I., and from the accounts given by many other writers. Her name, "the rosy-cheeked one," tells us that she was beautiful, and her amiability and charm of manner are expressly praised by Herodotus. How richly she was endowed with gifts and graces may be gathered too from the manner in which tradition and fairy lore have endeavored to render her name immortal. By many she is said to have built the most beautiful of the Pyramids, the Pyramid of Mycerinus or Menkera. One tale related of her and reported by Strabo and Aelian probably gave rise to our oldest and most beautiful fairy tale, Cinderella; another is near akin to the Loreley legend. An eagle, according to Aelian—the wind, in Strabo's tale,—bore away Rhodopis' slippers while she was bathing in the Nile, and laid them at the feet of the king, when seated on his throne of justice in the open market. The little slippers so enchanted him that he did not rest until he had discovered their owner and made her his queen.

The second legend tells us how a wonderfully beautiful naked woman could be seen sitting on the summit of one of the pyramids (ut in una ex pyramidibus); and how she drove the wanderers in the desert mad through her exceeding loveliness.

Moore borrowed this legend and introduces it in the following verse:

"Fair Rhodope, as story tells—
The bright unearthly nymph, who dwells
'Mid sunless gold and jewels hid,
The lady of the Pyramid."

Fabulous as these stories sound, they still prove that Rhodopis must have been no ordinary woman. Some scholars would place her on a level with the beautiful and heroic Queen Nitokris, spoken of by Julius Africanus, Eusebius and others, and whose name, (signifying the victorious Neith) has been found on the monuments, applied to a queen of the sixth dynasty. This is a bold conjecture; it adds however to the importance of our heroine; and without doubt many traditions referring to the one have been transferred to the other, and vice versa. Herodotus lived so short a time after Rhodopis, and tells so many exact particulars of her private life that it is impossible she should have been a mere creation of fiction. The letter of Darius, given at the end of Vol. II., is intended to identify the Greek Rhodopis with the mythical builder of the Pyramid. I would also mention here that she is called Doricha by Sappho. This may have been her name before she received the title of the "rosy-cheeked one."

I must apologize for the torrent of verse that appears in the love-scenes between Sappho and Bartja; it is also incumbent upon me to say a few words about the love-scenes themselves, which I have altered very slightly in the new edition, though they have been more severely criticised than any other portion of the work.

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First I will confess that the lines describing the happy love of a handsome young couple to whom I had myself become warmly attached, flowed from my pen involuntarily, even against my will (I intended to write a novel in prose) in the quiet night, by the eternal Nile, among the palms and roses. The first love-scene has a story of its own to me. I wrote it in half an hour, almost unconsciously. It may be read in my book that the Persians always reflected in the morning, when sober, upon the resolutions formed the night before, while drunk. When I examined in the sunshine what had come into existence by lamplight, I grew doubtful of its merits, and was on the point of destroying the love-scenes altogether, when my dear friend Julius Hammer, the author of "Schau in Dich, und Schau um Dich," too early summoned to the other world by death, stayed my hand. Their form was also approved by others, and I tell myself that the 'poetical' expression of love is very similar in all lands and ages, while lovers' conversations and modes of intercourse vary according to time and place. Besides, I have to deal with one of those by no means rare cases, where poetry can approach nearer the truth than prudent, watchful prose. Many of my honored critics have censured these scenes; others, among whom are some whose opinion I specially value, have lavished the kindest praise upon them. Among these gentlemen I will mention A. Stahr, C. V. Holtei, M. Hartmann, E. Hoefer, W. Wolfsohn, C. Leemans, Professor Veth of Amsterdam, etc. Yet I will not conceal the fact that some, whose opinion has great weight, have asked: "Did the ancients know anything of love, in our sense of the word? Is not romantic love, as we know it, a result of Christianity?" The following sentence, which stands at the head of the preface to my first edition, will prove that I had not ignored this question when I began my task.

"It has often been remarked that in Cicero's letters and those of Pliny the younger there are unmistakeable indications of sympathy with the more sentimental feeling of modern days. I find in them tones of deep tenderness only, such as have arisen and will arise from sad and aching hearts in every land and every age."

A. v. *Humboldt*. *Cosmos* II. P. 19.

This opinion of our great scholar is one with which I cheerfully coincide and would refer my readers to the fact that love-stories were written before the Christian era: the *Amor and Psyche* of Apuleius for instance. Indeed love in all its forms was familiar to the ancients. Where can we find a more beautiful expression of ardent passion than glows in Sappho's songs? or of patient faithful constancy than in Homer's Penelope? Could there be a more beautiful picture of the union of two loving hearts, even beyond the grave, than Xenophon has preserved for us in his account of Panthea and Abradatas? or the story of Sabinus the Gaul and his

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wife, told in the history of Vespasian? Is there anywhere a sweeter legend than that of the Halcyons, the ice-birds, who love one another so tenderly that when the male becomes enfeebled by age, his mate carries him on her outspread wings whithersoever he will; and the gods, desiring to reward such faithful love, cause the sun to shine more kindly, and still the winds and waves on the "Halcyon days" during which these birds are building their nest and brooding over their young? There can surely have been no lack of romantic love in days when a used-up man of the world, like Antony, could desire in his will that wherever he died his body might be laid by the side of his beloved Cleopatra: nor of the chivalry of love when Berenice's beautiful hair was placed as a constellation in the heavens. Neither can we believe that devotion in the cause of love could be wanting when a whole nation was ready to wage a fierce and obstinate war for the sake of one beautiful woman. The Greeks had an insult to revenge, but the Trojans fought for the possession of Helen. Even the old men of Ilium were ready "to suffer long for such a woman." And finally is not the whole question answered in Theocritus' unparalleled poem, "the Sorceress?" We see the poor love-lorn girl and her old woman-servant, Thestylis, cowering over the fire above which the bird supposed to possess the power of bringing back the faithless Delphis is sitting in his wheel. Simoetha has learnt many spells and charms from an Assyrian, and she tries them all. The distant roar of the waves, the stroke rising from the fire, the dogs howling in the street, the tortured fluttering bird, the old woman, the broken-hearted girl and her awful spells, all join in forming a night scene the effect of which is heightened by the calm cold moonshine. The old woman leaves the girl, who at once ceases to weave her spells, allows her pent-up tears to have their way, and looking up to Selene the moon, the lovers' silent confidante, pours out her whole story: how when she first saw the beautiful Delphis her heart had glowed with love, she had seen nothing more of the train of youths who followed him, "and," (thus sadly the poet makes her speak)

"how I gained my home
I knew not; some strange fever wasted me.
Ten days and nights I lay upon my bed.
O tell me, mistress Moon, whence came my love!"

"Then" (she continues) when Delphis at last crossed her threshold:

"I
Became all cold like snow, and from my brow
Brake the damp dewdrops: utterance I had none,
Not e'en such utterance as a babe may make
That babbles to its mother in its dreams;
But all my fair frame stiffened into wax,—
O tell me mistress Moon, whence came my love!"

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Whence came her love? thence, whence it comes to us now. The love of the creature to its Creator, of man to God, is the grand and yet gracious gift of Christianity. Christ's command to love our neighbor called into existence not only the conception of philanthropy, but of humanity itself, an idea unknown to the heathen world, where love had been at widest limited to their native town and country. The love of man and wife has without doubt been purified and transfigured by Christianity; still it is possible that a Greek may have loved as tenderly and longingly as a Christian. The more ardent glow of passion at least cannot be denied to the ancients. And did not their love find vent in the same expressions as our own? Who does not know the charming roundelay:

“Drink the glad wine with me,
With me spend youth's gay hours;
Or a sighing lover be,
Or crown thy brow with flowers.
When I am merry and mad,
Merry and mad be you;
When I am sober and sad,
Be sad and sober too!”

—written however by no poet of modern days, but by Praxilla, in the fifth century before Christ. Who would guess either that Moore's little song was modelled on one written even earlier than the date of our story?

“As o'er her loom the Lesbian maid
In love-sick languor hung her head.
Unknowing where her fingers stray'd,
She weeping turned away and said,
Oh, my sweet mother, 'tis in vain,

I cannot weave as once I wove;
So wilder'd is my heart and brain
With thinking of that youth I love.”

If my space allowed I could add much more on this subject, but will permit myself only one remark in conclusion. Lovers delighted in nature then as now; the moon was their chosen confidante, and I know of no modern poem in which the mysterious charm of a summer night and the magic beauty which lies on flowers, trees and fountains in those silent hours when the world is asleep, is more exquisitely described than in the following verses, also by Sappho, at the reading of which we seem forced to breathe more slowly, “kuhl bis an's Herz hinan.”

“Planets, that around the beauteous moon
Attendant wait, cast into shade
Their ineffectual lustres, soon



As she, in full-orb'd majesty array'd,
Her silver radiance pours
Upon this world of ours."

and:—

"Thro' orchard plots with fragrance crown'd,
The clear cold fountain murm'ring flows;
And forest leaves, with rustling sound,
Invite to soft repose."

The foregoing remarks seemed to me due to those who consider a love such as that of Sappho and Bartja to have been impossible among the ancients. Unquestionably it was much rarer then than in these days: indeed I confess to having sketched my pair of lovers in somewhat bright colors. But may I not be allowed, at least once, to claim the poet's freedom?

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How seldom I have availed myself of this freedom will be evident from the notes included in each volume. They seemed to me necessary, partly in order to explain the names and illustrate the circumstances mentioned in the text, and partly to vindicate the writer in the eyes of the learned. I trust they may not prove discouraging to any, as the text will be found easily readable without reference to the explanations.

Jena, November 23, 1868.

Georg Ebers, Dr.

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH GERMAN EDITION.

Two years and a half after the appearance of the third edition of "An Egyptian Princess," a fourth was needed. I returned long since from the journey to the Nile, for which I was preparing while correcting the proof-sheets of the third edition, and on which I can look back with special satisfaction. During my residence in Egypt, in 1872-73, a lucky accident enabled me to make many new discoveries; among them one treasure of incomparable value, the great hieratic manuscript, which bears my name. Its publication has just been completed, and it is now in the library of the Leipzig University.

