

The Emperor — Volume 10 eBook

The Emperor — Volume 10 by Georg Ebers

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Selene and Helios were baptized, and two days after dame Hannah with her adopted children and Mary, escorted by the presbyter Hilarion and a deacon, embarked in the harbor of Mareotis on board a Nile-boat which was to convey them to their new home, the town of Besa in Upper Egypt. The deformed girl had hesitated as to her answer to the widow's question whether she would accompany her. Her old mother dwelt in Alexandria, and then—but it was this “then” which helped her abruptly to cut short all reflection and to pronounce a decided “yes,” for it referred to Antinous.

For a few minutes it had seemed unendurable to think that she should never see him again, for she could not help often thinking of the beautiful youth, and her whole heart ought to belong solely to the One who had with His blood purchased peace for her on earth and bliss in the world to come.

The day after being baptized, Selene had gone to Paulina's town-house, and there, with many tears had taken leave of Arsinoe. All the affection which bound the sisters together found expression at this moment of parting. Selene had heard from Paulina that Pollux was dead, and she no longer grudged her rival sister that she grieved for him more passionately than herself, though at first her peace of mind had more than once been disturbed by memories of her old playfellow.

She felt it hard to leave Alexandria, where most of her brothers and sisters were left behind, and yet she rejoiced to think of a distant home, for she was no longer the same creature that she had been a few months since, and she longed for a remote scene of a new and sanctified life.

Eumenes and Hannah were in the right. It was not the widow but the little blind boy who had won her to Christianity. The child's influence had proceeded in a strange course. In the first instance the promises of the slave Master that Helios should some day meet his father again in a shining realm among beautiful angels had a powerful effect on the blind child's tender heart and vivid imagination. In Hannah's house his hopes had received fresh nurture, and Mary and the widow told him much about their kind and loving God and His Son who loved children and had invited them to come to Him. When Selene began to recover and he was permitted to talk to her he poured out to her all his delight at what he had heard from the women. At first, to be sure, his sister took no pleasure in these fanciful fables and tried to shake his belief and lead back his heart to the old gods. But while she tried to guide the child, by degrees she felt compelled to follow in his path; at first with wavering steps, but dame Hannah helped her by her example and with many words of good counsel. She only taught her doctrine when the girl asked her questions and begged for information. All that here surrounded Selene breathed of love and peace,

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and the child felt this, spoke of it, forced her to acknowledge it, and, in his own person, was the first object on which to exercise a wish hitherto unknown to her, to be herself loving and lovable. The boy's firm faith, which was not to be shaken by any reasoning or by any of the myths which she knew, touched her deeply and led to her asking Hannah what was the real bearing of one and another of his statements. It had always seemed a comfort to her that the miseries of our earthly life would come to an end with death; but Helios left her without a reply when he said in a sad voice:

"Do you feel no longing, then, to see our father and mother again?"

To see her mother again! This thought gave her an interest in the next world, and dame Hannah fanned the spark of hope in her soul into flame.

Selene had seen and suffered much misery, and was accustomed to call the gods cruel. Helios told her that God and the Saviour were good and kind, and loved human beings as their children.

"Is it not good and kind," asked he, "of our Heavenly Father to lead us to dame Hannah?"

"Yes, but we have all been torn apart," said Selene. "Never mind," said the child confidently, "we shall all meet in Heaven."

As she got well Selene asked after each of the children and Hannah described all the families into which they had been received. The widow did not look as if she spoke falsely, and the little ones, when they came to see her, confirmed her report, and yet Selene could hardly believe in the accuracy of the pictures drawn of their lives in the houses of the Christians.

The mother of a Christian family—says a great Christian teacher—should be the pride of her children, the wife the pride of her husband, husband and children the pride of the wife, and God the pride and glory of every member of the household. Love and faith in fact the bond, contentment and virtuous living the law of the family; and it was in just such a pure and beneficent atmosphere, as Selene herself and Helios felt the blessing of in Hannah's house, that each and all of her brothers and sisters were growing up. Her upright sense gave an honest answer when she asked herself what would have become of them all if her father had remained alive and had been dispossessed of his office? They must all have perished in misery and degradation.

And now?—Perhaps in truth the Divine Being had dealt in kindness with the children.

Love, love, and again love, was breathed from all she saw and heard, and yet—was it not love that had caused her greatest sorrows. Wherefore had it been her lot to endure

so much through the same sentiment which beautified life to others? Had any one ever had more to suffer than she? Aye indeed! A vivacious, eager youth had duped her and had promised happiness to her sister instead of to her; it had been hard to bear—and yet, the Saviour of whom Hellos had told her, had been

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far more severely tried. Mankind, for whom He—the Son of God—had come down upon earth, to save from misery and guilt, had rewarded His loving kindness by hanging Him on the cross. In Him she could see a companion in suffering and she asked the widow to tell her all about Him. Selene had made many sacrifices to her family—she could never forget her walk to the papyrus-factory—but He had let them mock Him and had shed His blood for His own. And who was she?—and who was He? The Son of God. His image became dear to her; she was never weary of hearing about His life and fate, His words and deeds; and without her observing it the day came when her soul was free to receive the teaching of Christ with fervent longing. With faith she acquired that consciousness of guilt which had previously been unknown to her. She had been busy and industrious out of pride and fear, but never from love; she had selfishly tried to fling from her the sacred gift of life without ever thinking what would become of those whom it was her duty to care for. She had cursed her lovely sister who needed her protection and care, and even Pollux, her childhood's playfellow; and a thousand times had she imprecated the ruler of human destinies. All this she now keenly felt with all the earnestness natural to her, but she was soothed by the tidings that there was One who had redeemed the world, and taken on Himself the sins of every repentant sinner.

After Selene had once expressed to the widow her desire to be a Christian, Hannah brought the bishop to see her. He himself undertook to instruct the girl and he found in her a disciple anxious and craving for knowledge. Just like those dried-up and dull-colored plants which, when they are plunged in water, open out and revive, so did her heart, untimely withered and dry; and she longed to be perfectly recovered that she, like Hannah, might tend the sick and exercise that love which Christ demands of His followers. That which most particularly appealed to her in her new faith was that it did not promise joys to the rich who could make great sacrifices, but to the miserable sinner who with a contrite heart yearned for forgiveness, to the poor and abject, towards whom she felt as though they belonged to the same family as herself. And her valiant spirit could not be satisfied with intentions but longed to act upon them. In Besa she could set to work with Hannah, and this prospect lightened her grief in quitting Alexandria.

A favoring wind bore the voyagers southward safe to their destination.

Two days after their departure Antinous once more stole into Paulina's garden. He went up to the widow's little house looking in vain for the deformed girl; the road was open; her absence could but be pleasing to him, and yet it disquieted him. His heart beat wildly, for to-day—perhaps he might find Selene alone. He opened the door without knocking, but he dared not cross the threshold, for in the anteroom stood a strange man, placing boards against the wall. The carpenter, a Christian to whom Paulina had given this little house for his family to live in, asked Antinous what he wanted.

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"Is dame Hannah at home?" stammered the Bithynian.

"She no longer lives here."

"And her adopted daughter, Selene?"

"She is gone with her into Upper Egypt. Have you any message for her?"

"No," said the lad, quite confounded.

"When did they go?"

"The day before yesterday."

"And they are not coming back."

"For the next few years, certainly not. Later may be, if it is the Lord's pleasure."

Antinous left the garden by the public gate, unmolested. He was very pale, and he felt like a wanderer in the desert who finds the spring choked where he had hoped to find a refreshing draught.

Next day, at the first moment he could dispose of, Antinous again knocked at the carpenter's door to inquire in what town of Upper Egypt the travellers proposed to settle and the artisan told him frankly, "In Besa."

Antinous had always been a dreamer, but Hadrian had never seen him so listless, so vaguely brooding as in these days. When he tried to rouse him and spur him to greater energy his favorite would look at him beseechingly, and though he made every effort to be of use to him and to show him a cheerful countenance it was always with but brief success. Even on the hunting excursions into the Libyan desert which the Emperor frequently made, Antinous remained apathetic and indifferent to the pleasures of the sport to which he had formerly devoted himself with enjoyment and skill.

The Emperor had remained in Alexandria longer than in any other place, and was weary of festivities and banquets, of the wordy war with the philosophers of the Museum, of conversing with the ecstatic mystics, the soothsayers; astrologers and empirics with whom the place swarmed. And the short audiences which he accorded to the heads of the different religious communities, and the inspection of the factories and workshops of this centre of industry, began to annoy him. One day he announced his intention of visiting the southern provinces of the Nile valley.

The high-priests of the native Egyptian faith had craved this favor of him, and he was prompted, not only by his love of information and passion for travelling, but also by considerations of state-craft, to gratify this desire of a hierarchy which was extremely

influential in those rich and important provinces. The prospect of seeing with his own eyes those marvels of Pharaonic times which attracted so many travellers, was also an incitement, and his good spirits rose as soon as he observed what a reviving effect his determination to visit southern Egypt had upon Antinous.

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His favorite had for the last few weeks expressed not the smallest pleasure at any single thing. The homage paid him no less by the Alexandrian than by the Roman ladies of rank sickened him. At banquets he sat a silent guest whose neighborhood could not add to anybody's pleasure, and even the most brilliant and exciting exhibitions in the Circus and the best contests and races in the Hippodrome had hardly sufficed to attract his gaze. Formerly he had been an eager and attentive spectator of the plays of Menander and of his imitators, Alexis, Apollodorus and Posidippus; but now when they were performed he stared into vacancy and thought of Selene. The prospect of going to the place where she was living excited him powerfully and revived his drooping courage for life. He could hope once more, and to the man who sees light shining in the future the present is no longer dark.

