

The Emperor — Volume 07 eBook

The Emperor — Volume 07 by Georg Ebers

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CHAPTER V.

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

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

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

In former years the finest hangings had decorated his windows, which had been as gay with flowers and lamps as those of the other Israelites who dwelt in the Canopic way, and who were wont to keep the festival in common with their heathen fellow-citizens as jovially as though they were no less zealous to do homage to Dionysus. Apollodorus had his own reasons for keeping aloof on this occasion from all that was connected with the holiday doings of the heathen. Without dreaming that his withdrawal could involve him in any danger, he was quietly sitting in his house, which was so splendidly furnished as to seem fitted for some princely Greek rather than for a Hebrew. This was especially the case with the men's living-room, in which Apollodorus sat, for the pictures on the walls and pavement of this beautiful hall—of which the roof, which was half open, was supported on columns of the finest porphyry—represented the loves of Eros and Psyche; while between the pillars stood busts of the greatest heathen philosophers, and in the background a fine statue of Plato was conspicuous. Among all the Greeks and Romans there was the portrait of only one Jew, and this was that of Philo, whose

intellectual and delicate features greatly resembled those of the most illustrious of his Greek companions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gamaliel let the Alexandrian speak to the end, but then, as his nephew was beginning to argue against their host's hesitancy, the old man abruptly interrupted him. Drawing up his figure, which was a little bent, to its full height, and passing his hand among the blue veins and fine wrinkles that marked his high forehead, he began:

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

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

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

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

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

“You and your nephew also speak Greek.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"By Heracles!"

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

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

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

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

“Speak, I beg you, speak.”

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

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

“And you called him?”

“You know his name is Benjamin.”

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

“I did not ask you here,” retorted Apollodorus. “But if you quit us to-morrow, you as will be followed by our reverent regard. Think no worse of us because we adapt ourselves, more, perhaps, than is fitting, to the ways and ideas of the people among whom we have grown up, and in whose midst we have been prosperous, and whose interests are ours. We know how high our faith is beyond theirs. In our hearts we still are Jews; but are we not bound to try to open and to cultivate and to elevate our spirits, which God certainly made of stuff no coarser than that of other nations, whenever and wherever we may? And in what school may our minds be trained better or on sounder principles than in ours—I mean that of the Greek sages? The knowledge of the Most High—”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"He is a hero—perhaps the Redeemer."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"They are attacking my house," shouted Apollodorus.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Let us get into the house!"

"The mean churl shall remember this day!"

"Fetch him out!"

"Drag him into the street!"

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

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

“Tear him in pieces!”

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

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

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CHAPTER VI.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“The crazy Roman! the praetor! the sham Eros!”

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

“Listen, Listen.”

“No let us get into the Jew’s house.”

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

“I will knock your teeth down your throat boy, if you don’t hold your tongue.”

All the crowd were shouting in wild confusion.

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

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

“Get into the Jew’s house, we don’t want to hear children’s stories—”

“Be quiet there!”

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

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

“Do not mention the horrid things!” laughed Verus but listen to me.— Well, the child set his little sheep up in a row each one close to the next. He was a weaver’s son. Are there any weavers here? You? and you—ah, and you out there. If I were not my



father's son I should like to be the son of an Alexandrian weaver. You need not laugh! —Well, about the sheep. All the little things were beautifully white but one which had nasty black spots, and the little boy could not bear that one. He went to the hearth, pulled out a burning stick and wanted to burn the little ugly sheep so as only to have pretty white ones. The lambkin caught fire and just as the flame had begun to burn the wooden skeleton of the toy a draught from the window blew the flame towards the other little sheep and in a minute they were all burned to ashes. Then thought the little boy, 'If only I had let the ugly sheep alone! What can I play with now?' and he began to cry. But this was not all, for while the little rascal was drying his eyes, the flame spread and burnt up the loom, the wool, the flax, the woven pieces, the whole house—the town in which he was born, and even, I believe, the boy himself!—Now worthy friends and Macedonian citizens, reflect a moment. Any man among you who is possessed of any property may read the moral of my fable."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

daughter, Ismene, came in, and after falling on her father's neck and weeping with agitation the house keeper took her hand and led her to Verus, saying:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Perfectly."