The Papyrus Ebers, the second in size and the best preserved of all the ancient Egyptian manuscripts which have come into our possession, was written in the 16th century B. C., and contains on 110 pages the hermetic book upon the medicines of the ancient Egyptians, known also to the Alexandrine Greeks. The god Thoth (Hermes) is called "the guide" of physicians, and the various writings and treatises of which the work is composed are revelations from him. In this venerable scroll diagnoses are made and remedies suggested for the internal and external diseases of most portions of the human body. With the drugs prescribed are numbers, according to which they are weighed with weights and measured with hollow measures, and accompanying the prescriptions are noted the pious axioms to be repeated by the physician, while compounding and giving them to the patient. On the second line of the first page of our manuscript, it is stated that it came from Sais. A large portion of this work is devoted to the visual organs. On the twentieth line of the fifty-fifth page begins the book on the eyes, which fills eight large pages. We were formerly compelled to draw from Greek and Roman authors what we knew about the remedies used for diseases of the eye among the ancient Egyptians. The portion of the Papyrus Ebers just mentioned is now the only Egyptian source from whence we can obtain instruction concerning this important branch of ancient medicine.

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All this scarcely seems to have a place in the preface of a historical romance, and yet it is worthy of mention here; for there is something almost “providential” in the fact that it was reserved for the author of “An Egyptian Princess” to bestow the gift of this manuscript upon the scientific world. Among the characters in the novel the reader will meet an oculist from Sais, who wrote a book upon the diseases of the visual organs. The fate of this valuable work exactly agrees with the course of the narrative. The papyrus scroll of the Sais oculist, which a short time ago existed only in the imagination of the author and readers of “An Egyptian Princess,” is now an established fact. When I succeeded in bringing the manuscript home, I felt like the man who had dreamed of a treasure, and when he went out to ride found it in his path.

A reply to Monsieur Jules Soury’s criticism of “An Egyptian Princess” in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, Vol. VII, January 1875, might appropriately be introduced into this preface, but would scarcely be possible without entering more deeply into the ever-disputed question, which will be answered elsewhere, whether the historical romance is ever justifiable. Yet I cannot refrain from informing Monsieur Soury here that “An Egyptian Princess” detained me from no other work. I wrote it in my sick-room, before entering upon my academic career, and while composing it, found not only comfort and pleasure, but an opportunity to give dead scientific material a living interest for myself and others.

Monsieur Soury says romance is the mortal enemy of history; but this sentence may have no more justice than the one with which I think myself justified in replying: Landscape painting is the mortal enemy of botany. The historical romance must be enjoyed like any other work of art. No one reads it to study history; but many, the author hopes, may be aroused by his work to make investigations of their own, for which the notes point out the way. Already several persons of excellent mental powers have been attracted to earnest Egyptological researches by “An Egyptian Princess.” In the presence of such experiences, although Monsieur Soury’s clever statements appear to contain much that is true, I need not apply his remark that “historical romances injure the cause of science” to the present volume.

Leipzig, April 19, 1875.

GeorgEbers.

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH GERMAN EDITION.

Again a new edition of “An Egyptian Princess” has been required, and again I write a special preface because the printing has progressed so rapidly as unfortunately to render it impossible for me to correct some errors to which my attention was directed by the kindness of the well-known botanist, Professor Paul Ascherson of Berlin, who has travelled through Egypt and the Oases.



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In Vol. I, page 7, I allow mimosas to grow among other plants in Rhodopis' garden. I have found them in all the descriptions of the Nile valley, and afterwards often enjoyed the delicious perfume of the golden yellow flowers in the gardens of Alexandria and Cairo. I now learn that this very mimosa (*Acacia farnesiana*) originates in tropical America, and was undoubtedly unknown in ancient Egypt. The bananas, which I mentioned in Vol. I, p. 64, among other Egyptian plants, were first introduced into the Nile valley from India by the Arabs. The botanical errors occurring in the last volume I was able to correct. Helm's admirable work on "Cultivated Plants and Domestic Animals" had taught me to notice such things. Theophrastus, a native of Asia Minor, gives the first description of a citron, and this proves that he probably saw the so-called paradise-apple, but not our citron, which I am therefore not permitted to mention among the plants cultivated in ancient Lydia. Palms and birches are both found in Asia Minor; but I permitted them to grow side by side, thereby committing an offense against the geographical possibility of vegetable existence. The birch, in this locality, flourishes in the mountainous region, the palm, according to Griesbach (*Vegetation of the Earth*, Vol. I, p. 319) only appears on the southern coast of the peninsula. The latter errors, as I previously mentioned, will be corrected in the new edition. I shall of course owe special thanks to any one who may call my attention to similar mistakes.

Leipzig, March 5, 1877

Georg Ebers

PREFACE TO THE NINTH GERMAN EDITION.

I have nothing to add to the ninth edition of "An Egyptian Princess" except that it has been thoroughly revised. My sincere thanks are due to Dr. August Steitz of Frankfort on the Main, who has travelled through Egypt and Asia Minor, for a series of admirable notes, which he kindly placed at my disposal. He will find that they have not remained unused.

Leipzig, November 13, 1879.

Georg Ebers

AN EGYPTIAN PRINCESS.

By Georg Ebers

Volume 1.

CHAPTER I.

The Nile had overflowed its bed. The luxuriant corn-fields and blooming gardens on its shores were lost beneath a boundless waste of waters; and only the gigantic temples and palaces of its cities, (protected from the force of the water by dikes), and the tops of the tall palm-trees and acacias could be seen above its surface. The branches of the sycamores and plane-trees drooped and floated on the waves, but the boughs of the tall silver poplars strained upward, as if anxious to avoid the watery world beneath. The full-moon had risen; her soft light fell on the

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Libyan range of mountains vanishing on the western horizon, and in the north the shimmer of the Mediterranean could faintly be discerned. Blue and white lotus-flowers floated on the clear water, bats of all kinds darted softly through the still air, heavy with the scent of acacia-blossom and jasmine; the wild pigeons and other birds were at roost in the tops of the trees, while the pelicans, storks and cranes squatted in groups on the shore under the shelter of the papyrus-reeds and Nile-beans. The pelicans and storks remained motionless, their long bills hidden beneath their wings, but the cranes were startled by the mere beat of an oar, stretching their necks, and peering anxiously into the distance, if they heard but the song of the boatmen. The air was perfectly motionless, and the unbroken reflection of the moon, lying like a silver shield on the surface of the water, proved that, wildly as the Nile leaps over the cataracts, and rushes past the gigantic temples of Upper Egypt, yet on approaching the sea by different arms, he can abandon his impetuous course, and flow along in sober tranquillity.

On this moonlight night in the year 528 B. C. a bark was crossing the almost currentless Canopic mouth of the Nile. On the raised deck at the stern of this boat an Egyptian was sitting to guide the long pole-rudder, and the half-naked boatmen within were singing as they rowed. In the open cabin, which was something like a wooden summer-house, sat two men, reclining on low cushions. They were evidently not Egyptians; their Greek descent could be perceived even by the moonlight. The elder was an unusually tall and powerful man of more than sixty; thick grey curls, showing very little attempt at arrangement, hung down over his short, firm throat; he wore a simple, homely cloak, and kept his eyes gloomily fixed on the water. His companion, on the contrary, a man perhaps twenty years younger, of a slender and delicate build, was seldom still. Sometimes he gazed into the heavens, sometimes made a remark to the steersman, disposed his beautiful purple chlanis in fresh folds, or busied himself in the arrangement of his scented brown curls, or his carefully curled beard.

[The chlanis was a light summer-mantle, worn especially by the more elegant Athenians, and generally made of expensive materials. The simpler cloak, the himation, was worn by the Doric Greeks, and principally by the Spartans.]

The boat had left Naukratis, at that time the only Hellenic port in Egypt, about half an hour before.

[This town, which will form the scene of a part of our tale, lies in the northwest of the Nile Delta, in the Saitic Nomos or district, on the left bank of the Canopic mouth of the river. According to Strabo and Eusebius it was founded by Milesians, and Bunsen reckons 749 B. C. It seems that in the earliest times Greek ships were only allowed to enter this mouth of the Nile in case of necessity. The entire intercourse

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of the Egyptians with the hated strangers was, at that time, restricted to the little island of Pharos lying opposite to the town of Thonis.]

During their journey, the grey-haired, moody man had not spoken one word, and the other had left him to his meditations. But now, as the boat neared the shore, the restless traveller, rising from his couch, called to his companion: "We are just at our destination, Aristomachus! That pleasant house to the left yonder, in the garden of palms which you can see rising above the waters, is the dwelling of my friend Rhodopis. It was built by her husband Charaxus, and all her friends, not excepting the king himself, vie with one another in adding new beauties to it year by year. A useless effort! Let them adorn that house with all the treasures in the world, the woman who lives within will still remain its best ornament!"

[We are writing of the month of October, when the Nile begins to sink. The inundations can now be accurately accounted for, especially since the important and laborious synoptical work of H. Barth and S. Baker. They are occasioned by the tropical rains, and the melting of the snows on the high mountain-ranges at the Equator. In the beginning of June a gradual rising of the Nile waters can be perceived; between the 15th and 20th June, this changes to a rapid increase; in the beginning of October the waters reach their highest elevation, a point, which, even after having begun their retreat, they once more attempt to attain; then, at first gradually, and afterwards with ever increasing rapidity, they continue to sink. In January, February and March, the Nile is still drying up; and in May is at its lowest point, when the volume of its waters is only one- twentieth of that in October.]

The old man sat up, threw a passing glance at the building, smoothed the thick grey beard which clothed his cheeks and chin, but left the lips free,—[The Spartans were not in the habit of wearing a beard on the upper lip.]—and asked abruptly: "Why so much enthusiasm, Phanes, for this Rhodopis? How long have the Athenians been wont to extol old women?" At this remark the other smiled, and answered in a self-satisfied tone, "My knowledge of the world, and particularly of women, is, I flatter myself, an extended one, and yet I repeat, that in all Egypt I know of no nobler creature than this grey-haired woman. When you have seen her and her lovely grandchild, and heard your favorite melodies sung by her well-practised choir of slave-girls, I think you will thank me for having brought you hither."—"Yet," answered the Spartan gravely, "I should not have accompanied you, if I had not hoped to meet Phryxus, the Delphian, here."

"You will find him here; and besides, I cannot but hope that the songs will cheer you, and dispel your gloomy thoughts." Aristomachus shook his head in denial, and answered: "To you, sanguine Athenians, the melodies of your country may be cheering: but not so to me; as in many a sleepless night of dreams, my longings will be doubled, not stilled by the songs of Alkman."