Hadrian rejoiced in this change in the lad and hastened the preparations for their departure; still, some months passed before he could begin his journey.

In the first place he had to provide for newly colonizing Libya, which had been depopulated by a revolt of the Jews. Then he had to come to a determination as to certain new post-roads which were to connect the different parts of the empire more nearly, and finally he had to await the formal assent of the Roman Senate to some new resolutions concerning the hereditary reversion of conferred free-citizenship. This assent was, no doubt a matter of course, but the Emperor never issued an edict without it, and he was very desirous that his decree should come into operation as soon as possible.

In the course of his visits to the Museum the sovereign had informed himself as to the position of the several members of that institution, and he was occupied in making certain regulations which should relieve them of the more sordid cares of life; the condition of the aged teachers and educators of the young had also attracted his observation, and he had endeavored to improve it.

When Sabina represented to him what a large outlay these new measures would entail, he replied:

"We do not allow the veterans to perish who placed their lives, and limbs at the service of the state. Why then should those who serve it with their intellect be burdened with petty cares? Which should we rank the higher, power and poverty or mental wealth? The harder I—as the sovereign—find it to answer the question the more positively do I feel it to be my duty to mete out the same measure to all veterans alike, whether officials, warriors or instructors."

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The Alexandrians themselves detained him too by a succession of new acts of homage. They raised him to the rank of a divinity, dedicated a temple to him, and instituted a series of new festivals in his honor; partly no doubt to win his partiality for their city and to express their pride and satisfaction in his long stay there, but also because the pleasure-loving community was glad to seize this opportunity as a favorable one for gratifying their own inclinations and revelling in mere unusual enjoyment. Thus the Imperial visit swallowed up millions, and Hadrian, who enquired into every detail and contrived to obtain information as to the sums expended by the city, blamed the recklessness of his lavish entertainers. He wrote afterwards to his brother-in-law, Servianus, his fullest recognition of both the wealth and the industry of Alexandrians, saying, with terms of praise, that among them not one was idle. One made glass, another papyrus, another linen; and each of these restless mortals, said he, is busied in some handiwork. Even the lame, the blind and the maimed here sought and found employment. Nevertheless he calls the Alexandrians a contumacious and good-for-nothing community, with sharp and evil tongues that had spared neither Verus nor Antinous. Jews, Christians, and the votaries of Serapis, he adds in the same letter, serve but one God instead of the divinities of Olympus, and when he asserts of the Christians that they even worshipped Serapis he means to say that they were persuaded of the doctrine of the survival of the soul after death. The dispute as to which temple should be assigned as the residence of the newly-found Apis gave Hadrian much to do. From time immemorial this sacred bull had been kept in the temple of Ptah at Memphis, but this venerable city of the Pyramids had been outstripped by Alexandria, and the temple of Serapis outvied that at Memphis in the province of Sokari, tenfold in size and in magnificence. The Egyptians of Alexandria, who dwelt in the quarter called Rhakotis, close to the Serapeum, desired to have the incarnation of the god in the form of a bull, in their midst; but the Memphites would not abandon their old prescriptive rights, and the Emperor had found it far from easy to guide the contest, which proved a very exciting one to all parties, to a satisfactory issue. Memphis had its Apis, and the Serapeum was indemnified by certain endowments which had formerly been granted to the temple at Memphis.

At last, in June, the Emperor could set out. He wished to traverse the province on foot and on horseback, and Sabina was to follow by boat as soon as the inundation should begin.

The Empress would gladly have returned to Rome or to Tibur, for Verus had been obliged to quit Egypt by the orders of the physician as soon as the summer heat had set in. He departed with his wife, as the son of the Imperial couple, but no word on Hadrian's part had justified him in hoping confidently to be nominated as his successor to the sovereignty.

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The handsome rake's unlimited dissipations were severely checked by his sufferings, but not altogether prevented, and on his return to Rome he continued to indulge in all the pleasures of life. Hadrian's hesitation and reluctance often disquieted him, for that imperial Sphinx had, only too frequently, given the most unexpected solutions to his mystifications. But the fatal end with which he had been threatened caused him small anxiety; nay, Ben Jochai's prediction rather prompted him to enjoy to the utmost every hour of health and ease that Fate might still allow him.

CHAPTER XIX.

Balbilla and her companion, Publius Balbinus and other illustrious Romans, Favorinus the sophist, and a numerous suite of chamberlains and servants, were to accompany the Empress by water, while Hadrian set forth on his land journey with a small escort to which he added a splendid array of huntsmen. Before he reached Memphis, in crossing the Libyan desert, through which his road lay, he had killed a few lions and many other beasts of prey, and here he had once more found Antinous the best of sporting companions. Cool headed in danger, indefatigable on foot, content and serviceable in all circumstances, the young fellow seemed to Hadrian to be a comrade created by the gods themselves for his special delectation. When Hadrian was in the humor to brood and be silent the whole day long, he never disturbed him by a word; but in these moods the Emperor found his favorite's society indispensable, for the mere consciousness of his presence soothed him.

Antinous too, was happy on these occasions, for he felt that he was of some use to his venerated master and could thus alleviate the burden which had never ceased to weigh on his own soul ever since the crime he had committed. Besides, he preferred dreaming to talking, and the exercise in the open air preserved him from listless lassitude.

In Memphis Hadrian was detained a whole month, for there he was expected to visit the Egyptian temples with Sabina, who had arrived before him, and to submit to many ceremonials invested with the regalia of the Pharaohs. Sabina often felt as if she must faint when, crowned with the ponderous vulture-headed fillet of the Queens of Egypt, weighed down with long robes and golden ornaments, she was conducted with her husband, in procession, through all the rooms, over the roof and finally into the holiest place of some vast sanctuary. What senseless ceremonials they had to go through in the course of these long circuits, and how many sacrifices had they to attend! When she returned from these visitations she was utterly exhausted, and indeed, it was no small exertion to undergo so many fumigations with incense and so many aspersions, to listen to so many litanies and hymns, to parade through such endless halls and while being elevated to the rank of celestial beings, to be crowned with so many crowns in turn and decorated with all kinds of fillets and symbolic adornments.

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Her husband set her a good example, however; through all the ceremonials he displayed the whole grave majesty of his nature, and among the Egyptians behaved as one of themselves. He even took pleasure in the mystical lore of the priests, with whom he often held long conversations.

As at Memphis, so in all the principal temples of the great cities to the southward, the Imperial pair accepted the homage of the hierarchy and the honors due to divinity. Wherever Hadrian granted money for the extension of a temple, he was required to perform the ceremony of laying a stone with his own hand. But he always found time to hunt in the desert, to manage the affairs of state, and to visit the most interesting monuments of past times, and at Memphis especially, the city of the dead, with the Pyramids, the great Sphinx, the Serapeum and the tombs of the Apis.

Before quitting the city he and his companions consulted the oracle of the sacred bull. The fairest future was promised to Balbilla; the bull to whom she had to offer a cake, with her face averted, had approved of her gift and had touched her hand with his moist muzzle. Hadrian was left in ignorance as to the sentence of the priests of Apis, for it was given to him in a sealed roll with an explanation of the signs it contained; but he was solemnly adjured not to open them before at least half a year had elapsed.

It was only in the cities that Hadrian met his wife, for he pursued his journey by land and she hers by water. The boats almost invariably reached their destination sooner than the land-travellers, and when they at last arrived, there was always a grand festival to welcome them, in which however Sabina but rarely took part. Balbilla proved herself all the more eager to make their arrival pleasant by some kindly surprise. She sincerely revered Hadrian, and his favorite's beauty had an irresistible charm for her artist's soul. It was a delight to her only to look at him; his absence troubled her, and when he returned she was always the first to greet him. And yet the bright girl troubled herself about him neither more nor less than the other ladies in Sabina's train; only Balbilla asked nothing of him but the pleasure of looking at him and rejoicing in his beauty.

If he had dared to mistake her admiration for love and to have offered her his, the poetess would have indignantly brought him to his bearings; and yet she gave unqualified expression to her admiration of the Bithynian's splendid person, and indeed with rather remarkable demonstrativeness.

When the travellers made their appearance again after a prolonged absence Antinous would find in the room in the ship where he was to live flowers, and choice fruits sent by her, and verses in which she had sung his praises. He put it all aside with the rest and only esteemed the donor the less; but the poetess knew nothing of these sentiments in her beautiful idol, and indeed troubled herself very little about

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his feelings. She had hitherto found no difficulty in keeping within the limits of what was becoming. But lately there had been moments in which she had owned to herself that she might be carried away into overstepping these limits. But what did she care for the opinion of those around her, or about the inner life of the Bithyman, whose external perfection of form was all that pleased her. She did not shrink from the possibility of arousing hopes in him which she never could nor intended to fulfil, for the idea did not once enter her mind; still she felt dissatisfied with herself, for there was one person who might disapprove of her proceedings, one who had indeed in plain words reprehended her fancy for doing honor to the handsome boy with offerings of flowers, and the opinion of that one person weighed with her more than that of all the rest of the men and women she knew, put together.

This one was Pontius the architect; and yet, strangely enough, it was precisely her remembrance of him that urged her on from one folly to another. She had often seen the architect in Alexandria, and when they parted she had allowed him to promise to follow her and the Empress, and to escort them at any rate for a part of their voyage up the Nile. But he came not, nor had he sent any report of himself, though he was alive and well, and every express that overtook them brought documents for Caesar in his handwriting.

So he, on whose faithful devotion she had built as on a rock, was no less self-seeking and fickle than other men. She thought of him every day and every hour; and as soon as a vessel from the north cast anchor within sight, she watched the voyagers as they disembarked to detect him among them. She longed for Pontius as a traveller who has lost his way sighs for a sight of the guide who has deserted him; and yet she was angry with him, for he had betrayed by a thousand tokens that he esteemed and cared for her, that she had a certain power over his strong will—and now he had broken his word and did not come.