"From whom?"

"From Aquila, my father's disciple."

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

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

"What should prevent your answering positively?"

"Unforeseen appearances in the heavens."

Are such signs common?"

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

"But perhaps my fortune is not a common one-and I beg of you to calculate on Hadrian's method what the heavens will predict on that night for the man whose horoscope my slave shall deliver to you early to-morrow morning."

"I will do so with pleasure."

"When can you have finished this work?"

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

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

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

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

“I will conceal nothing, absolutely nothing.”

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

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

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

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

In a side street the praetor met the tailor he had knocked down, the sausage-maker, and other ringleaders of the attack on the Israelite’s house. They were being led away prisoners before the night magistrates. Verus would have set them at liberty with all his heart, but he knew that the Emperor would enquire next morning what had been done to the rioters, and so he forbore. At any other time he would certainly have sent them home unpunished, but just now he was dominated by a wish that was more dominant than his good nature or his facile impulses.

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CHAPTER VII.

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

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

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

"Did they tell you so too?"

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

"No useless speeches!"

"Just now I met, in his own person—"

"Who?"

"Hadrian."

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

"With these eyes."

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sabina withdrew the hand he had taken, saying:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verus gazed at Sabina with growing astonishment. She had always been kinder to him than to any one else in the world and he felt bound to her by all the ties of gratitude and the sweet memories of childhood. Even as a boy, out of all his playfellows he was the only one who, far from fearing her had clung to her. But to-night! who had ever seen Sabina in such a mood? Was this the harsh bitter woman whose heart seemed filled with gall, whose tongue cut like a dagger every one against whom she used it? Was this Sabina who no doubt was kindly disposed towards him but who loved no one else, not even herself? Did he see rightly, or was he under some delusion? Tears, genuine, honest, unaffected tears filled her eyes as she went on:

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

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

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

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

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

Tender emotion, the emotion that softens the heart, thrilled through Sabina's dried-up nature and sparkled in her eyes. She felt like a young wife of whom a child is born, and

the voice of her heart sings to her in soothing tones: "It lives, it is mine, I am the providence of a living soul, I am a mother."

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

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

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

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

Notwithstanding the late hour, his wife had not yet gone to bed. She had heard that he had been summoned to the Empress on his return home, and awaited him not without anxiety, for she was not accustomed to anything pleasant from Sabina. Her husband's hasty step echoed loudly from the stone walls of the sleeping palace. She heard it at some distance, and went to the door of her room to meet him. Radiant, excited, and with flushed cheeks, he held out both his hands to her. She looked so fair in her white night-wrapper of fine white material, and his heart was so full that he clasped her in his arms as fondly as when she was his bride; and she loved him even now no less than she had done then, and felt for the hundredth time with grateful joy that the faithless scapegrace had once more returned to her unchangeable and faithful heart, like a sailor who, after wandering through many lands seeks his native port.

"Lucilla," he cried, disengaging her arms from round his neck. "Oh, Lucilla! what an evening this has been! I always judged Sabina differently from you, and have felt with gratitude that she really cared for me. Now all is clear between her and me! She called me her son. I called her mother. I owe it to her, and the purple—the purple is ours! You

are the wife of Verus Caesar; you are certain of it if no signs and omens come to frighten Hadrian."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I am the daughter of the butchered man."

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



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

“Good-night, fair Muse!”

“Good-night, sham Eros!” she retorted.

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

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

"And you will celebrate it in your poems?"

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

"I tremble!"

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

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

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

"Did you venture into the streets?"

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

"May I be allowed to ask who?"

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

"He knows the town well."

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

"Happy Pontius!"

"Most happy Verus!"

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER VIII.