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[Alkman (Attic, Alkmaeon) flourished in Sparta about 650 B. C. His mother was a Lydian slave in Sardes, and he came into the possession of Agesides, who gave him his freedom. His beautiful songs soon procured him the rights of a Lacedaemonian citizen. He was appointed to the head-directorship in the entire department of music in Lacedaemon and succeeded in naturalizing the soft Lydian music. His language was the Doric-Laconian. After a life devoted to song, the pleasures of the table and of love, he is said to have died of a fearful disease. From the frequent chorusses of virgins (Parthenien) said to have been originally introduced by him, his frequent songs in praise of women, and the friendly relations in which he stood to the Spartan women (more especially to the fair Megalostrata), he gained the name of the woman's poet.]

"Do you think then," replied Phanes, "that I have no longing for my beloved Athens, for the scenes of our youthful games, for the busy life of the market? Truly, the bread of exile is not less distasteful to my palate than to yours, but, in the society afforded by this house, it loses some of its bitterness, and when the dear melodies of Hellas, so perfectly sung, fall on my ear, my native land rises before me as in a vision, I see its pine and olive groves, its cold, emerald green rivers, its blue sea, the shimmer of its towns, its snowy mountain-tops and marble temples, and a half-sweet, half-bitter tear steals down my cheek as the music ceases, and I awake to remember that I am in Egypt, in this monotonous, hot, eccentric country, which, the gods be praised, I am soon about to quit. But, Aristomachus, would you then avoid the few Oases in the desert, because you must afterwards return to its sands and drought? Would you fly from one happy hour, because days of sadness await you later? But stop, here we are! Show a cheerful countenance, my friend, for it becomes us not to enter the temple of the Charites with sad hearts."—[The goddesses of grace and beauty, better known by their Roman name of "Graces."]

As Phanes uttered these words, they landed at the garden wall, washed by the Nile. The Athenian bounded lightly from the boat, the Spartan following with a heavier, firmer tread. Aristomachus had a wooden leg, but his step was so firm, even when compared with that of the light-footed Phanes, that it might have been thought to be his own limb.

The garden of Rhodopis was as full of sound, and scent and blossom as a night in fairy-land. It was one labyrinth of acanthus shrubs, yellow mimosa, the snowy gelder-rose, jasmine and lilac, red roses and laburnums, overshadowed by tall palm-trees, acacias and balsam trees. Large bats hovered softly on their delicate wings over the whole, and sounds of mirth and song echoed from the river.

This garden had been laid out by an Egyptian, and the builders of the Pyramids had already been celebrated for ages for their skill in horticulture. They well understood how to mark out neat flower-beds, plant groups of trees and shrubs in regular order, water the whole by aqueducts and fountains, arrange arbors and summerhouses, and even inclose the walks with artistically clipped hedges, and breed goldfish in stone basins.

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At the garden gate Phanes stopped, looked around him carefully and listened; then shaking his head, "I do not understand what this can mean," he said. "I hear no voices, there is not a single light to be seen, the boats are all gone, and yet the flag is still flying at its gay flag-staff, there, by the obelisks on each side of the gate."

[Obelisks bearing the name of the owner were sometimes to be seen near the gates of the Egyptian country-houses. Flags too were not uncommon, but these were almost exclusively to be found at the gates of the temples, where to this day the iron sockets for the flagstaff can still be seen. Neither were flags unknown to the Greeks. It appears from some inscriptions on the staffs of the Pylons, that if the former were not actually erected for lightning-rods, it had been noticed that they attracted the electricity.]

"Rhodopis must surely be from home; can they have forgotten?"—Here a deep voice suddenly interrupted him with the exclamation, "Ha! the commander of the body-guard!"

"A pleasant evening to you, Knakais," exclaimed Phanes, kindly greeting the old man, who now came up. "But how is it that this garden is as still as an Egyptian tomb, and yet the flag of welcome is fluttering at the gate? How long has that white ensign waved for guests in vain?"

"How long indeed?" echoed the old slave of Rhodopis with a smile. "So long as the Fates graciously spare the life of my mistress, the old flag is sure to waft as many guests hither as the house is able to contain. Rhodopis is not at home now, but she must return shortly. The evening being so fine, she determined on taking a pleasure-trip on the Nile with her guests. They started at sunset, two hours ago, and the evening meal is already prepared; they cannot remain away much longer. I pray you, Phanes, to have patience and follow me into the house. Rhodopis would not easily forgive me, if I allowed such valued guests to depart. You stranger," he added, turning to the Spartan, "I entreat most heartily to remain; as friend of your friend you will be doubly welcome to my mistress."

The two Greeks, following the servant, seated themselves in an arbor, and Aristomachus, after gazing on the scene around him now brilliantly lighted by the moon, said, "Explain to me, Phanes, by what good fortune this Rhodopis, formerly only a slave and courtesan can now live as a queen, and receive her guests in this princely manner?"

[The mistresses (Hetaere) of the Greeks must not be compared with modern women of bad reputation. The better members of this class represented the intelligence and culture of their sex in Greece, and more especially in the Ionian provinces. As an instance we need only recall Aspasia and her well-attested relation to Pericles and Socrates. Our heroine Rhodopis was a celebrated woman. The Hetaera, Thargalia of Miletus, became the wife of a Thessalian king.]

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Ptolemy Lagi married Thais; her daughter was called Irene, and her sons Leontiskus and Lagus. Finally, statues were erected to many.]

"I have long expected this question," answered the Athenian. "I shall be delighted to make you acquainted with the past history of this woman before you enter her house. So long as we were on the Nile, I would not intrude my tale upon you; that ancient river has a wonderful power of compelling to silence and quiet contemplation. Even my usually quick tongue was paralyzed like yours, when I took my first night-journey on the Nile."

"I thank you for this," replied the Spartan. "When I first saw the aged priest Epimenides," at Knossus in Crete, he was one hundred and fifty years old, and I remember that his age and sanctity filled me with a strange dread; but how far older, how far more sacred, is this hoary river, the ancient stream 'Aigypotos'!" Who would wish to avoid the power of his spells? Now, however, I beg you to give me the history of Rhodopis."

Phanes began: "When Rhodopis was a little child playing with her companions on the Thracian sea-shore, she was stolen by some Phoenician mariners, carried to Samos, and bought by Iadmon, one of the geomori, or landed aristocracy of the island. The little girl grew day by day more beautiful, graceful and clever, and was soon an object of love and admiration to all who knew her. AEsop, the fable-writer, who was at that time also in bondage to Iadmon, took an especial pleasure in the growing amiability and talent of the child, taught her and cared for her in the same way as the tutors whom we keep to educate our Athenian boys.

The kind teacher found his pupil tractable and quick of comprehension, and the little slave soon practised the arts of music, singing and eloquence, in a more charming and agreeable manner than the sons of her master Iadmon, on whose education the greatest care had been lavished. By the time she had reached her fourteenth year, Rhodopis was so beautiful and accomplished, that the jealous wife of Iadmon would not suffer her to remain any longer in the house, and the Samian was forced, with a heavy heart, to sell her to a certain Xanthus. The government of Samos at that time was still in the hands of the less opulent nobles; had Polykrates then been at the head of affairs, Xanthus need not have despaired of a purchaser. These tyrants fill their treasuries as the magpies their nests! As it was, however, he went off with his precious jewel to Naukratis, and there gained a fortune by means of her wondrous charms. These were three years of the deepest humiliation to Rhodopis, which she still remembers with horror.

Now it happened, just at the time when her fame was spreading through all Greece, and strangers were coming from far to Naukratis for her sake alone, that the people of

Lesbos rose up against their nobles, drove them forth, and chose the wise Pittakus as their ruler.

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[According to Herodotus the beauty of Rhodopis was so great that every Greek knew her by name.]

The highest families of Lesbos were forced to leave the country, and fled, some to Sicily, some to the Greek provinces of Italy, and others to Egypt. Alcaeus, the greatest poet of his day, and Charaxus, the brother of that Sappho whose odes it was our Solon's last wish to learn by heart, came here to Naukratis, which had already long been the flourishing centre of commercial communication between Egypt and the rest of the world. Charaxus saw Rhodopis, and soon loved her so passionately, that he gave an immense sum to secure her from the mercenary Xanthus, who was on the point of returning with her to his own country; Sappho wrote some biting verses, derisive of her brother and his purchase, but Alcaeus on the other hand, approved, and gave expression to this feeling in glowing songs on the charms of Rhodopis. And now Sappho's brother, who had till then remained undistinguished among the many strangers at Naukratis, became a noted man through Rhodopis. His house was soon the centre of attraction to all foreigners, by whom she was overwhelmed with gifts. The King Hophra, hearing of her beauty and talent, sent for her to Memphis, and offered to buy her of Charaxus, but the latter had already long, though secretly, given Rhodopis her freedom, and loved her far too well to allow of a separation. She too, loved the handsome Lesbian and refused to leave him despite the brilliant offers made to her on all sides. At length Charaxus made this wonderful woman his lawful wife, and continued to live with her and her little daughter Kleis in Naukratis, until the Lesbian exiles were recalled to their native land by Pittakus. He then started homeward with his wife, but fell ill on the journey, and died soon after his arrival at Mitylene. Sappho, who had derided her brother for marrying one beneath him, soon became an enthusiastic admirer of the beautiful widow and rivalled Alcaeus in passionate songs to her praise.

After the death of the poetess, Rhodopis returned, with her little daughter, to Naukratis, where she was welcomed as a goddess. During this interval Amasis, the present king of Egypt, had usurped the throne of the Pharaohs, and was maintaining himself in its possession by help of the army, to which caste he belonged.

[Amasis, of whom much will be said in our text, reigned 570-526 B. C. His name, in the hieroglyphic signs, was Aahmes or young moon but the name by which he was commonly called was Sa-Nit "Son of Neith." His name, and pictures of him are to be found on stones in the fortress of Cairo, on a relief in Florence, a statue in the Vatican, on sarcophagi in Stockholm and London, a statue in the Villa Albani and on a little temple of red granite at Leyden. A beautiful bust of gray-wacke in our possession probably represents the same king.]