And she? She had not been unmoved by his devotion, and had been gentler to this grandson of her father's freed slave than to the best-born man of her own rank. And in spite of it all Pontius could spoil all the pleasure of her journey and stay in Alexandria instead of following in her wake. He could easily have intrusted his building to other architects—the great metropolis was swarming with them! Well, if he did not trouble himself about her she certainly need care even less about him. Perhaps at last, at the end of their travels he might yet come, and then he should see how much she cared for his admonitions.

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But she sighed impatiently for the hour when she might read him all the verses she had addressed to Antinous, and ask him how he liked them. It gave her a childish pleasure to add to the number of these little poems, to finish them elaborately, and display in them all her knowledge and ability. She gave the preference to artificial and massive metres; some of the verses were in Latin, others in the Attic, and others again in the Aeolian dialects of Greek, for she had now learnt to use this, and all to punish Pontius—to vex Pontius—and at the same time to appear in his eyes as brilliant as she could. She belauded Antinous, but she wrote for Pontius, and for every flower she gave the lad she had sent a thought to the architect, though with a curl on her lips of scornful defiance.

But a young girl cannot be always praising the beauty of a youth in new and varied forms with complete impunity, and thus there were hours when Balbilla was inclined to believe that she really loved Antinous. Then she would call herself his Sappho, and he seemed destined to be her Phaon. During his long absences with the Emperor she would long to see him—nay, even with tears; but, as soon as he was by her side again, and she could look at his inanimate beauty and into his weary eyes, when she heard the torpid “Yes” or “No” with which he replied to her questions, the spell was entirely broken and she honestly confessed to herself that she would as soon see him before her hewn in marble as clothed in flesh and blood.

In such moments as these her memory of the architect was particularly fresh, and once, when their ship was sailing through a mass of lotos leaves, above which one splendid full-blown flower raised its head, her apt imagination, which rapidly seized on everything noteworthy and gave it poetic form, entwined the incident in a set of verses, in which she designated Antinous as the lotos-flower which fulfils its destiny simply by being beautiful, and comparing Pontius to the ship which, well constructed and well guided, invited the traveller to new voyages in distant lands.

The Nile voyage came to an end at Thebes of the hundred gates, and here nothing that could attract the Roman travellers remained unvisited. The tombs of the Pharaohs extending into the very heart of the rocky hills, and the grand temples that stood to the west of the city of the dead, shorn though they were of their ancient glory, filled the Emperor with admiration. The Imperial travellers and their companions listened to the famous colossus of Memnon, of which the upper portion had been overthrown by an earthquake, and three times in the dawn they heard it sound.

Balbilla described the incident in several long poems which Sabina caused to be engraved on the stone of the colossus. The poetess imagined herself as hearing the voice of Memnon singing to his mother Eos while her tears, the fresh morning dew, fell upon the image of her son, fallen before the walls of Troy. These verses she composed in the Aeolian dialect, named herself as their writer and informed the readers—among whom she included Pontius—that she was descended from a house no less noble than that of King Antiochus.

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The gigantic structures on each bank of the Nile fully equalled Hadrian's expectations, though they had suffered so much injury from earthquakes and sieges, and the impoverished priesthood of Thebes were no longer in a position to provide for their preservation even, much less for their restoration. Balbilla accompanied Caesar on a visit to the sanctuary of Ammon, on the eastern shore of the Nile. In the great hall, the most vast and lofty pillared hall in the world, her impressionable soul felt a peculiar exaltation, and as the Emperor observed how, with a heightened color she now gazed upward, and then again, leaning against a towering column, looked at the scene around her, he asked her what she felt, standing in this really worthy abode of the gods.

"One thing—above all things one thing!" cried the girl. "That architecture is the sublimest of the arts! This temple is to me like some grand epode, and the poet who composed it conceived it not in feeble words but formed it out of almost immovable masses. Thousands of parts are here combined to form a whole, and each is welded with the rest into beautiful harmony and helps to give expression to the stupendous idea which existed in the brain of the builder of this hall. What other art is gifted with the power of creating a work so imperishable and so far transcending all ordinary standards?"

"A poetess crowning the architect with laurels!" exclaimed the Emperor. "But is not the poet's realm the infinite, and can the architect ever get beyond the finite and the limited?"

"Then is the nature of the divinity a measurable unit?" asked Balbilla. "No, it is not; and yet this hall gives one the impression that the very divinity might find space in it to dwell in."

"Because it owes its existence to a master-mind, which while it conceived it stood on the boundary line of eternity. But do you think this temple will outlast the poems of Homer?"

"No; but the memory of it will no more fade away than that of the wrath of Achilles or the wanderings of the experienced Odysseus."

"It is a pity that our friend Pontius cannot hear you," said Hadrian. "He has completed the plans for a work which is destined to outlive me and him and all of us."

"I mean my own tomb. Besides that I intend him to erect gates, courts and halls in the Egyptian style at Tibur, which may remind us of our travels in this wonderful country. I expect him to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" exclaimed Balbilla, and her face fired with a scarlet flush to her very brow.

CHAPTER XX.

Shortly after starting from Thebes—on the second day of November— Hadrian came to a great decision. Verus should be acknowledged not merely as his son but also as his successor.

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Sabina's urgency would not alone have sufficed to put a term to his hesitancy, especially as it had lately been farther increased by a wish that was all his own. His wife's heart had pined for a child, but he too had longed for a son, and he had found one in Antinous. His favorite was a boy he had picked up by chance, the son of humble though free parents, but it lay in the Emperor's power to make him great, to confer on him the highest posts of honor in the Empire, and at last to recognize him publicly as his heir. Antinous, if any one, had deserved this at his hands, and on no other man could he so ungrudgingly bestow everything that he possessed.

These ideas and hopes had now filled his mind for many months, but the nature and the mood of the young Bithyman had been more and more adverse to them.

Hadrian had striven more earnestly than his predecessors to raise the fallen dignity of the Senate, and still he could count securely on its consent to any measure. The leading official authorities of the Republic had been recognized and allowed the full exercise of their powers. To be sure, be they whom they might, they all had to obey the Emperor, still they were always there; and even with a weak ruler at its head the Empire might continue to subsist within the limits established by Hadrian, and restricted with wise moderation. Nevertheless, only a few months previously he would not have ventured to think of the adoption of his favorite. Now he hoped to find himself somewhat nearer to the fulfilment of his wishes. It is true Antinous was still a dreamer; but in their wanderings and hunting excursions through Egypt he had proved himself gallant and prompt, intelligent, and, after their departure from Thebes, even bold and lively at times. Antinous, under this aspect, he himself might take in hand, and even name him as his successor in due time, when he had risen from one post of honor to another. For the present this plan must remain unrevealed.

When he publicly adopted Verus any idea of a possible new selection of a son was excluded, and he might unhesitatingly venture to appoint Sabina's darling his successor, for the most famous of the Roman physicians had written to Hadrian, by his desire, saying that the praetor's undermined strength could not be restored, and that, at the best, he could only have a limited number of years to live. Well, then, Verus might die slowly and contentedly in the midst of the most splendid anticipations, and when he should have closed his eyes it would be time enough to set the dreamer—by that time matured to vigorous manhood—in the vacant place.

On the return journey from Thebes to Alexandria Hadrian met his wife at Abydos, and revealed to her his intention of proclaiming the son of her choice as his successor. Sabina thanked him with an exclamation of "At last!" which expressed partly her satisfaction, but partly too her annoyance at her husband's long delay. Hadrian gave her his permission to return to Rome from Alexandria, and on the very same day messages were despatched with letters both to the Senate and to the prefects of Egypt.

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The despatch intended for Titianus charged him to proclaim publicly the adoption of the praetor, to arrange at the same time for a grand festival, and on that occasion to grant to the people, in Caesar's name, all the boons and favors which by the traditional law of Egypt the Sovereign was expected to bestow at the birth of an heir to the throne. The whole suite of the Imperial pair celebrated Hadrian's decision by splendid banquets, but the Emperor did not himself take part in them, but crossed to the other bank of the Nile and went to Antaeopolis in the desert, meaning to penetrate from thence into the gorges of the Arabian desert and to chase wild beasts. No one was to accompany him but Antinous, Mastor, and a few huntsmen and some dogs.

He meant to rejoin the ships at Besa. He had postponed his visit to this place till the return journey, because he had travelled up by the western shore of the Nile, and the passage across the river would have taken up too much time.

The travellers' tents were pitched one sultry evening in November, between the Nile and the limestone range, in which was arrayed a long row of tombs of the period of the Pharaohs. Hadrian had gone to visit these, for the remarkable pictures on the walls delighted him, but Antinous remained behind, for he had already looked at similar works oftener than he cared for, in Upper Egypt. He found these pictures monotonous and unlovely, and he had not the patience to investigate their meaning as his master did. He had been a hundred times into the ancient rock-tombs, only not to leave Hadrian and not for his own amusement; but to-day—he could hardly bear himself for impatience and excitement, for he knew that a ride, a walk, of a few hours, would carry him to Besa and to Selene. The Emperor would remain absent three or four hours at any rate, and if he made up his mind to it he could have sought out the girl for whom his heart was longing before his return, and still be back again before his master.