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

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

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

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

But for Arsinoe's sake he could not turn his back on his native place. He loved her with all the passion of his artist's soul, and his youthful courage would certainly not have been so quickly and utterly crushed if he could have deluded himself as to the fact that his hopes of possessing her had been driven into the remote background by the events of the preceding evening. How could he dare to drag her into his uncertain and compromised position? And what reception could he hope for from her father if he should now attempt to demand her for his wife. As these thoughts overpowered his mind he suddenly felt as if his eyes were smarting with sand that had blown into them, and he could not help springing out of bed; he paced his little room with long steps, and he held his forehead pressed against the wall.

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

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

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His artistic faculties were once more roused into play, and found a field for their freest exercise when Antinous told him that he was at his disposal till mid-day, since his master—or rather Caesar as he was now permitted to name him—was engaged in business. The prefect Titianus had come to him with a whole heap of papers, to work with him and his private secretary. Pollux at once led the favorite into a side room of the little house, with a northern aspect; here on a table lay the wax and the smaller implements which belonged to himself and which he had brought home last evening. His heart ached, and his nerves were in a painful state of tension as he began his work. All sorts of anxious thoughts disturbed his spirit, and yet he knew that if he put his whole soul into it he could do something good. Now, if ever, he must put forth his best powers, and he dreaded failure as an utter catastrophe, for on the face of the whole earth there was no second model to compare with this that stood before him.

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

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

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

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

“How will that do?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Be silent and show us the way.”

Doris was not feeling particularly strong that day, and her eyes already red with weeping about her son again filled with tears. No one had ever spoken so to her before, and yet, for her son’s sake she would not repay sharp words in the same coin, though she had plenty at her command.

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

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

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

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



"After all," said she to herself, "none but Caesar can command here, and it is said that he gets on but badly with his spiteful wife, and cares very little what she wishes. Hadrian let Pollux feel his power, but he has always been friendly to me. My dogs and birds amused him, and did he not even do me the honor to relish a dish out of my kitchen? No, no, if only I can succeed in speaking with him alone all may yet be well," and thus thinking she rose from her seat.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sabina had quitted the anteroom leaning on her chamberlain and Hadrian was standing there alone with his slave Mastor. The old woman would not be likely to have another such favorable opportunity of supplicating the all-powerful man who stood before her, without the hindrance of witnesses, to exercise his magnanimity and clemency towards her son. His back turned to her; if she could have seen the threatening scowl with which he stood gazing on the ground she would surely have remembered the architect’s warning and have postponed her address till a future day.

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

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

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

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Doris had never worn so unpleasing an aspect to Hadrian as at this instant, in this decisive moment of her life. She had followed the Empress straight from the kitchen-hearth just as she was after passing a sleepless night and full of her many anxieties, she had scarcely set her grey hair in order, and her kind bright eyes, usually the best feature of her face, were red with many tears. The neat brisk little mother looked to-day anything rather than smart and bright; in the Emperor's eyes she was in no way distinguished from any other old woman, and he regarded all old women as of evil omen, if he met them as he went out of any place he was in.

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

"Out of my way!" said Hadrian sternly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Emperor spoke rapidly as though desirous of bringing a disagreeable business to a prompt termination, and he stalked past Doris who was now standing on her feet and leaning as if stunned against the doorpost. Indeed if Hadrian had not left her there and had he been in the mood to hear her farther, she was not now in a fit state to answer him another word.

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



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

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

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"He went out to the gate-house."

"What is he doing there?"

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

"The truth, fellow!"

"He is with Pollux the sculptor."

"Has he been there long?"

"I do not exactly know."

"How long, I ask you?"

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

"Three hours—three whole hours has he been with that braggart, whom I ordered off the premises!" Hadrian's eye sparkled wrathfully as he spoke. His annoyance at the absence of his favorite, whose society he permitted no one to enjoy but himself, and least of all Pollux, smothered every kind feeling in his mind, and in a tone of anger bordering on fury he commanded Mastor to go and fetch Antinous, and then to have the gate-house utterly cleared out.