As his predecessor Hophra had accelerated his fall,

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and brought the army and priesthood to open rebellion by his predilection for the Greek nation, and for intercourse with foreigners generally, (always an abomination in the eyes of the Egyptians), men felt confident that Amasis would return to the old ways, would rigorously exclude foreigners from the country, dismiss the Greek mercenaries, and instead of taking counsel from the Greeks, would hearken only to the commands of the priesthood. But in this, as you must see yourself, the prudent Egyptians had guessed wide of the mark in their choice of a ruler; they fell from Scylla into Charybdis. If Hophra was called the Greeks' friend, Amasis must be named our lover. The Egyptians, especially the priests and the army, breathe fire and flame, and would fain strangle us one and all, off hand, This feeling on the part of the soldiery does not disturb Amasis, for he knows too well the comparative value of their and our services; but with the priests it is another and more serious matter, for two reasons: first, they possess an unbounded influence over the people; and secondly. Amasis himself retains more affection than he likes to acknowledge to us, for this absurd and insipid religion—a religion which appears doubly sacred to its adherents simply because it has existed in this eccentric land—unchanged for thousands of years. These priests make the king's life burdensome to him; they persecute and injure us in every possible way; and indeed, if it had not been for the king's protection, I should long ago have been a dead man. But I am wandering from my tale! As I said before, Rhodopis was received at Naukratis with open arms by all, and loaded with marks of favor by Amasis, who formed her acquaintance. Her daughter Kleis, as is the case with the little Sappho now—was never allowed to appear in the society which assembled every evening at her mother's house, and indeed was even more strictly brought up than the other young girls in Naukratis. She married Glaucus, a rich Phocæan merchant of noble family, who had defended his native town with great bravery against the Persians, and with him departed to the newly-founded Massalia, on the Celtic coast. There, however, the young couple both fell victims to the climate, and died, leaving a little daughter, Sappho. Rhodopis at once undertook the long journey westward, brought the orphan child back to live with her, spent the utmost care on her education, and now that she is grown up, forbids her the society of men, still feeling the stains of her own youth so keenly that she would fain keep her granddaughter (and this in Sappho's case is not difficult), at a greater distance from contact with our sex than is rendered necessary, by the customs of Egypt. To my friend herself society is as indispensable as water to the fish or air to the bird. Her house is frequented by all the strangers here, and whoever has once experienced her hospitality and has the time at command will never after be found absent when the flag announces an evening

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of reception. Every Greek of mark is to be found here, as it is in this house that we consult on the wisest measures for encountering the hatred of the priests and bringing the king round to our own views. Here you can obtain not only the latest news from home, but from the rest of the world, and this house is an inviolable sanctuary for the persecuted, Rhodopis possessing a royal warrant which secures her from every molestation on the part of the police.

[A very active and strict police-force existed in Egypt, the organization of which is said to have owed much to Amasis' care. We also read in inscriptions and papyrus rolls, that a body of mounted police existed, the ranks of which were generally filled by foreigners in preference to natives.]

Our own songs and our own language are to be heard here, and here we take counsel on the best means for delivering Greece from the ever fresh encroachments of her tyrants.

In a word, this house is the centre of attraction for all Hellenic interests in Egypt, and of more importance to us politically, than our temple, the Hellenion itself, and our hall of commerce.

In a few minutes you will see this remarkable grandmother, and, if we should be here alone, perhaps the grandchild too; you will then at once perceive that they owe everything to their own rare qualities and not to the chances of good fortune. Ah! there they come! they are going towards the house. Cannot you hear the slave-girls singing? Now they are going in. First let them quietly be seated, then follow me, and when the evening is over you shall say whether you repent of having come hither, and whether Rhodopis resembles more nearly a queen or a freed bond-woman."

The houses was built in the Grecian style. It was a rather long, one-storied building, the outside of which would be called extremely plain in the present day; within, it united the Egyptian brilliancy of coloring with the Greek beauty of form. The principal door opened into the entrance-hall. To the left of this lay a large dining-room, overlooking the Nile, and, opposite to this last was the kitchen, an apartment only to be found in the houses of the wealthier Greeks, the poorer families being accustomed to prepare their food at the hearth in the front apartment. The hall of reception lay at the other end of the entrance-hall, and was in the form of a square, surrounded within by a colonnade, into which various chambers opened. This was the apartment devoted to the men, in the centre of which was the household fire, burning on an altar-shaped hearth of rich Aeginetan metal-work.

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It was lighted by an opening in the roof, which formed at the same time, an outlet for the smoke. From this room (at the opposite end to that on which it opened into the entrance-hall), a passage, closed by a well-fastened door, led into the chamber of the women. This was also surrounded by a colonnade within, but only on three sides, and here the female inhabitants were accustomed to pass their time, when not employed, spinning or weaving, in the rooms lying near the back or garden-door as it was termed. Between these latter and the domestic offices, which lay on the right and left of the women's apartment, were the sleeping-rooms; these served also as places of security for the valuables of the house. The walls of the men's apartment were painted of a reddish-brown color, against which the outlines of some white marble carvings, the gift of a Chian sculptor, stood out in sharp relief. The floor was covered with rich carpets from Sardis; low cushions of panthers' skins lay ranged along the colonnade; around the artistically wrought hearth stood quaint Egyptian settees, and small, delicately-carved tables of Thya wood, on which lay all kinds of musical instruments, the flute, cithara and lyre. Numerous lamps of various and singular shapes, filled with Kiki oil, hung against the walls. Some represented fire-spouting dolphins; others, strange winged monsters from whose jaws the flames issued; and these, blending their light with that from the hearth, illumined the apartment.

In this room a group of men were assembled, whose appearance and dress differed one from the other. A Syrian from Tyre, in a long crimson robe, was talking animatedly to a man whose decided features and crisp, curly, black hair proclaimed him an Israelite. The latter had come to Egypt to buy chariots and horses for Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah—the Egyptian equipages being the most sought after at that time. Close to him stood three Greeks from Asia Minor, the rich folds of whose garments (for they wore the costly dress of their native city Miletus), contrasted strongly with the plain and unadorned robe of Phryxus, the deputy commissioned to collect money for the temple of Apollo at Delphi, with whom they were in earnest conversation. Ten years before, the ancient temple had been consumed by fire; and at this time efforts were being made to build another, and a more beautiful one.

Two of the Milesians, disciples of Anaximander and Anaximenes, were staying then in Egypt, to study astronomy and the peculiar wisdom of the Egyptians at Heliopolis, and the third was a wealthy merchant and ship-owner, named Theopompus, who had settled at Naukratis.

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[Anaximander of Miletus, born 611-546, was a celebrated geometrician, astronomer, philosopher and geographer. He was the author of a book on natural phenomena, drew the first map of the world on metal, and introduced into Greece a kind of clock which he seems to have borrowed from the Babylonians. He supposes a primary and not easily definable Being, by which the whole world is governed, and in which, though in himself infinite and without limits, everything material and circumscribed has its foundation. "Chaotic matter" represents in his theory the germ of all created things, from which water, earth, animals, nereids or fish-men, human beings &c. have had their origin.]

Rhodopis herself was engaged in a lively conversation with two Samian Greeks: the celebrated worker in metals, sculptor and goldsmith Theodorus, and the Iambic poet Ibykus of Rhegium, who had left the court of Polykrates for a time in order to become acquainted with Egypt, and were bearers of presents to Amasis from their ruler. Close to the fire lay Philoinus of Sybaris, a corpulent man with strongly-marked features and a sensual expression of face; he was stretched at full-length on a couch covered with spotted furs, and amused himself by playing with his scented curls wreathed with gold, and with the golden chains which fell from his neck on to the long saffron-colored robe that clothed him down to his feet.

[Sybaris was a town in Lower Italy notorious throughout the ancient world for its luxury. According to Strabo it was founded by Achaeans 262. About 510 it was conquered and destroyed by the Crotoniates and then rebuilt under the name of Thurii.]

Rhodopis had a kind word for each of her guests, but at present she occupied herself exclusively with the two celebrated Samians; their talk was of art and poetry. The fire of youth still glowed in the eyes of the Thracian woman, her tall figure was still full and unbent; her hair, though grey, was wound round her beautifully formed head in luxuriant waves, and laid together at the back in a golden net, and a sparkling diadem shone above her lofty forehead.

Her noble Greek features were pale, but still beautiful and without a wrinkle, notwithstanding her great age; indeed her small mouth with its full lips, her white teeth, her eyes so bright and yet so soft, and her nobly-formed nose and forehead would have been beauty enough for a young maiden.

Rhodopis looked younger than she really was, though she made no attempt to disavow her age. Matronly dignity was visible in every movement, and the charm of her manner lay, not in a youthful endeavor to be pleasing, but in the effort of age to please others, considering their wishes, and at the same time demanding consideration in return.

Our two friends now presenting themselves in the hall, every eye turned upon them, and as Phanes entered leading his friend by the hand, the heartiest welcome met him from all sides; one of the Milesians indeed exclaimed: "Now I see what it is that was wanting to our assembly. There can be no merriment without Phanes."

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And Philoinus, the Sybarite, raising his deep voice, but not allowing himself for a moment to be disturbed in his repose, remarked: "Mirth is a good thing, and if you bring that with you, be welcome to me also, Athenian."

"To me," said Rhodopis, turning to her new guests, "you are heartily welcome, but not more in your joy than if borne down by sadness. I know no greater pleasure than to remove the lines of care from a friend's brow. Spartan, I venture to address you as a friend too, for the friends of my friends are my own." Aristomachus bowed in silence, but Phanes, addressing himself both to Rhodopis and to the Sybarite, answered: "Well then, my friends, I can content you both. To you, Rhodopis, I must come for comfort, for soon, too soon I must leave you and your pleasant house; Philoinus however can still enjoy my mirth, as I cannot but rejoice in the prospect of seeing my beloved Hellas once more, and of quitting, even though involuntarily, this golden mouse-trap of a country."

"You are going away! you have been dismissed? Whither are you going?" echoed on all sides.

"Patience, patience, my friends," cried Phanes. "I have a long story to tell, but I will rather reserve it for the evening meal. And indeed, dear friend, my hunger is nearly as great as my distress at being obliged to leave you."

"Hunger is a good thing," philosophized the Sybarite once more, "when a man has a good meal in prospect."

"On that point you may be at ease, Philoinus," answered Rhodopis. "I told the cook to do his utmost, for the most celebrated epicure from the most luxurious city in the world, no less a person than Philoinus of Sybaris, would pass a stern judgment on his delicate dishes. Go, Knakias, tell them to serve the supper. Are you content now, my impatient guests? As for me, since I heard Phanes' mournful news, the pleasure of the meal is gone." The Athenian bowed, and the Sybarite returned to his philosophy. "Contentment is a good thing when every wish can be satisfied. I owe you thanks, Rhodopis, for your appreciation of my incomparable native city. What says Anakreon?"

"To-day is ours—what do we fear?
To-day is ours—we have it here.
Let's treat it kindly, that it may
Wish at least with us to stay.
Let's banish business, banish sorrow;
To the gods belongs to-morrow."