But before acting he must reflect. There was the Emperor climbing the hill-side where he could see him, and messengers were expected and he had been charged to receive them. If they should bring bad news, his master must on no account be alone. Ten times did he go up to his good hunter to leap upon his back; once he even took down the horse's head-gear to put on his bridle, but in the very act of slipping the complicated bit between the teeth of his steed his resolution gave way. During all this delay and hesitation the minutes slipped away, and at last it was so late that Hadrian might return and it was folly to think of carrying his plan into execution. The expected express arrived with several letters, but the Emperor did not come back. It grew dark, and heavy rain-drops fell from the overcast sky, and still Antinous was alone. His anxious longing was mingled with regret for the lost opportunity of seeing Selene and alarm at the Emperor's prolonged absence.

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In spite of the rain, which began to fall more violently, he went out into the open air, of which the sweltering oppressiveness had helped to fetter his feeble volition, and called to the dogs, with whose help he proposed seeking the Emperor; but just then he heard the bark of Argus, and soon after Hadrian and Mastor stepped out of the darkness into the brightness which shone out from the tent, where lights were burning.

The Emperor gave his favorite but a brief greeting and silently submitted while Antinous dried his hair and brought him some refreshments, and Mastor bathed his feet and dressed him in fresh garments. As he reclined with the Bithyman, before the supper which was standing ready, he said:

"A strange evening! how hot and oppressive the atmosphere is. We must be on the lookout, something serious is brewing."

"What happened to you, my Lord?"

"Many things. At the door of the very first tomb that I was about to enter I found an old black woman who stretched out her hands against us to keep us out and shrieked out words that sounded horrible."

"Did you understand her?"

"No—who can learn Egyptian."

"Then you do not know what she said?"

"I was to find out—she cried out 'Dead!' and again 'Dead!' and in the tomb which she was watching there were I know not how many persons attacked by the plague."

"You saw them?"

"Yes, I had only heard of this disease till then. It is frightful, and quite answers to the descriptions I had read of it."

"But Caesar!" cried Antinous reproachfully and in alarm.

"When we turned our backs on the tombs," continued Hadrian, paying no heed to the lad's exclamation, "we were met by an elderly man dressed in white and a strange-looking maiden. She was lame but of remarkable beauty."

"And she was going to the sick?"

"Yes, she had brought medicine and food to them."

"But she did not go in among them?" asked Antinous eagerly.

“She did, in spite of my warnings. In her companion I recognized an old acquaintance.”

‘An old one?’

“At any rate older than myself. We had met in Athens when we still were young. At that time he was one of the school of Plato and the most zealous, nay, perhaps the most gifted of us all.”

“How came such a man among the plague-stricken people of Besa? Is he become a physician?”

“No. But at Athens he sought fervently and eagerly for the truth, and now he asserts that he has found it.”

“Here, among the Egyptians?”

“In Alexandria among the Christians.”

“And the lame girl who accompanied the philosopher—does she too believe in the crucified God?”

“Yes. She is a sick-nurse or something of the kind. Indeed there is something grand in the ecstatic craze of these people.”

“Is it true that they worship an ass and a dove?”

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"Nonsense!"

"I did not want to believe it; and at any rate they are kind, and succor all who suffer, even strangers who do not belong to their sect."

"How do you know?"

"One hears a great deal about them in Alexandria."

"Alas! alas!—I never persecute an imaginary foe, as such I reckon the creeds and ideas of other men; still, I cannot but ask myself whether it can add to the prosperity of the state when citizens cease to struggle against the pressure and necessity of life and console themselves for them instead, by the hope of visionary happiness in another world which perhaps only exists in the fancy of those who believe in it."

"I should wish that life might end with death," said Antinous thoughtfully; "and yet—"

"Well?"

"If I were sure that in that other world I should find those I long to see again, then I might long for a future life."

"And would you really like, throughout all eternity, to push and struggle in the crowd of old acquaintances which death does not diminish but rather multiplies?"

"Nay, not that—but I should like to be permitted to live for ever with a few chosen friends."

"And should I be one of them?"

"Yes—indeed," cried Antinous warmly and pressing his lips to Hadrian's hand.

"I was sure of it—but even with the promise of never being obliged to part with you my darling, I would never sacrifice the only privilege which man enjoys above the immortals."

"What privilege can you mean?"

"The right of withdrawing from the ranks of the living as soon as annihilation seems more endurable than existence and I choose to call death to release me."

"The gods, it is true, cannot die."

"And the Christians only to link a new life on to death."

“But a fairer and a happier than this on earth.” They say it is a life of bliss. But the mother of this everlasting life is the ineradicable love of existence in even the most wretched of our race, and hope is its father. They believe in a complete freedom from suffering in that other world because He whom they call their Redeemer, the crucified Christ, has saved them from all sufferings by His death.”

“And can a man take upon him the sufferings of others, think you, like a garment or a burden?”

“They say so, and my friend from Athens is quite convinced. In books of magic there are many formulas by which misfortunes may be transferred not merely from men to beasts, but from one human being to another. Very remarkable experiments have even been carried out with slaves, and to this day I have to struggle in several provinces to suppress human sacrifices by which the gods are to be reconciled or propitiated. Only think of the innocent Iphigenia who was dragged to the altar; did not the gulf in the Forum close when Curtius had leaped into it? When Fate shoots a fatal arrow at you and I receive it in my breast, perhaps she is content with the chance victim and does not enquire as to whom she has hit.”

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"The gods would be exorbitant indeed if they were not content with your blood for mine!"

"Life is life, and that of the young is of better worth than that of the old. Many joys will yet bloom for you."

"And you are indispensable to the whole world."

"After me another will come. Are you ambitious, boy?"

"No, my Lord."

"What then can be the meaning of this: that every one wishes me joy of my son Verus excepting you. Do you not like my choice?"

Antinous colored and looked at the ground, and Hadrian went on:

"Say honestly what you feel."

"The praetor is ill."

"He can have but a few years to live, and when he is dead—"

"He may recover—"

"When he is dead, I must look out for another son. What do you think now? Who is the being that every man, from a slave to a consul, would soonest hear call him 'Father?'"

"Some one he tenderly loved."

"True—and particularly when that one clung to him with unchangeable fidelity. I am a man like any other, and you, my good fellow, are always nearest to my heart, and I shall bless the day when I may authorize you, before all the world, to call me 'Father.' Do not interrupt me. If you resolutely concentrate your will and show as keen a sense for ruling men as you do for the chase, if you try to sharpen your wits and take in what I teach you, it may some day happen that Antinous instead of Verus—"

"Nay, not that, only not that!" cried the lad, turning very pale and raising his hands beseechingly.

"The greatness with which Destiny surprises us seems terrible so long as it is new to us," said Hadrian. "But the seaman is soon accustomed to the storms, and we come to wear the purple as you do your chiton."

"Oh, Caesar, I entreat you," said Antinous, anxiously, "put aside these ideas; I am not fit for great things."



"The smallest saplings grow to be palms."

"But I am only a wretched little herb that thrives awhile in your shadow. Proud Rome—"

"Rome is my handmaid. She has been forced before now to be ruled by men of inferior stamp, and I should show her how the handsomest of her sons can wear the purple. The world may look for such a choice from a sovereign whom it has long known to be an artist, that is a high-priest of the Beautiful. And if not, I will teach it to form its taste on mine."

"You are pleased to mock me, Caesar," cried the Bithynian. "You certainly cannot be in earnest, and if it is true that you love me—"

"What now, boy?"

"You will let me live unknown for you, care for you; you will ask nothing of me but reverence and love and fidelity."

"I have long had them, and I now would fain repay my Antinous for all these treasures."

"Only let me stay with you, and if necessary let me die for you."

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"I believe, boy, you would be ready to make the sacrifice we were speaking of for me!"

"At any moment without winking an eyelash."

"I thank you for those words. It has turned out a pleasant evening, and what a bad one I looked forward to—"

"Because the woman by the tomb startled you?"

"'Dead,' is a grim word. It is true that 'death'—being dead—can frighten no wise man; but the step out of light into darkness is fearful. I cannot get the figure of the old hag and her shrill cry out of my mind. Then the Christian came up, and his discourse was strange and disturbing to my soul. Before it grew dark he and the limping girl went homewards; I stood looking after them and my eyes were dazzled by the sun which was sinking over the Libyan range. The horizon was clear, but behind the day-star there were clouds. In the west, the Egyptians say, lies the realm of death. I could not help thinking of this; and the oracle, the misfortunes that the stars threatened me with in the course of this year, the cry of the old woman—all these crowded into my mind together. But then, as I observed how the sun struggled with the clouds and approached nearer and nearer to the hill-tops on the farther side of the river, I said to myself: If it sets in full radiance you may look confidently to the future; if it is swallowed up by clouds before it sinks to rest, then destiny will fulfil itself; then you must shorten sail and wait for the storm."

"And what happened?"

"The fiery globe burnt in glowing crimson, surrounded by a million rays. Each seemed separate from the rest and shone with glory of its own; it was as though the sinking disc had been the centre of bow-shots innumerable and golden arrow-shafts radiated to the sky in every direction. The scene was magnificent and my heart beat high with happy excitement, when suddenly and swiftly a dark cloud fell, as though exasperated by the wounds it had received from those fiery darts; a second followed, and a third, and sinister Daimons flung a dark and fleecy curtain over the glorious head of Helios, as the executioner throws a coarse black cloth over the head of the condemned, when he sets his knee against him to strangle him."

At this narrative Antinous covered his face with both hands, and murmured in terror:

"Frightful, frightful! What can be hanging over us? Only listen, how it thunders, and the rain thrashes the tent."

"The clouds are pouring out torrents; see the water is coming in already. The slaves must dig gutters for it to run off. Drive the pegs tighter you fellows out there or the whirlwind will tear down the slight structure."

“And how sultry the air is!”

“The hot wind seems to warm even the flood of rain. Here it is still dry; mix me a cup of wine, Antinous. Have any letters come?”

“Yes, my Lord.”

“Give them to me, Mastor.”