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

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

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

Phlegon bowed and said:

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

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

CHAPTER IX.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I cannot drink," sighed Euphorion.

"Then I will drink your share and my own too." Nay-nay, mother," remonstrated Pollux.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It even came into his mind to hire some Egyptian rascal to have him assassinated; but he was a citizen of peaceful habits, to whom a breach of the law was an abomination and he cast the thought from him as too horrible and base. He was not over-nice in his choice of means, he knew men, was very capable of finding his way up the backstairs, and did not hesitate when need arose to calumniate others boldly, and thus he had before now won the day in many a battle against his fellow-artists of distinction. His hope of succeeding in the tripping of a scholar of no great repute, and of rendering him harmless so long as the Emperor should remain in Alexandria, was certainly not an over-bold one. He hated the gate-keeper's son far less than he feared him, and he did not conceal from himself that if his attack on Pollux should fail and the young fellow should succeed in proving independently of what he was capable he could do nothing to prevent his loudly proclaiming all that he had done in these last years for his master.

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

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

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

"I did not take them for myself, but for the grand lord in there, and his companion. If any thing is missing apply to him. It grieves me that I should have taken your silver quiver among them, for the Roman's companion has lost it. As soon as I have done here, I will

take home all of your things that I can recover, and bring away my own. A good many things belonging to me are still lying in your workshop.”

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

Pollux had told him that some of the properties, which he had taken without asking permission, had been lost—among them an object of considerable value—and this perhaps would give him a hold over him by which to prevent his injuring him. He remained in the palace scarcely half an hour and then, while Pollux was still engaged in escorting his mother and their household goods to his sister’s house, he went to visit the night magistrate, who presided over the safety of Alexandria. Papias was on intimate terms with this important official, for he had constructed for him a sarcophagus for his deceased wife, an altar with panels in relief for his men’s apartment, and other works, at moderate prices, and he could count on his readiness to serve him. When he quitted him he carried in his hand an order of arrest against his assistant Pollux, who had attacked his property and abstracted a quiver of massive silver. The magistrate had also promised him to send two of his guards who would carry the offender off to prison.

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

“I have already told you,” cried Pollux, “that it is not I, but the illustrious Roman—you know as well as I do, who he is—who is answerable for the silver quiver and the torn chiton.” And he began to tell him how Antinous had commanded him, in the name of his master, to find masks and disguises for them both. But Papias cut off his speech at the very beginning, and vehemently demanded the restoration of his quiver and bow, of which Pollux could not work out the value in two years. The young man whose heart and thoughts were at Lochias and who, at any cost, did not want to be detained

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longer than was necessary, begged his master, with all possible politeness, to let him go now, and to settle the matter with him to-morrow after he had discussed it with the Roman, from whom he might certainly demand any compensation he chose. But when Papias interrupted him again and again, and obstinately insisted on the immediate restoration of his property, the artist whose blood was easily heated, grew angry and replied to the attacks and questions of the older man with vehement response.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Thief—stop thief!" he heard as he flew on with long strides; and like the pelting of rain driven by all the four winds came from all sides the senseless, odious, horrible cry: "Stop thief!—stop thief!" it seemed to deprive him of his senses.

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

On he went faster and farther, each step a leap; the briny breeze from the sea already fanned his glowing cheeks and the narrow empty street yonder he well knew led to the

quay by the King's harbor, where he could hide from his pursuers among the tall piles of wood. He was just turning the corner into the alley when an Egyptian ox-driver threw his goad between his legs; he stumbled, fell to the ground, and instantly felt that a dog which had rushed upon him was tearing the chiton he wore, while he was seized by a number of men. An hour later and he found himself in prison, bitten, beaten, and bound among a crew of malefactors and real thieves.

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

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Dried merry-thought bone of a fowl
More to the purpose to think of the future than of the past
So long as we do not think ourselves wretched, we are not so
Temples would be empty if mortals had nothing left to wish for

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