"Eh! Ibykus, have I quoted your friend the poet correctly, who feasts with you at Polykrates' banquets? Well, I think I may venture to say of my own poor self that if Anakreon can make better verses, I understand the art of living quite as well as he, though he writes so many poems upon it. Why, in all his songs there is not one word

about the pleasures of the table! Surely they are as important as love and play! I confess that the two last are clear to me also; still, I could exist without them, though in a miserable fashion, but without food, where should we be?"

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The Sybarite broke into a loud laugh at his own joke; but the Spartan turned away from this conversation, drew Phryxus into a corner, and quite abandoning his usually quiet and deliberate manner, asked eagerly whether he had at last brought him the long wished for answer from the Oracle. The serious features of the Delphian relaxed, and thrusting his hand into the folds of his chiton,—[An undergarment resembling a shirt.]—he drew out a little roll of parchment-like sheepskin, on which a few lines were written.

The hands of the brave, strong Spartan trembled as he seized the roll, and his fixed gaze on its characters was as if it would pierce the skin on which they were inscribed.

Then, recollecting himself, he shook his head sadly and said: “We Spartans have to learn other arts than reading and writing; if thou canst, read the what Pythia says.”

The Delphian glanced over the writing and replied: “Rejoice! Loxias (Apollo) promises thee a happy return home; hearken to the prediction of the priestess.”

“If once the warrior hosts from the snow-topped mountains descending
Come to the fields of the stream watering richly the plain,
Then shall the lingering boat to the beckoning meadows convey thee
Which to the wandering foot peace and a home will afford.
When those warriors come, from the snow-topped mountains descending,
Then will the powerful Five grant thee what long they refused.”

To these words the Spartan listened with intense eagerness; he had them read over to him twice, then repeated them from memory, thanked Phryxus, and placed the roll within the folds of his garment.

The Delphian then took part in the general conversation, but Aristomachus repeated the words of the Oracle unceasingly to himself in a low voice, endeavoring to impress them on his memory, and to interpret their obscure import.

CHAPTER II.

The doors of the supper-room now flew open. Two lovely, fair-haired boys, holding myrtle-wreaths, stood on each side of the entrance, and in the middle of the room was a large, low, brilliantly polished table, surrounded by inviting purple cushions.

[It was most probably usual for each guest to have his own little table; but we read even in Homer of large tables on which the meals were served up. In the time of Homer people sat at table, but the recumbent position became universal in later times.]

Rich nosegays adorned this table, and on it were placed large joints of roast meat, glasses and dishes of various shapes filled with dates, figs, pomegranates, melons and grapes, little silver beehives containing honey, and plates of embossed copper, on

which lay delicate cheese from the island of Trinakria. In the midst was a silver table-ornament, something similar to an altar, from which arose fragrant clouds of incense.

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At the extreme end of the table stood the glittering silver cup in which the wine was to be mixed.

[The Greeks were not accustomed to drink unmingled wine. Zaleukus forbade to all citizens the pure juice of the grape under penalty of death, and Solon under very severe penalties, unless required as medicine. The usual mixture was composed of three-fifths water to two-fifths wine.]

This was of beautiful Aeginetan workmanship, its crooked handles representing two giants, who appeared ready to sink under the weight of the bowl which they sustained.

Like the altar, it was enwreathed with flowers, and a garland of roses or myrtle had been twined around the goblet of each guest.

The entire floor was strewn with rose-leaves, and the room lighted by many lamps which were hung against the smooth, white, stucco walls.

No sooner were the guests reclining on their cushions, than the fair-haired boys reappeared, wound garlands of ivy and myrtle around the heads and shoulders of the revellers, and washed their feet in silver basins. The Sybarite, though already scented with all the perfumes of Arabia, would not rest until he was completely enveloped in roses and myrtle, and continued to occupy the two boys even after the carver had removed the first joints from the table in order to cut them up; but as soon as the first course, tunny-fish with mustard-sauce, had been served, he forgot all subordinate matters, and became absorbed in the enjoyment of the delicious viands.

Rhodopis, seated on a chair at the head of the table, near the wine-bowl, not only led the conversation, but gave directions to the slaves in waiting.

[The women took their meals sitting. The Greeks, like the Egyptians, had chairs with backs and arms. The form of the solia or throne has become familiar to us from the discoveries at Pompeii and the representations of many gods and distinguished persons. It had a high, almost straight back, and supports for the arms.]

She gazed on her cheerful guests with a kind of pride, and seemed to be devoting her attention to each exclusively, now asking the Delphian how he had succeeded in his mission, then the Sybarite whether he was content with the performances of her cook, and then listening eagerly to Ibykus, as he told how the Athenian, Phrynichus, had introduced the religious dramas of Thespis of Ikaria into common life, and was now representing entire histories from the past by means of choruses, recitative and answer.

Then she turned to the Spartan, remarking, that to him alone of all her guests, instead of an apology for the simplicity of the meal, she felt she owed one for its luxury. The next time he came, her slave Knakias, who, as an escaped Helot, boasted that he could

cook a delicious blood-soup (here the Sybarite shuddered), should prepare him a true Lacedaemonian repast.

When the guests had eaten sufficiently they again washed their hands; the plates and dishes were removed, the floor cleansed, and wine and water poured into the bowl.

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[The Symposium began after the real meal. Not till that was over did the guests usually adorn themselves with wreaths, wash their hands with Smegma or Smema (a kind of soap) and begin to drink.]

At last, when Rhodopis had convinced herself that the right moment was come, she turned to Phanes, who was engaged in a discussion with the Milesians, and thus addressed him:

“Noble friend, we have restrained our impatience so long that it must surely now be your duty to tell us what evil chance is threatening to snatch you from Egypt and from our circle. You may be able to leave us and this country with a light heart, for the gods are wont to bless you Ionians with that precious gift from your very birth, but we shall remember you long and sadly. I know of no worse loss than that of a friend tried through years, indeed some of us have lived too long on the Nile not to have imbibed a little of the constant, unchanging Egyptian temperament. You smile, and yet I feel sure that long as you have desired to revisit your dear Hellas, you will not be able to leave us quite without regret. Ah, you admit this? Well, I knew I had not been deceived. But now tell us why you are obliged to leave Egypt, that we may consider whether it may not be possible to get the king’s decree reversed, and so keep you with us.”

Phanes smiled bitterly, and replied: “Many thanks, Rhodopis, for these flattering words, and for the kind intention either to grieve over my departure, or if possible, to prevent it. A hundred new faces will soon help you to forget mine, for long as you have lived on the Nile, you are still a Greek from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, and may thank the gods that you have remained so. I am a great friend of constancy too, but quite as great an enemy of folly, and is there one among you who would not call it folly to fret over what cannot be undone? I cannot call the Egyptian constancy a virtue, it is a delusion. The men who treasure their dead for thousands of years, and would rather lose their last loaf than allow a single bone belonging to one of their ancestors to be taken from them, are not constant, they are foolish. Can it possibly make me happy to see my friends sad? Certainly not! You must not imitate the Egyptians, who, when they lose a friend, spend months in daily-repeated lamentations over him. On the contrary, if you will sometimes think of the distant, I ought to say, of the departed, friend, (for as long as I live I shall never be permitted to tread Egyptian ground again), let it be with smiling faces; do not cry, ‘Ah! why was Phanes forced to leave us?’ but rather, ‘Let us be merry, as Phanes used to be when he made one of our circle!’ In this way you must celebrate my departure, as Simonides enjoined when he sang:

“If we would only be more truly wise,
We should not waste on death our tears and sighs,
Nor stand and mourn o’er cold and lifeless clay
More than one day.

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For Death, alas! we have no lack of time;
But Life is gone, when scarcely at its prime,
And is e'en, when not overfill'd with care
But short and bare!"

"If we are not to weep for the dead, how much less ought we to grieve for absent friends! the former have left us for ever, but to the latter we say at parting, 'Farewell, until we meet again'"

Here the Sybarite, who had been gradually becoming more and more impatient, could not keep silent any longer, and called out in the most woe begone tone: Will you never begin your story, you malicious fellow? I cannot drink a single drop till you leave off talking about death. I feel cold already, and I am always ill, if I only think of, nay, if I only hear the subject mentioned, that this life cannot last forever." The whole company burst into a laugh, and Phanes began to tell his story:

"You know that at Sais I always live in the new palace; but at Memphis, as commander of the Greek body-guard which must accompany the king everywhere, a lodging was assigned me in the left wing of the old palace.

"Since Psamtik the First, Sais has always been the royal residence, and the other palaces have in consequence become somewhat neglected. My dwelling was really splendidly situated, and beautifully furnished; it would have been first-rate, if, from the first moment of my entrance, a fearful annoyance had not made its appearance.

"In the day-time, when I was seldom at home, my rooms were all that could be wished, but at night it was impossible to sleep for the tremendous noise made by thousands of rats and mice under the old floors, and couches, and behind the hangings.

"Even in the first night an impudent mouse ran over my face.

"I was quite at a loss what to do, till an Egyptian soldier sold me two large cats, and these, in the course of many weeks, procured me some rest from my tormentors.

"Now, you are probably all aware that one of the charming laws of this most eccentric nation, (whose culture and wisdom, you, my Milesian friends, cannot sufficiently praise), declares the cat to be a sacred animal. Divine honors are paid to these fortunate quadrupeds as well as to many other animals, and he who kills a cat is punished with the same severity as the murderer of a human being."

Till now Rhodopis had been smiling, but when she perceived that Phanes' banishment had to do with his contempt for the sacred animals, her face became more serious. She knew how many victims, how many human lives, had already been sacrificed to this Egyptian superstition, and how, only a short time before, the king Amasis himself had

endeavored in vain to rescue an unfortunate Samian, who had killed a cat, from the vengeance of the enraged populace.

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[The cat was probably the most sacred of all the animals worshipped by the Egyptians. Herod tells that when a house was on fire the Egyptians never thought of extinguishing the fire until their cats were all saved, and that when a cat died, they shaved their heads in sign of mourning. Whoever killed one of these animals, whether intentionally or by accident, suffered the penalty, of death, without any chance of mercy. Diod. (l. 81.) himself witnessed the murder of a Roman citizen who had killed a cat, by the Egyptian people; and this in spite of the authorities, who in fear of the powerful Romans, endeavored to prevent the deed. The bodies of the cats were carefully embalmed and buried, and their mummies are to be found in every museum. The embalmed cat, carefully wrapped in linen bandages, is oftener to be met with than any other of the many animals thus preserved by the Egyptians. In spite of the great care bestowed on cats, there can have been no lack of mice in Egypt. In one nomos or province the shrew-mouse was sacred, and a satirical, obscene papyrus in Turin shows us a war between the cats and mice; the Papyrus Ebers contains poisons for mice. We ourselves possess a shrew-mouse exquisitely wrought in bronze.]