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The slave, who was busily engaged in damming up with earth and stones, the trickling stream of rain-water that was soaking into the tent, sprang up, hastily dried his hands, took a sack out of the chest in which the Emperor's despatches were kept and gave it to his master. Hadrian opened the leather bag, took out a roll, hastily broke it open, and then, after rapidly glancing at the contents, exclaimed:

"What is this? I have opened the record of the oracle of Apis. How did it come among to-day's letters?"

Antinous went up to Hadrian, looked at the sack, and said:

"Mastor has made a mistake. These are the documents from Memphis. I will bring you the right despatch-bag."

"Stay!" said Hadrian, eagerly seizing his favorite's hand. "Is this a mere trick of chance or a decree of Fate? Why should this particular sack have come into my hands to-day of all others? Why, out of twenty documents it contains, should I have taken out this very one? Look here.—I will explain these signs to you. Here stand three pairs of arms bearing shields and spears, close by the name of the Egyptian month that corresponds to our November. These are the three signs of misfortune. The lutes up there are of happier omen. The masts here indicate the usual state of affairs. Three of these hieroglyphics always occur together. Three lutes indicate much good fortune, two lutes and one mast good fortune and moderate prosperity, one pair of arms and two lutes misfortune, followed by happiness, and so forth. Here, in November, begin the arms with weapons, and here they stand in threes and threes, and portend nothing but unqualified misfortune, never mitigated by a single lute. Do you see, boy? Have you understood the meaning of these signs?"

"Perfectly well; but do you interpret them rightly? The fighting arms may perhaps lead to victory."

"No. The Egyptians use them to indicate conflict, and to them conflict and unrest are identical with what we call evil and disaster."

"That is strange!"

"Nay, it is well conceived; for they say that everything was originally created good by the gods, but that the different portions of the great All changed their nature by restless and inharmonious mingling. This explanation was given me by the priest of Apis, and here—here by the month of November are the three fighting arias—a hideous token. If one of the flashes which light up this tent so incessantly, like a living stream of light were to strike you, or me, and all of us—I should not wonder. Terrible—terrible things hang over us! It requires some courage under such omens as these, to keep an untroubled gaze and not to quail."

“Only use your own arms against the fighting arms of the Egyptian gods; they are powerful,” said Antinous; but Hadrian let his head sink on his breast, and said, in a tone of discouragement:

“The gods themselves must succumb to Destiny.”

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The thunder continued to roar. More than once the storm snapped the tent-ropes, and the slaves were obliged to hold on to the Emperor's fragile shelter with their hands; the chambers of the clouds poured mighty torrents out upon the desert range which for years had not known a drop of rain, and every rift and runlet was filled with a stream or a torrent.

Neither Hadrian nor Antinous closed their eyes that fearful night. The Emperor had as yet opened only one of the rolls that were in the day's letter-bag; it contained the information that Titianus the prefect was cruelly troubled by his old difficulty of breathing, with a petition from that worthy official to be allowed to retire from the service of the state and to withdraw to his own estate. It was no small matter for Hadrian to dispense for the future with this faithful coadjutor, to lose the man on whom he had had his eye to tranquillize Judaea—where a fresh revolt had raised its head, and to reduce it again to subjection without bloodshed. To crush and depopulate the rebellious province was within the power of other men, but to conquer and govern it with kindness belonged only to the wise and gentle Titianus. The Emperor had no heart to open a second letter that night. He lay in silence on his couch till morning began to grow gray, thinking over every evil hour of his life—the murders of Nigrinus, of Tatianus and of the senators, by which he had secured the sovereignty—and again he vowed to the gods immense sacrifices if only they would protect him from impending disaster.

When he rose next morning Antinous was startled at his aspect, for Hadrian's face and lips were perfectly bloodless. After he had read the remainder of his letters he started, not on foot but on horseback, with Antinous and Mastor for Besa, there to await the rest of the escort.

CHAPTER XXI.

The unchained elements had raged that night with equal fury over the Nile city of Besa. The citizens of this ancient town had done all they could to give the Imperial traveller a worthy reception. The chief streets had been decked with ropes of flowers strung from mast to mast and from house to house, and by the harbor, close to the river shore, statues of Hadrian and his wife had been erected. But the storm tore down the masts and the garlands, and the lashed waters of the Nile had beaten with irresistible fury on the bank; had carried away piece after piece of the fertile shore, flung its waves, like liquid wedges into the rifts of the parched land; and excavated the high bank by the landing-quay.

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After midnight the storm was still raging with unheard-of fury; it swept the palm thatch from many of the houses, and beat the stream with such violence that it was like a surging sea. The full unbroken force of the flood beat again and again on the promontory on which stood the statues of the Imperial couple. Shortly before the first dawn of light the little tongue of land, which was protected by no river wall, could no longer resist the furious attack of the waters; huge clods of soil slipped and fell with a loud noise into the river and were followed by a large mass of the cliff, with a roar as of thunder the plateau behind sank, and the statue of the Emperor which stood upon it began to totter and lean slowly to its fall. When day broke it was lying with the pedestal still above ground, but the head was buried in the earth.

At break of day the citizens left their houses to inquire of the fishermen and boatmen what had occurred in the harbor during the night. As soon as the storm had abated, hundreds, nay thousands, of men, women and children thronged the landing-place round the fallen statue—they saw the land-slip and knew that the current had torn the land from the bank and caused the mischief. Was it that Hapi, the Nile-god, was angry with the Emperor? At any rate the disaster that had befallen the image of the sovereign boded evil, that was clear.

The Toparch, the chief municipal authority, at once set to work to reinstate the statue which was itself uninjured, for Hadrian might arrive in a few hours. Numerous men, both free and slaves, crowded to undertake the work, and before long the statue of Hadrian, executed in the Egyptian style, once more stood upright and gazing with a fixed countenance towards the harbor. Sabina's was also put back by the side of her husband's and the Toparch went home satisfied. With him most of the starers and laborers left the quay, but their place was taken by other curious folks who had missed the statue from its place, where the land had fallen, and now expressed their opinions as to the mode and manner of its fall.

"The wind can never have overturned this heavy mass of limestone," said a ropemaker: "And see how far it stands from the broken ground."

They say it fell on the top of land-slip," answered a baker.

"That is how it was," said a sailor.

"Nonsense!" cried the ropemaker. "If the statue had stood on the ground now carried away, it must have fallen at once into the water and have sunk to the bottom—any child can see that other powers have been at work here."

"Very likely," said a temple-servant who devoted himself to the interpretation of signs: "The gods may have overset the proud image to give a warning token to Hadrian."

“The immortals do not mix in the affairs of men in our day,” said the sailor; “but in such a fearful night as this peaceful citizens remain within doors and so leave a fair field for Caesar’s foes.”

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"We are all faithful subjects," said the baker indignantly.

"You are a pack of rebellious rabble," retorted a Roman soldier, who like the whole cohort quartered in the province of Hermopolis, had formerly served in Judaea under the cruel Tinnius Rufus. "Among you worshippers of beasts squabbles never cease, and as to the Christians, who have made their nests out there on the other side of the valley, say the worst you can of them and still you would be flattering them."

"Brave Fuscus is quite right!" cried a beggar. The wretches have brought the plague into our houses; wherever the disease shows itself there are Christian men and women to be seen. They came to my brother's house; they sat all night by his sick children and of course both died."

"If only my old governor Tinnius Rufus were here," growled the soldier, "they would none of them be any better off than their own crucified god."

"Well, I certainly have nothing in common with them," replied the baker. "But what is true must continue true. They are quiet, kind folks and punctual in payment, who do no harm and show kindness to many poor creatures."

"Kindness?" cried the beggar, who had received alms himself from the deacon of the church at Besa, but had also been exhorted to work. "All the five priests of Sekket of the grotto of Artemis have been led away by them and have basely abandoned the sanctuary of the goddess. And is it good and kind that they should have poisoned my brother's children with their potions?"

"Why should they not have killed the children?" asked the soldier. "I heard of the same things in Syria; and as to this statue, I will never wear my sword again—"

"Hark! listen to the bold Fuscus," cried the crowd. "He has seen much."

"I will never wear my sword again if they did not knock over the statue in the dark."

"No, no," cried the sailor positively. "It fell with the land that was washed away; I saw it lying there myself."

"And are you a Christian, too?" asked the soldier, "or do you suppose that I was in jest when I swore by my sword? I have served in Bithynia, in Syria, and in Judaea. I know these villains, good people. There were hundreds of Christians to be seen there who would throw away life like a worn-out shoe because they did not choose to sacrifice to the statues of Caesar and the gods."

"There, you hear!" cried the beggar. "And did you see a single man of them among the citizens who set to work to restore the statue to its place?"

"There were none of them there," said the sailor, who was beginning to share the soldier's views.

"The Christians threw down the Emperor's statue," the beggar shouted to the crowd. "It is proved, and they shall suffer for it. Every man who is a friend of the divine Hadrian come with me now and have them out of their houses."

"No uproar!" interrupted the soldier to the furious man. "There is the tribune, he will hear you."

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The Roman officer, who now came past with a troop of soldiers to receive the Emperor outside the city, was greeted by the crowd with loud shouting. He commanded silence and made the soldier tell him what had so violently excited the people.

“Very possibly,” said the tribune, a sinewy and stern-looking man, who, like Fuscus, had served under Tinnius Rufus, and had risen from a sutler to be an officer, “Very possibly—but where are your proofs?”

“Most of the citizens helped in reerecting the statue, but the Christians held aloof from the work,” cried the beggar. “There was not one to be seen. Ask the sailor, my lord; he was by and he can bear witness to it.”

“That certainly is more than suspicious. This matter must be strictly inquired into. Pay heed, you people.”