“Everything was going well,” continued the officer, “when we left Memphis two years ago.

“I confided my pair of cats to the care of one of the Egyptian servants at the palace, feeling sure that these enemies of the rats would keep my dwelling clear for the future; indeed I began to feel a certain veneration for my deliverers from the plague of mice.

“Last year Amasis fell ill before the court could adjourn to Memphis, and we remained at Sais.

“At last, about six week ago, we set out for the city of the Pyramids. I betook me to my old quarters; not the shadow of a mouse’s tail was to be seen there, but instead, they swarmed with another race of animals not one whit dearer to me than their predecessors. The pair of cats had, during my two years’ absence, increased twelve-fold. I tried all in my power to dislodge this burdensome brood of all ages and colors, but in vain; every night my sleep was disturbed by horrible choruses of four-footed animals, and feline war-cries and songs.

“Every year, at the period of the Bubastis festival, all superfluous cats may be brought to the temple of the cat-headed goddess Pacht, where they are fed and cared for, or, as I believe, when they multiply too fast, quietly put out of the way. These priests are knaves!

“Unfortunately the journey to the said temple” did not occur during the time of our stay in Memphis; however, as I really could not tolerate this army of tormentors any longer, I determined at least to get rid of two families of healthy kittens with which their mothers had just presented me. My old slave Mus, from his very name a natural enemy of cats, was told to kill the little creatures, put them into a sack, and throw them into the Nile.

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“This murder was necessary, as the mewling of the kittens would otherwise have betrayed the contents of the sack to the palace-warders. In the twilight poor Muss betook himself to the Nile through the grove of Hathor, with his perilous burden. But alas! the Egyptian attendant who was in the habit of feeding my cats, had noticed that two families of kittens were missing, and had seen through our whole plan.

“My slave took his way composedly through the great avenue of Sphinxes, and by the temple of Ptah, holding the little bag concealed under his mantle. Already in the sacred grove he noticed that he was being followed, but on seeing that the men behind him stopped before the temple of Ptah and entered into conversation with the priests, he felt perfectly reassured and went on.

“He had already reached the bank of the Nile, when he heard voices calling him and a number of people running towards him in haste; at the same moment a stone whistled close by his head.

“Mus at once perceived the danger which was threatening him. Summoning all his strength he rushed down to the Nile, flung the bag in, and then with a beating heart, but as he imagined without the slightest evidence of guilt, remained standing on the shore. A few moments later he was surrounded by at least a hundred priests.

“Even the high-priest of Ptah, my old enemy Ptahotep, had not disdained to follow the pursuers in person.

“Many of the latter, and amongst them the perfidious palace-servant, rushed at once into the Nile, and there, to our confusion, found the bag with its twelve little corpses, hanging entirely uninjured among the Papyrus-reeds and bean-tendrils. The cotton coffin was opened before the eyes of the high-priest, a troop of lower priests, and at least a thousand of the inhabitants of Memphis, who had hurried to the spot, and when the miserable contents were disclosed, there arose such fearful howls of anguish, and such horrible cries of mingled lamentation and revenge, that I heard them even in the palace.

“The furious multitude, in their wild rage, fell on my poor servant, threw him down, trampled on him and would have killed him, had not the all-powerful high-priest—designing to involve me, as author of the crime, in the same ruin—commanded them to cease and take the wretched malefactor to prison.

“Half an hour later I was in prison too.

“My old Mus took all the guilt of the crime on himself, until at last, by means of the bastinado, the high-priest forced him to confess that I had ordered the killing of the kittens, and that he, as a faithful servant, had not dared to disobey.



“The supreme court of justice, whose decisions the king himself has no power to reverse, is composed of priests from Memphis, Heliopolis and Thebes: you can therefore easily believe that they had no scruple in pronouncing sentence of death on poor Mus and my own unworthy Greek self. The slave was pronounced guilty of two capital offences: first, of the murder of the sacred animals, and secondly, of a twelve-fold pollution of the Nile through dead bodies. I was condemned as originator of this, (as they termed it) four-and-twenty-fold crime.

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[According to the Egyptian law, the man who was cognizant of a crime was held equally culpable with the perpetrator.]

“Mus was executed on the same day. May the earth rest lightly on him! I shall never think of him again as my slave, but as a friend and benefactor! My sentence of death was read aloud in the presence of his dead body, and I was already preparing for a long journey into the nether world, when the king sent and commanded a reprieve.

[This court of justice, which may be compared with the Areopagus at Athens, and the Gerusia at Sparta, (Diod. I, 75.), was composed of 30 judges taken from the priestly caste, (10 from Heliopolis, 10 from Memphis, 10 from Thebes). The most eminent from among their number was chosen by them as president. All complaints and defences had to be presented in writing, that the judges might in no way be influenced by word or gesture. This tribunal was independent, even of the king's authority. Much information concerning the administration of justice has been obtained from the Papyrus Abbott, known by the name of the ‘Papyrus judiciaire’. Particulars and an account of their literature may be found in Ebers “Durch Gosen zum Sinai,” p. 534 and following.]

“I was taken back to prison. One of my guards, an Arcadian Taxiarch, told me that all the officers of the guard and many of the soldiers, (altogether four thousand men) had threatened to send in their resignation, unless I, their commander, were pardoned.

“As it was beginning to grow dusk I was taken to the king.

“He received me graciously, confirmed the Taxiarch's statement with his own mouth, and said how grieved he should be to lose a commander so generally beloved. I must confess that I owe Amasis no grudge for his conduct to me, on the contrary I pity him. You should have heard how he, the powerful king, complained that he could never act according to his own wishes, that even in his most private affairs he was crossed and compromised by the priests and their influence.

[See the parallel in the history of 2000 years later in the reigns of Henry III. and IV. confronting the Jesuit influence, finally culminating in assassination. D.W.]

“Had it only depended on himself, he could easily have pardoned the transgression of a law, which I, as a foreigner, could not be expected to understand, and might (though unjustly) esteem as a foolish superstition. But for the sake of the priests he dare not leave me unpunished. The lightest penalty he could inflict must be banishment from Egypt.

“He concluded his complaint with these words: ‘You little know what concessions I must make to the priests in order to obtain your pardon. Why, our supreme court of justice is independent even of me, its king!’

“And thus I received my dismissal, after having taken a solemn oath to leave Memphis that very day, and Egypt, at latest, in three weeks.

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"At the palace-gate I met Psamtik, the crown-prince. He has long been my enemy, on account of some vexatious matters which I cannot divulge, (you know them, Rhodopis). I was going to offer him my parting salutation, but he turned his back upon me, saying: Once more you have escaped punishment, Athenian; but you cannot elude my vengeance. Whithersoever you may go, I shall be able to find you!'—'That remains to be proved,' I answered, and putting myself and my possessions on board a boat, came to Naukratis. Here, by good fortune, I met my old friend Aristomachus of Sparta, who, as he was formerly in command of the Cyprian troops, will most likely be nominated my successor. I should rejoice to know that such a first-rate man was going to take my place, if I did not at the same time fear that his eminent services will make my own poor efforts seem even more insignificant than they really were."

But here he was interrupted by Aristomachus, who called out: "Praise enough, friend Phanes! Spartan tongues are stiff; but if you should ever stand in need of my help, I will give you an answer in deeds, which shall strike the right nail on the head."

Rhodopis smiled her approval, and giving her hand to each, said: "Unfortunately, the only conclusion to be drawn from your story, my poor Phanes, is that you cannot possibly remain any longer in this country. I will not blame you for your thoughtlessness, though you might have known that you were exposing yourself to great danger for a mere trifle. The really wise and brave man never undertakes a hazardous enterprise, unless the possible advantage and disadvantage that may accrue to him from it can be reckoned at least as equal. Recklessness is quite as foolish, but not so blamable as cowardice, for though both do the man an injury, the latter alone can dishonor him.

"Your thoughtlessness, this time, has very nearly cost your life, a life dear to many, and which you ought to save for a nobler end. We cannot attempt to keep you here; we should thereby only injure ourselves without benefitting you. This noble Spartan must now take your place as head and representative of the Greek nation at the Egyptian court, must endeavor to protect us against the encroachment of the priests, and to retain for us the royal favor. I take your hand, Aristomachus, and will not let it go till you have promised that you will protect, to the utmost of your power, every Greek, however humble, (as Phanes did before you), from the insolence of the Egyptians, and will sooner resign your office than allow the smallest wrong done to a Hellene to go unpunished. We are but a few thousands among millions of enemies, but through courage we are great, and unity must keep us strong. Hitherto the Greeks in Egypt have lived like brothers; each has been ready to offer himself for the good of all, and all for each, and it is just this unity that has made us, and must keep us, powerful.

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"Oh! could we but bestow this precious gift on our mother-country and her colonies! would the tribes of our native land but forget their Dorian, Ionian or AEolian descent, and, contenting themselves with the one name of Hellenes, live as the children of one family, as the sheep of one flock,—then indeed we should be strong against the whole world, and Hellas would be recognized by all nations as the Queen of the Earth!"

[This longing desire for unity was by no means foreign to the Greeks, though we seldom hear it expressed. Aristotle, for example, says VII. 7.: "Were the Hellenes united into one state, they could command all the barbarous nations."]

A fire glowed in the eyes of the grey-haired woman as she uttered these words; and the Spartan, grasping her hand impetuously and stamping on the floor with his wooden leg, cried: "By Zeus, I will not let a hair of their heads be hurt; but thou, Rhodopis, thou art worthy to have been born a Spartan woman."

"Or an Athenian," cried Phanes.

"An Ionian," said the Milesians, and the sculptor: "A daughter of the Samian Geomori—"

"But I am more, far more, than all these," cried the enthusiastic woman. "I am a Hellene!"

The whole company, even to the Jew and the Syrian, were carried away by the intense feeling of the moment; the Sybarite alone remained unmoved, and, with his mouth so full as to render the words almost unintelligible, said:

"You deserve to be a Sybarite too, Rhodopis, for your roast beef is the best I have tasted since I left Italy, and your Anthylla wine' relishes almost as well as Vesuvian or Chian!"

Every one laughed, except the Spartan, who darted a look of indignation and contempt at the epicure.

In this moment a deep voice, hitherto unknown to us, shouted suddenly through the window, "A glad greeting to you, my friends!"

"A glad greeting," echoed the chorus of revellers, questioning and guessing who this late arrival might prove to be.

They had not long to wait, for even before the Sybarite had had time carefully to test and swallow another mouthful of wine, the speaker, Kallias, the son of Phaenippus of Athens, was already standing by the side of Rhodopis. He was a tall thin man of over sixty, with a head of that oval form which gives the impression of refinement and intellect. One of the richest among the Athenian exiles, he had twice bought the possessions of Pisistratus from the state, and twice been obliged to surrender them, on

the tyrant's return to power. Looking round with his clear keen eyes on this circle of acquaintances, he exchanged friendly greetings with all, and exclaimed:

"If you do not set a high value on my appearance among you this evening, I shall think that gratitude has entirely disappeared from the earth."

"We have been expecting you a long time," interrupted one of the Milesians. "You are the first man to bring us news of the Olympic games!"

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"And we could wish no better bearer of such news than the victor of former days?" added Rhodopis. "Take your seat," cried Phanes impatiently, "and come to the point with your news at once, friend Kallias."

"Immediately, fellow-countryman," answered the other. "It is some time ago now since I left Olympia. I embarked at Cenchreae in a fifty-oared Samian vessel, the best ship that ever was built.

"It does not surprise me that I am the first Greek to arrive in Naukratis. We encountered terrific storms at sea, and could not have escaped with our lives, if the big-bellied Samian galley, with her Ibis beak and fish's tail had not been so splendidly timbered and manned.

"How far the other homeward-bound passengers may have been driven out of their course, I cannot tell; we found shelter in the harbor of Samos, and were able to put to sea again after ten days.

"We ran into the mouth of the Nile this morning. I went on board my own bark at once, and was so favored by Boreas, who at least at the end of my voyage, seemed willing to prove that he still felt kindly towards his old Kallias, that I caught sight of this most friendly of all houses a few moments since. I saw the waving flag, the brightly lighted windows, and debated within myself whether to enter or not; but Rhodopis, your fascination proved irresistible, and besides, I was bursting with all my untold news, longing to share your feast, and to tell you, over the viands and the wine, things that you have not even allowed yourselves to dream of."

Kallias settled himself comfortably on one of the cushions, and before beginning to tell his news, produced and presented to Rhodopis a magnificent gold bracelet in the form of a serpent's, which he had bought for a large sum at Samos, in the goldsmith's workshop of the very Theodorus who was now sitting with him at table.

"This I have brought for you," he said, turning to the delighted Rhodopis, "but for you, friend Phanes, I have something still better. Guess, who won the four-horse chariot-race?"

"An Athenian?" asked Phanes, and his face glowed with excitement; for the victory gained by one citizen at the Olympic games belonged to his whole people, and the Olympic olive-branch was the greatest honor and happiness that could fall to the lot, either of a single Hellene, or an entire Greek tribe.

"Rightly guessed, Phanes!" cried the bringer of this joyful news, "The first prize has been carried off by an Athenian; and not only so, your own cousin Cimon, the son of Kypselos, the brother of that Miltiades, who, nine Olympiads ago, earned us the same

honor, is the man who has conquered this year; and with the same steeds that gained him the prize at the last games.

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[The second triumph won by the steeds of Cimon must have taken place, as Dunecker correctly remarks, about the year 528. The same horses won the race for the third time at the next Olympic games, consequently four years later. As token of his gratitude Cimon caused a monument to be erected in their honor in "the hollow way" near Athens. We may here remind our readers that the Greeks made use of the Olympic games to determine the date of each year. They took place every four years. The first was fixed 776 B. C. Each separate year was named the 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th of such or such an Olympiad.]

"The fame of the Alkmaeonidae is, verily, darkening more and more before the Philadae. Are not you proud, Phanes? do not you feel joy at the glory of your family?"

In his delight Phanes had risen from his seat, and seemed suddenly to have increased in stature by a whole head.

With a look of ineffable pride and consciousness of his own position, he gave his hand to the messenger of victory. The latter, embracing his countryman, continued:

"Yes, we have a right to feel proud and happy, Phanes; you especially, for no sooner had the judges unanimously awarded the prize to Cimon, than he ordered the heralds to proclaim the tyrant Pisistratus as the owner of the splendid team, and therefore victor in the race. Pisistratus at once caused it to be announced that your family was free to return to Athens, and so now, Phanes, the long-wished for hour of your return home is awaiting you."

But at these words Phanes turned pale, his look of conscious pride changed into one of indignation, and he exclaimed:

"At this I am to rejoice, foolish Kallias? rather bid me weep that a descendant of Ajax should be capable of laying his well-won fame thus ignominiously at a tyrant's feet! No! I swear by Athene, by Father Zeus, and by Apollo, that I will sooner starve in foreign lands than take one step homeward, so long as the Pisistratidae hold my country in bondage. When I leave the service of Amasis, I shall be free, free as a bird in the air; but I would rather be the slave of a peasant in foreign lands, than hold the highest office under Pisistratus. The sovereign power in Athens belongs to us, its nobles; but Cimon by laying his chaplet at the feet of Pisistratus has acknowledged the tyrants, and branded himself as their servant. He shall hear that Phanes cares little for the tyrant's clemency. I choose to remain an exile till my country is free, till her nobles and people govern themselves, and dictate their own laws. Phanes will never do homage to the oppressor, though all the Philadae, the Alkmaeonidae, and even the men of your own house, Kallias, the rich Daduchi, should fall down at his feet!"

With flashing eyes he looked round on the assembly; Kallias too scrutinized the faces of the guests with conscious pride, as if he would say:

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“See, friends, the kind of men produced by my glorious country!”

Taking the hand of Phanes again, he said to him: “The tyrants are as hateful to me as to you, my friend; but I have seen, that, so long as Pisistratus lives, the tyranny cannot be overthrown. His allies, Lygdamis of Naxos and Polykrates of Samos, are powerful; but the greatest danger for our freedom lies in his own moderation and prudence. During my recent stay in Greece I saw with alarm that the mass of the people in Athens love their oppressor like a father. Notwithstanding his great power, he leaves the commonwealth in the enjoyment of Solon’s constitution. He adorns the city with the most magnificent buildings. They say that the new temple of Zeus, now being built of glorious marble by Kallaeschrus, Antistates and Porinus (who must be known to you, Theodorus), will surpass every building that has yet been erected by the Hellenes. He understands how to attract poets and artists of all kinds to Athens, he has had the poems of Homer put into writing, and the prophecies of Musaeus collected by Onomakritus. He lays out new streets and arranges fresh festivals; trade flourishes under his rule, and the people find themselves well off, in spite of the many taxes laid upon them. But what are the people? a vulgar multitude who, like the gnats, fly towards every thing brilliant, and, so long as the taper burns, will continue to flutter round it, even though they burn their wings in doing so. Let Pisistratus’ torch burn out, Phanes, and I’ll swear that the fickle crowd will flock around the returning nobles, the new light, just as they now do around the tyrant.

“Give me your hand once more, you true son of Ajax; for you, my friends, I have still many an interesting piece of news untold.

“The chariot-race, as I have just related, was won by Cimon who gave the olive-branch to Pisistratus. Four finer horses than his I never saw. Arkesilaus of Cyrene, Kleosthenes of Epidamnus, Aster of Sybaris, Hekataeus of Miletus and many more had also sent splendid teams. Indeed the games this time were more than brilliant. All Hellas had sent deputies. Rhoda of the Ardeates, in distant Iberia, the wealthy Tartessus, Sinope in the far East on the shores of Pontus, in short, every tribe that could boast of Hellenic descent was well represented. The Sybarite deputies were of a dazzling beauty; the Spartans, homely and simple, but handsome as Achilles, tall and strong as Hercules; the Athenians remarkable for their supple limbs and graceful movements, and the men of Crotona were led by Milo, strongest of mortal birth. The Samian and Milesian deputies vied in splendor and gorgeousness of attire with those from Corinth and Mitylene: the flower of the Greek youth was assembled there, and, in the space allotted to spectators, were seated, not only men of every age, class and nation, but many virgins, fair and lovely maidens, who had come to Olympia, more especially from Sparta,

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in order to encourage the men during the games by their acclamations and applause. The market was set up beyond the Alphaeus, and there traders from all parts of the world were to be seen; Greeks, Carthaginians, Lydians, Phrygians and shrewd Phoenicians from Palestine settled weighty business transactions, or offered their goods to the public from tents and booths. But how can I possibly describe to you the surging throngs of the populace, the echoing choruses, the smoking festal hecatombs, the bright and variegated costumes, the sumptuousness of the equipages, the clang of the different dialects and the joyful cries of friends meeting again after years of separation; or the splendid appearance of the envoys, the crowds of lookers-on and venders of small wares, the brilliant effect produced by the masses of spectators, who filled to overflowing the space allotted to them, the eager suspense during the progress of the games, and the never ending shouts of joy when the victory was decided; the solemn investiture with the olive-branch, cut with a golden knife by the Elean boy, (whose parents must both be living), from the sacred tree in the Altis planted so many centuries ago by Hercules himself; or lastly, the prolonged acclamations which, like peals of thunder, resounded in the Stadium, when Milo of Crotona appeared, bearing on his shoulders the bronze statue of himself cast by Dameas, and carried it through the Stadium into the Altis without once tottering. The weight of the metal would have crushed a bull to the earth: but borne by Milo it seemed like a child in the arms of its Lacedaemonian nurse.

“The highest honors (after Cimon’s) were adjudged to a pair of Spartan brothers, Lysander and Maro, the sons of Aristomachus. Maro was victor in the foot race, but Lysander presented himself, amidst the shouts of the spectators, as the opponent of Milo! Milo the invincible, victor at Pisa, and in the Pythian and Isthmian combats. Milo was taller and stouter than the Spartan, who was formed like Apollo, and seemed from his great youth scarcely to have passed from under the hands of the schoolmaster.

“In their naked beauty, glistening with the golden oil, the youth and the man stood opposite to one another, like a panther and a lion preparing for the combat. Before the onset, the young Lysander raised his hands imploringly to the gods, crying: ‘For my father, my honor, and the glory of Sparta!’ The Crotonian looked down on the youth with a smile of superiority; just as an epicure looks at the shell of the languste he is preparing to open.