“Here comes a Christian girl!” cried the sailor.

“Lame Martha; I know her well,” interrupted the beggar. “She goes into all the plague-stricken houses and poisons the people. She stayed three days and three nights at my brother’s turning the children’s pillows till they were carried out. Wherever she goes death follows.”

Selene, now known as Martha, paid no heed to the crowd, but with her blind brother Helios, now called John, went calmly on her way which led from the raised bank down to the landing-quay. There she wished to hire a boat to take her across the stream, for in a village on the island over against the town dwelt some sick Christians to whom she was carrying medicines and whom she was intending to watch. For months past her whole life had been devoted to the suffering. She had carried help even into heathen homes, and shrunk from neither fever nor plague. Her cheeks had gained no color, but her eyes shone with a gentler and purer light which glorified the severe beauty of her features. As the girl approached the captain he fixed his eyes on her, and called out:

“Hey! pale-face—are you a Christian?”

“Yes, my lord,” replied Selene, and she went on quietly and indifferently with her brother.

The Roman looked after her, and as she passed by Hadrian’s statue, and, as she did so, dropped her head rather lower than before, he roughly ordered her to stop and to tell him why she had averted her face from the statue of Caesar.

“Hadrian is our ruler as well as yours,” answered the young girl. “I am in haste for there are sick people on the island.”

“You will bring them no good!” cried the beggar. “Who knows what is hidden there in the basket?”

“Silence!” interrupted the tribune. “They say, girl that your fellow-believers overthrew the statue of Caesar in the night.”

“How should that be? We honor Caesar no less than you do.”

“I will believe you, and you shall prove it. There stands the statue of the divine Caesar. Come with me and worship it.” Selene looked with horror in the face of the stern man, and could not find a word of reply.

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"Well!" asked the captain, "will you come? Yes or no?"

Selene struggled for self-possession, and when the soldier held out his hand to her she said with a trembling voice:

"We honor the Emperor but we pray to no statue—only to our Father in Heaven."

"There you have it!" laughed the beggar.

"Once more I ask you," cried the tribune. "Will you worship this statue, or do you refuse to do so?"

A fearful struggle possessed Selene's soul. If she resisted the Roman her life was in danger, and the fury of the populace would be aroused against her fellow-believers—if, on the other hand, she obeyed him, she would be blaspheming God, breaking her faith to the Saviour who loved her, sinning against the truth and her own conscience. A fearful dread fell upon her, and deprived her of the power to lift her soul in prayer. She could not, she dared not, do what was required of her, and yet the overweening love of life which exists in every mortal led her feet to the base of the idol and there stayed her steps.

"Lift up your hands and worship the divine Caesar," cried the tribune, who with the rest of the lookers-on had watched her movements with keen excitement.

Trembling, she set her basket on the ground and tried to withdraw her hand from her brother's; but the blind boy held it fast. He fully understood what was required of his sister, he knew full well, from the history of many martyrs that had been told him, what fate awaited her and him if they resisted the Roman's demand; but he felt no fear and whispered to her:

"We will not obey his desires Martha; we will not pray to idols, we will cling faithfully to the Redeemer. Turn me away from the image, and I will say 'Our Father.'"

With a loud voice and his lustreless eyes upraised to Heaven, the boy said the Lord's prayer. Selene had first set his face towards the river, and then she herself turned her back on the statue; then, lifting her hands, she followed the child's example.

Helios clung to her closely, her loudly uttered prayer was one with his, and neither of them saw or heard anything more of what befell them.

The blind boy had a vision of a distant but glorious light, the maiden of a blissful life made beautiful by love, as she was flung to the ground in front of the statue of Hadrian, and the excited mob rushed upon her and her faithful little brother. The military tribune tried in vain to hold back the populace, and by the time the soldiers had succeeded in driving the excited mob away from their victims, both the young hearts, in the midst of

the triumph of their faith, in the midst of their hopes of an eternal and blissful life, had ceased to beat for ever.

The occurrence disturbed the captain and made him very uneasy. This girl, this beautiful boy, who lay before him pale corpses, had been worthy of a better fate, and he might be made to answer for them; for the law forbade that any Christian should be punished for his faith without a judge's sentence. He therefore commanded that the dead should be carried at once to the house to which they belonged, and threatened every one, who should that day set foot in the Christian quarter, with the severest punishment.

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The beggar went off, shrieking and shouting, to his brother's house to tell the mistress that lame Martha, who had nursed her daughter to death, was slain; but he gained an evil reward, for the poor woman bewailed Selene as if she had been her own child, and cursed him and her murderers.

Before sundown Hadrian arrived at Besa, where he found magnificent tents pitched to receive him and his escort. The disaster that had befallen his statue was kept a secret from him, but he felt anxious and ill. He wished to be perfectly alone, and desired Antinous to go to see the city before it should be dark. The Bithynian joyfully embraced this permission as a gift of the gods; he hurried through the decorated high streets, and made a boy guide him from thence into the Christian quarter. Here the streets were like a city of the dead; not a door was open, not a man to be seen.

Antinous paid the lad, sent him away, and with a beating heart went from one house to another. Each looked neat and clean, and was surrounded by trees and shrubs, but though the smoke curled up from several of the roofs every house seemed to have been deserted. At last he heard the sound of voices. Guided by these he went through a lane to an open place where hundreds of people, men, women and children, were assembled in front of a small building which stood in the midst of a palm grove.

He asked where dame Hannah lived, and an old man silently pointed to the little house on which the attention of the Christians seemed to be concentrated. The lad's heart throbbed wildly and yet he felt anxious and embarrassed, and he asked himself whether he had not better turn back and return next morning when he might hope to find Selene alone.

But no! Perhaps he might even now be allowed to see her.

He modestly made his way through the throng, which had set up a song in which he could not determine whether it was intended to express feelings of sadness or of triumph. Now he was standing at the gate of the garden and saw Mary the deformed girl. She was kneeling by a covered bier and weeping bitterly. Was dame Hannah dead? No, she was alive, for at this moment she came out of her house, leaning on an old man, pale, calm and tearless. Both came forward, the old man uttered a short prayer and then stooping down, lifted the sheet which covered the dead.

Antinous pushed a step forward but instantly drew two steps back—then covering his eyes with his hand he stood as if rooted to the spot.

There was no vehement lamentation. The old man began a discourse. All around were sounds of suppressed weeping, singing and praying but Antinous saw and heard nothing. He had dropped his hand and never took his eyes off the white face of the dead till Hannah once more covered it with the sheet. Even then he did not stir.

It was not till six young girls lifted Selene's modest bier and four matrons took up that of little Helios on their shoulders and the whole assembly moved away after them, that he too turned and followed the mourning procession. He looked on from a distance while the larger and the smaller coffins were carried into a rocktomb, while the entrance was carefully closed, and the procession dispersed some here and some there.

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At last he found himself alone and in front of the door of the vault. The sun went down, and darkness spread rapidly over hill and vale. When no one was to be seen who could observe him, he threw up his arms, clasped the pillar at the entrance of the tomb, pressed his lips against the rough wooden door and struck his forehead against it while his whole body trembled with the tearless anguish of his spirit.

For some minutes he stood so and did not hear a light step which came up behind him. It was Mary, who had come once more to pray by the grave of her beloved friend. She at once recognized the youth and softly called him by his name.

"Mary," he answered, clasping her hand eagerly. "How did she die?"

"Slain," she said, sadly. "She would not worship Caesar's image."

Antinous shuddered at the words, and asked, "And why would she not?"

"Because she was faithful to our belief, and so hoped for the mercy of the Saviour. Now she is a blessed angel."

"Are you sure of that?"

"As sure as I live in hope of meeting the martyr who rests here, again in Heaven!"

"Mary."

"Leave go of my hand!"

"Will you do me a service, Mary?"

"Willingly, Antinous—but pray do not touch me."

"Take this money and buy the loveliest wreath that is to be had here. Hang it on this tomb, and say as you do so—call out—, From Antinous to Selene."

The deformed girl took the money he gave her and said:

"She often prayed for you."

"To her God?"

"To our Redeemer, that he might give you also joy. She died for Christ Jesus; now she is with him, and he will grant her prayers."

Antinous was silent for a while, then he said:

“Once more give me your hand, Mary, and now farewell. Will you sometimes think of me, and pray for me too, to your Redeemer?”

“Yes, yes, and you will not quite forget me, the poor cripple?”

“Certainly not, you good, kind girl! Perhaps we may some day meet again.” With these words Antinous hurried down the hill and through the town to the Nile.

The moon had risen and was mirrored in the rough water. Just so had its image played upon the waves when Antinous had rescued Selene from the sea. The lad knew that Hadrian would be expecting him, still he did not seek his tent. A violent emotion had overpowered him; he restlessly paced up and down the river-bank rapidly reviewing in his memory the more prominent incidents of his past life. He seemed to hear again every word of the dialogue that had taken place yesterday between Hadrian and himself. Before his inward eye he saw once more his humble home in Bithynia, his mother, his brothers and sisters whom he should never see again. Once more he lived through the dreadful hour when he had deceived his beloved master and had been an incendiary.

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An overmastering dread fell upon him as he thought of Hadrian's wish to put him in the place of the man whom the prudent sovereign had chosen as his successor—a choice that was perhaps the direct outcome of his own crime. He, Antinous, who to-day could not think of the morrow, who always kept out of the way of the discourse of grave men because he found it so hard to follow their meaning, he who knew nothing but how to obey, he who was never happy but alone with his master and his dreaming, far from the bustle of the world—he, to be burdened with the purple, with anxiety, with a mountain-load of responsibility!