“And now the wrestling began. For some time neither could succeed in grasping the other. The Crotonian threw almost irresistible weight into his attempts to lay hold of his opponent, but the latter slipped through the iron grip like a snake. This struggle to gain a hold lasted long, and the immense multitude watched silently, breathless from excitement. Not a sound was to be heard but the groans of the wrestlers and the singing of the nightingales in the grove of the Altis. At last, the youth succeeded, by means of the cleverest trick I ever saw, in clasping his opponent firmly. For a long time,

Milo exerted all his strength to shake him oft, but in vain, and the sand of the Stadium was freely moistened by the great drops of sweat, the result of this Herculean struggle.

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“More and more intense waxed the excitement of the spectators, deeper and deeper the silence, rarer the cries of encouragement, and louder the groans of the wrestlers. At last Lysander’s strength gave way. Immediately a thousand voices burst forth to cheer him on. He roused himself and made one last superhuman effort to throw his adversary: but it was too late. Milo had perceived the momentary weakness. Taking advantage of it, he clasped the youth in a deadly embrace; a full black stream of blood welled from Lysander’s beautiful lips, and he sank lifeless to the earth from the wearied arms of the giant. Democedes, the most celebrated physician of our day, whom you Samians will have known at the court of Polycrates, hastened to the spot, but no skill could now avail the happy Lysander,—he was dead.

“Milo was obliged to forego the victor’s wreath”; and the fame of this youth will long continue to sound through the whole of Greece.

[By the laws of the games the wrestler, whose adversary died, had no right to the prize of victory.]

I myself would rather be the dead Lysander, son of Aristomachus, than the living Kallias growing old in inaction away from his country. Greece, represented by her best and bravest, carried the youth to his grave, and his statue is to be placed in the Altis by those of Milo of Crotona and Praxidamas of Aegina”. At length the heralds proclaimed the sentence of the judges: ‘To Sparta be awarded a victor’s wreath for the dead, for the noble Lysander hath been vanquished, not by Milo, but by Death, and he who could go forth unconquered from a two hours’ struggle with the strongest of all Greeks, hath well deserved the olive-branch.’”

Here Kallias stopped a moment in his narrative. During his animated description of these events, so precious to every Greek heart, he had forgotten his listeners, and, gazing into vacancy, had seen only the figures of the wrestlers as they rose before his remembrance. Now, on looking round, he perceived, to his astonishment, that the grey-haired man with the wooden leg, whom he had already noticed, though without recognizing him, had hidden his face in his hands and was weeping. Rhodopis was standing at his right hand. Phanes at his left, and the other guests were gazing at the Spartan, as if he had been the hero of Kallias’s tale. In a moment the quick Athenian perceived that the aged man must stand in some very near relation to one or other of the victors at Olympia; but when he heard that he was Aristomachus—the father of that glorious pair of brothers, whose wondrous forms were constantly hovering before his eyes like visions sent down from the abodes of the gods, then he too gazed on the sobbing old man with mingled envy and admiration, and made no effort to restrain the tears which rushed into his own eyes, usually so clear and keen. In those days men wept, as well as women, hoping to gain relief from the balm of their own tears. In wrath, in ecstasy of delight, in every deep inward anguish, we find the mighty heroes weeping, while, on the other hand, the Spartan boys would submit to be scourged at the altar of

Artemis Orthia, and would bleed and even die under the lash without uttering a moan, in order to obtain the praise of the men.

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For a time every one remained silent, out of respect to the old man's emotion. But at last the stillness was broken by Joshua the Jew, who began thus, in broken Greek:

"Weep thy fill, O man of Sparta! I also have known what it is to lose a son. Eleven years have passed since I buried him in the land of strangers, by the waters of Babylon, where my people pined in captivity. Had yet one year been added unto the life of the beautiful child, he had died in his own land, and had been buried in the sepulchres of his fathers. But Cyrus the Persian (Jehovah bless his posterity!) released us from bondage one year too late, and therefore do I weep doubly for this my son, in that he is buried among the enemies of my people Israel. Can there be an evil greater than to behold our children, who are unto us as most precious treasure, go down into the grave before us? And, may the Lord be gracious unto me, to lose so noble a son, in the dawn of his early manhood, just at the moment he had won such brilliant renown, must indeed be a bitter grief, a grief beyond all others!"

Then the Spartan took away his hands from before his face; he was looking stern, but smiled through his tears, and answered:

"Phoenician, you err! I weep not for anguish, but for joy, and would have gladly lost my other son, if he could have died like my Lysander."

The Jew, horrified at these, to him, sinful and unnatural words, shook his head disapprovingly; but the Greeks overwhelmed the old man with congratulations, deeming him much to be envied. His great happiness made Aristomachus look younger by many years, and he cried to Rhodopis: "Truly, my friend, your house is for me a house of blessing; for this is the second gift that the gods have allowed to fall to my lot, since I entered it."—"What was the first?" asked Rhodopis. "A propitious oracle."—"But," cried Phanes, "you have forgotten the third; on this day the gods have blessed you with the acquaintance of Rhodopis. But, tell me, what is this about the oracle?"—"May I repeat it to our friends?" asked the Delphian.

Aristomachus nodded assent, and Phryxus read aloud a second time the answer of the Pythia:

"If once the warrior hosts from the snow-topped mountains descending
Come to the fields of the stream watering richly the plain,
Then shall the lingering boat to the beckoning meadows convey thee
Which to the wandering foot peace and a home will afford.
When those warriors come from the snow-topped mountains descending
Then will the powerful Five grant thee what they long refused."

Scarcely was the last word out of his mouth, when Kallias the Athenian, springing up, cried: "In this house, too, you shall receive from me the fourth gift of the gods. Know that I have kept my rarest news till last: the Persians are coming to Egypt!"

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At this every one, except the Sybarite, rushed to his feet, and Kallias found it almost impossible to answer their numerous questions. "Gently, gently, friends," he cried at last; "let me tell my story in order, or I shall never finish it at all. It is not an army, as Phanes supposes, that is on its way hither, but a great embassy from Cambyses, the present ruler of the most powerful kingdom of Persia. At Samos I heard that they had already reached Miletus, and in a few days they will be here. Some of the king's own relations, are among the number, the aged Croesus, king of Lydia, too; we shall behold a marvellous splendor and magnificence! Nobody knows the object of their coming, but it is supposed that King Cambyses wishes to conclude an alliance with Amasis; indeed some say the king solicits the hand of Pharaoh's daughter."

"An alliance?" asked Phanes, with an incredulous shrug of the shoulders. "Why the Persians are rulers over half the world already. All the great Asiatic powers have submitted to their sceptre; Egypt and our own mother-country, Hellas, are the only two that have been shared by the conqueror."

"You forget India with its wealth of gold, and the great migratory nations of Asia," answered Kallias. "And you forget moreover, that an empire, composed like Persia of some seventy nations or tribes of different languages and customs, bears the seeds of discord ever within itself, and must therefore guard against the chance of foreign attack; lest, while the bulk of the army be absent, single provinces should seize the opportunity and revolt from their allegiance. Ask the Milesians how long they would remain quiet if they heard that their oppressors had been defeated in any battle?"

Theopompus, the Milesian merchant, called out, laughing at the same time: "If the Persians were to be worsted in one war, they would at once be involved in a hundred others, and we should not be the last to rise up against our tyrants in the hour of their weakness!"

"Whatever the intentions of the envoys may be," continued Kallias, "my information remains unaltered; they will be here at the latest in three days."

"And so your oracle will be fulfilled, fortunate Aristomachus!" exclaimed Rhodopis, "for see, the warrior hosts can only be the Persians. When they descend to the shores of the Nile, then the powerful Five,' your Ephori, will change their decision, and you, the father of two Olympian victors, will be recalled to your native land.

[The five Ephori of Sparta were appointed to represent the absent kings during the Messenian war. In later days the nobles made use of the Ephori as a power, which, springing immediately from their own body, they could oppose to the kingly authority. Being the highest magistrates in all judicial and educational matters, and in everything relating to the moral police of the country, the Ephori soon found means to assert their superiority,

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and on most occasions over that of the kings themselves. Every patrician who was past the age of thirty, had the right to become a candidate yearly for the office. Aristot. Potit, II. and IV. Laert. Diog. I. 68.]

“Fill the goblets again, Knakias. Let us devote this last cup to the manes of the glorious Lysander; and then I advise you to depart, for it is long past midnight, and our pleasure has reached its highest point. The true host puts an end to the banquet when his guests are feeling at their best. Serene and agreeable recollections will soon bring you hither again; whereas there would be little joy in returning to a house where the remembrance of hours of weakness, the result of pleasure, would mingle with your future enjoyment.” In this her guests agreed, and Ibykus named her a thorough disciple of Pythagoras, in praise of the joyous, festive evening.

Every one prepared for departure. The Sybarite, who had been drinking deeply in order to counteract the very inconvenient amount of feeling excited by the conversation, rose also, assisted by his slaves, who had to be called in for this purpose.

While he was being moved from his former comfortable position, he stammered something about a “breach of hospitality;” but, when Rhodopis was about to give him her hand at parting, the wine gained the ascendancy and he exclaimed, “By Hercules, Rhodopis, you get rid of us as if we were troublesome creditors. It is not my custom to leave a supper so long as I can stand, still less to be turned out of doors like a miserable parasite!”

“Hear reason, you immoderate Sybarite,” began Rhodopis, endeavoring with a smile to excuse her proceeding. But these words, in Philoinus’ half-intoxicated mood, only increased his irritation; he burst into a mocking laugh, and staggering towards the door, shouted: “Immoderate Sybarite, you call me? good! here you have your answer: Shameless slave! one can still perceive the traces of what you were in your youth. Farewell then, slave of Iadmon and Xanthus, freedwoman of Charaxus!” He had not however finished his sentence, when Aristomachus rushed upon him, stunned him with a blow of his fist, and carried him off like a child down to the boat in which his slaves were waiting at the garden-gate.

ETEXT EDITOR’S BOOKMARKS:

Did the ancients know anything of love
Folly to fret over what cannot be undone
Go down into the grave before us (Our children)
He who kills a cat is punished (for murder)
In those days men wept, as well as women
Lovers delighted in nature then as now



Multitude who, like the gnats, fly towards every thing brilliant
Olympics—The first was fixed 776 B.C.
Papyrus Ebers
Pious axioms to be repeated by the physician, while compounding
Romantic love, as we know it, a result of Christianity
True host puts an end to the banquet
Whether the historical romance is ever justifiable

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