No, no; the idea was unheard-of—impossible! And yet Hadrian never gave up a wish he had once expressed in words. The future loomed before his soul like some overpowering foe. Suffering, unrest, and misfortune stared him in the face, turn which way he would.

What was the hideous fatality that threatened his sovereign? It was approaching, it must come if no one—aye, if no one should be found to stand between him and the impending blow, and to receive in his own breast—in his own heart, bared to receive the wound—the spear hurled by the vengeful god. And he—he, and he alone was the one who might do this.

The thought flashed into his mind like a sudden blaze of light; and if he should find the courage to devote himself to death for his dear master all his sins against him would be expiated; then—then—oh, how lovely a thought!—then might he not find entrance into the gates of that realm of bliss which Selene's prayers had opened to him? There he would see his mother again and his father, and by and bye his brothers and sisters—but now, at once in a few minutes Her whom he loved and who had trodden the ways of death before him.

An exquisite sense of hope such as he had never felt before flooded his soul. There lay the Nile—here was a boat. He gave it a strong push into the stream and with a powerful leap, as when hunting he had often sprung from rock to rock, he jumped into the boat. He had just seized an oar when Mastor, who had been desired by the Emperor to seek him, recognized him in the moonlight and desired him to return with him to the tents.

But Antinous did not obey. As he pushed out into the stream he called out:

“Greet my Lord from me—greet him lovingly, a thousand times, and tell him Antinous loved him more than his life. Fate demands a victim. The world cannot dispense with Hadrian, but Antinous is a mere nonentity, whom none will miss but Caesar, and for him Antinous flings himself into the jaws of death.”

“Stay-stop! hapless boy, come back!” shouted the slave, and leaping into a boat he followed that of the Bithynian, which, impelled by strong and steady strokes, flew away into the current.

Mastor rowed with all his might, but he could not gain upon the boat he was pursuing. Thus in a wild race both reached the middle of the stream. There, the slave saw Antinous fling away his oar, and an instant later he heard Antinous call loudly on the name of Selene, and then, in helpless inactivity, he saw the lad glide into the waters, and the Nile swallowed in its flood the noblest and fairest of victims.

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CHAPTER XXII

A night and a day had slipped away since the death of the Bithynian. Ships and boats from every part of the province had collected before Besa to seek for the body of the drowned youth, the shores swarmed with men, and cressets and torches had dimmed the moonlight on river and shore all through the night; but they had not yet succeeded in finding the body of the beautiful youth.

Hadrian had heard in what way Antinous had perished. He had required Mastor to repeat to him more than once the last words of his faithful companion and neither to add nor to omit a single syllable. Hadrian's accurate memory cherished them all and now he had sat till dawn and from dawn till the sun had reached the meridian, repeating them again and again to him self. He sat gloomily brooding and would neither eat nor drink. The misfortune which had threatened him had fallen—and what a grief was this! If indeed Fate would accept the anguish he now felt in the place of all other suffering it might have had in store for him he might look forward to years free from care, but he felt as though he would rather have spent the remainder of his existence in sorrow and misery with his Antinous by his side than enjoy, without him, all that men call happiness, peace and prosperity.

Sabina and her escort had arrived—a host of men; but he had strictly ordered that no one, not even his wife, was to be admitted to his presence. The comfort of tears was denied him, but his grief gripped him at the heart, clouded his brain and made him so irritably sensitive that an unfamiliar voice, though even at a distance, disturbed him and made him angry.

The party who had arrived by water were not allowed to occupy the tents which had been pitched for them not far from his, because he desired to be alone, quite alone, with his anguish of spirit. Mastor, whom he had hitherto regarded rather a useful chattel than as a human creature, now grew nearer to him—had he not been the one witness of his darling's strange disappearance. Towards the close of this, the most miserable night he had ever known, the slave asked him whether he should not fetch the physician from the ships, he looked so pale; but Hadrian forbade it.

"If I could only cry like a woman," he said, "or like other fathers whose sons are snatched away by death, that would be the best remedy. You poor souls will have a bad time now, for the sun of my life has lost its light and the trees by the way-side have lost their verdure."

When he was alone once more he sat staring into vacancy and muttered to himself:

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"All mankind should mourn with me for if I had been asked yesterday how perfect a beauty might be bestowed on one of their race I could have pointed proudly to you, my faithful boy and have said, 'Beauty like that of the gods.' Now the crown is cut off from the trunk of the palm and the maimed thing can only be ashamed of its deformity; and if all humanity were but one man it would look like one who has had his right eye torn out. I will not look on the monsters, lean and fat, that they may not spoil my taste for the true type! Oh faithful, lovable, beautiful boy! What a blind, mad fool have you been! And yet I cannot blame your madness. You have pierced my soul with the deepest thrust of all and yet I cannot even be angry with you. Superhuman! godlike was your faithful devotion. Aye, indeed, it was!" As he thus spoke he rose from his seat and went on resolutely and decidedly:

"Here I stretch out this my right hand-hear me, ye Immortals! Every city in the Empire shall raise an altar to Antinous, and the friend of whom you have robbed me I will make your equal and companion. Receive him tenderly, oh, ye undying rulers of the world! Which among you can boast of beauty greater than his? and which of you ever displayed so much goodness and faithfulness as your new associate?"

This vow seemed to have given Hadrian some comfort. For above half an hour he paced his tent with a firmer tread, then he desired that Heliodorus his secretary might be called.

The Greek wrote what his sovereign dictated. This was nothing less than that henceforth the world should worship a new divinity in the person of Antinous.

At noonday a messenger in breathless haste came to say that the body of the Bithynian had been found. Thousands flocked to see the corpse, and among them Balbilla, who had behaved like a distracted creature when she heard to what an end her idol had come. She had rushed up and down the river-bank, among the citizens and fishermen, dressed in black mourning robes and with her hair flying about her. The Egyptians had compared her to the mourning Isis seeking the body of her beloved husband, Osiris. She was beside herself with grief, and her companion implored her in vain to calm herself and remember her rank and her dignity as a woman. But Balbilla pushed her vehemently aside, and when the news was brought that Nile had yielded up his prey she rushed on foot to see the body, with the rest of the crowd.

Her name was in every mouth, everyone knew that she was the Empress' friend, and so she was willingly and promptly obeyed when she commanded the bearers who carried the bier on which the recovered body lay to set it down and to lift up the sheet which shrouded it. Pale and trembling, she went up to it and gazed down at the drowned man; but only for a moment could she endure the sight. She turned away with a shudder, and desired the bearers to go on. When the funeral procession had disappeared and she could no longer hear the shrill wailing of the Egyptian women, and no longer see them

streaking their breast, head, and hair with damp earth and flinging up their arms wildly in the air, she turned to her companion and said calmly: "Now, Claudia, let us go home."

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In the evening at supper she appeared dressed in black, like Sabina and all the rest of the suite, but she was calm and ready with an answer to every observation.

Pontius had travelled with them from Thebes to Besa, and she had spared him nothing that could punish him for his long absence, and had mercilessly compelled him to listen to all her verses on Antinous.

He meanwhile had been perfectly cool about it, and had criticised her poems exactly as if they had referred not to a man of flesh and blood but to some statue or god. This epigram he would praise, the next he would disparage, a third condemn. Her confession that she had been in the habit of complimenting Antinous with flowers and fruit he heard with a shrug of the shoulders, saying pleasantly: "Give him as many presents as you will; I know that you expect no gifts from your divinity in return for your sacrifices."

His words had surprised and delighted her. Pontius always understood her, and did not deserve that she should wound him. So she let him gaze into her soul, and told him how much she loved Antinous so long as he was absent. Then she laughed and confessed that she was perfectly indifferent to him as soon as they were together.

When, after the Bithynian's death, she lost all self-control he simply let her alone, and begged Claudia to do the same.

The same day that the body was found it was burnt on a pile of precious wood. Hadrian had refused to see it when he learnt that the death by drowning had terribly distorted the lad's features.

A few hours after the ashes of the Bithynian had been collected and brought in a golden vase to Hadrian, the Nile fleet was once more under sail, this time with the Emperor on board one of the boats, to proceed without farther halt to Alexandria.

Hadrian remained alone with only his slave and his secretary on the boat that conveyed him; but he several times sent to Pontius to desire him to come from the ship on which he was and visit him on his. He liked to hear the architect's deep voice, and discussed with him the plans which Pontius had sketched for his mausoleum in Rome and the monument to his lost favorite which he proposed to have erected from designs of his own in the large city which he intended should stand on the site of the little town of Besa, and which he had already named Antinoe. But these discussions only took up a limited number of hours, and then the architect was at liberty to return to Sabina's boat, on which Balbilla also lived.

A few days after they had quitted Besa he was sitting alone with the poetess on the deck of the Nile boat which, borne by the current and propelled by a hundred oars, was rapidly and steadily nearing its destination. Ever since the death of the hapless favorite

Pontius had avoided mentioning him to her. She had now become as observant and as talkative as before, and in her eyes there even shone at times a ray of the

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old sunny gayety of her nature. The architect thought he comprehended the characteristic change in her sentiments, and would not allude to the cause of the violent but transient fever under which she had suffered. "What did you discuss with Caesar to-day?" asked Balbilla of her friend. Pontius looked down at the ground and considered whether he could venture to utter the name of Antinous before the poetess. Balbilla observed his hesitation and said:

"Speak on; I can hear anything. That folly is past and over."

"Caesar is at work at the plans for a new town to be built and called Antinoe, and a sketch for a monument to his ill-fated favorite," said Pontius. "He will not accept any help, but I have to teach him to discriminate what is possible from what is impossible."

"Ah! he is always gazing at the stars and you look steadily at the road on which you are walking."

"An architect can make no use of anything that is unsteady or that has no firm foundation."

"That is a hard saying, Pontius. It is true that during the last few weeks I have behaved like a fool."

"I only wish that every tottering structure could recover its balance as quickly and as certainly as you! Antinous was a demigod for beauty, and a good faithful fellow besides."

"Do not speak of him any more," exclaimed Balbilla shuddering. "He looked dreadful. Can you forgive me for my conduct?"

"I never was angry with you."

"But I lost your esteem."

"No, Balbilla. Beauty, which is dear to us all, and which the Muse has kissed, attracted your easily moved poet's soul and it fluttered off at random. Let it fly! My friend's true womanly nature was never carried away by it. She stands on a rock, that I am sure of."

"How good and kind in you to say so—too good, too kind! for I am a feeble creature, turned by every breeze that blows, a vain little fool who does not know one hour what she may do the next, a spoilt child that likes best to do the thing it ought to leave undone, a weak girl who finds a pleasure in doing battle with men. For all in all—"



“For all in all a darling of the gods who to-day can climb the rocks with a firm step and to-morrow lies dreaming in the sunshine among flowers— for all in all a nature that has no equal and which lacks nothing, nothing whatever that constitutes a true woman excepting—”

“I know what I lack,” cried Balbilla. “A strong man on whom I can depend, whose warnings I can respect. You, you are that man; you and none other, for as soon as I feel you by my side I find it difficult to do what I know to be wrong. Here I am, Pontius! Will you have me with all my moods, with all my faults and weaknesses?”

“Balbilla!” cried the architect, beside himself with heartfelt agitation and surprise, and he pressed her hand long and fervently to-his lips.

“You will? You will take me? You will never leave me, you will warn, support me and protect me?”

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"Till my last day, till death, as my child, as the apple of my eye, as— dare I say it and believe it?—as my love, my second self, my wife."

"Oh! Pontius, Pontius," she exclaimed, grasping his broad, right hand in both her own. "This hour restores to the orphaned Balbilla, father and mother and gives her besides the husband that she loves."

"Mine, mine!" cried the architect. "Immortal gods! During half a lifetime I have never found time, in the midst of labor and fatigue, to indulge in the joys of love and now you give me with interest and compound interest the treasure you have so long withheld."

"How can you, a reasonable man, so over-estimate the value of your possession? But you shall find some good in it. Life can no longer be conceived of as worth having without the possessor."

"And to me it has so long seemed empty and cold without you, you strange, unique, incomparable creature."

"But why did you not come sooner, and so give me no time to behave like a fool?"

"Because, because," said Pontius, gravely, "such a flight towards the sun seemed to me too bold; because I remember that my father's father—"

"He was the noblest man that the ancestor of my house attracted to its greatness."

"He was—consider it duly at this moment—he was your grandfather's slave."

"I know it, but I also know, that there is not a man on earth who is worthier of freedom than you are, or whom I could ask as humbly as I ask you: Take me, poor, foolish Balbilla, to be your wife, guide me and make of me whatever you can, for your own honor and mine."

The brief Nile voyage brought days and hours of the highest happiness to Balbilla and her lover. Before the fleet sailed into the Mareotic harbor of Alexandria, Pontius revealed his happy secret to the Emperor. Hadrian smiled for the first time since the death of his favorite, and desired the architect to bring Balbilla to him.

"I was wrong in my interpretation of the Pythian oracle," said he, as he laid the poetess's hand in that of Pontius. "Would you like to know how it runs Pontius—do not prompt me, my child. Anything that I have read through once or twice I never forget. Pythia said:

'That which thou boldest most precious and dear shall be torn from
thy keeping,
And from the heights of Olympus, down shalt thou fall in the dust;

Still the contemplative eye discerns under mutable sand-drifts
Stable foundations of stone, marble and natural rock.'

"You have chosen well girl. The oracle guaranteed you a safe road to tread through life. As to the dust of which it speaks, it exists no doubt in a certain sense, but this hand wields the broom that will sweep it away. Solemnize your marriage in Alexandria as soon as you will, but then come to Rome, that is the only condition I impose. A thing I always have at heart is the introduction of

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new and worthy members into the class of Knights, for it is in that way alone that its fallen dignity can be restored. This ring, my Pontius, gives you the rank of eques, and such a man as you are, the husband of Balbilla and the friend of Caesar may no doubt by-and-bye find a seat in the Senate. What this generation can produce in stone and marble, my mausoleum shall bear witness to. Have you altered the plan of the bridge?"

CHAPTER XXIII.

In Alexandria the news of the nomination of the "sham Eros" to be the Emperor's successor was hailed with joy, and the citizens availed themselves gladly of his fresh and favorable opportunity to hold one festival after another. Titianus took care to provide for the due performance of the usual acts of grace, and among others he threw open the prison-gates of Canopus, and the sculptor Pollux was set at liberty.

The hapless artist had grown pale, it is true, in durance vile, but neither leaner nor enfeebled in body; on the other hand all the vigor of his intellect, all his bright courage for life and his happy creative instinct, seemed altogether crushed out of him. His face, as in his dirty and ragged chiton, he journeyed from Canopus to Alexandria, revealed neither eager thankfulness for the unexpected boon of liberty, nor happiness at the prospect of seeing again his own people and Arsinoe.

In the town he went, unintelligently dreaming as he walked, from one street to another, but he was familiar with every stone of the way, and his feet found their way to his sister's house. How happy was Diotima, how her children rejoiced, how impatient was each one to conduct him to the old folks! How high in the air the Graces frisked and leaped in front of the new little home to welcome the returned absentee! And Doris, poor Doris, almost fainted with joyful surprise and her husband had to support her in his arms when her long vanished son, whom she had never given up for lost, however, suddenly stood before her and said: "Here am I." How fondly she kissed and caressed her dear, cruel, restored fugitive. The singer too loudly expressed his joy alike in verse and in prose, and fetched his best theatrical dress out of the chest to put it on his son in the place of his ragged chiton.

A mighty torrent of curses and execrations flowed from the old man's lips as Pollux told his story. The sculptor found it difficult to bring it to an end, for his father interrupted him at every word, and all the while he was talking his mother forced him to eat and drink incessantly, even when he could no more. After he had assured her that he was long since replete, she pushed two more pots on to the fire, for he must have been half-starved in prison, and what he did not want now he would find room for two hours hence. Euphorion himself conducted Pollux to the bath in the evening, and as they

went home together he never for an instant left his side; the sense of being near him did him good and was like some comfortable physical sensation.

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The singer was not usually inquisitive, but on this occasion he never ceased asking questions till Doris led her son to the bed she had freshly made for him. After the artist had gone to rest, the old woman once more slipped into his room, kissed his forehead, and said:

“To-day you have still been thinking too much of that hideous prison—but to-morrow my boy, to-morrow you will be the same as before, will you not?”

“Only leave me alone mother; I shall soon be better,” he replied. “This bed is as good as a sleeping-draught; the plank in the prison was quite a different thing.”

“You have never asked once for your Arsinoe,” said Doris.

“What can she matter to me? Only let me sleep.” But the next morning Pollux was just the same as he had been the previous evening, and as the days went on his condition remained unchanged. His head drooped on his breast, he never spoke but when he was spoken to, and when Doris or Euph Orion tried to talk to him of the future, he would ask: “Am I a burden to you?” or begged them not to worry him.

Still, he was gentle and kind, took his sister’s children in his arms, played with the Graces, whistled to the birds, went in and out, and played a valiant part at every meal. Now and again he would ask after Arsinoe. Once he allowed himself to be guided to the house where she lived, but he would not knock at Paulina’s door and seemed overawed by the grandeur of the house. After he had been brooding and dreaming for a week, so idle, listless, and absent that his mother’s heart was filled with anxious fears every time she looked at him, his brother Teuker hit upon a happy idea.

The young gem-cutter was not usually a frequent visitor to his parents’ house, but since the return of the hapless Pollux he called there almost daily. His apprenticeship was over and he seemed on the high-road to become a great master in his art; nevertheless he esteemed his brother’s gifts as far beyond his own and had tried to devise some means of reawakening the dormant energies of the luckless man’s brain.

“It was at this table,” said Teuker to his mother, “that Pollux used to sit. This evening I will bring in a lump of clay and a good piece of modelling wax. Just put it all on the table and lay his tools by the side of it; perhaps when he sees them he will take a fancy again to work. If he can only make up his mind to model even a doll for the children he will soon get into the vein again, and he will go on from small things to great.”

Teuker brought the materials, Doris set them out with the modelling tools, and next morning watched her son’s proceedings with an anxious heart. He got up late, as he had always done since his return home, and sat a long time over the bowl of porridge which his mother had prepared for his breakfast. Then he sauntered across to his table, stood in front of it awhile, broke off a piece of clay and kneaded and moulded it in his

fingers into balls and cylinders, looked at one of them more closely and then, flinging it on the ground, he said, as he leaned across the table supporting himself on both hands to put his face near his mother's:

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"You want me to work again; but it is of no use—I could do no good with it."

The old woman's eyes filled with tears, but she did not answer him. In the evening Pollux begged her to put away the tools.

When he was gone to bed she did so, and while she was moving about with a light in the dark, lumber-room in which she had kept them with other disused things, her eye fell on the unfinished wax model which had been the last work of her ill-starred son. A new idea struck her. She called Euph Orion, made him throw the clay into the court-yard and place the model on the table by the side of the wax. Then she put out the very same tools as he had been using on the fateful day of their expulsion from Lochias, close to the cleverly-sketched portrait, and begged her husband to go out with her quite early next morning and to remain absent till mid-day.

"You will see," she said, "when he is standing face to face with his last work and there is no one by to disturb him or look at him, he will find the ends of the threads that have been cut and perhaps be able to gather them up again and go on with the work where it was interrupted."

The mother's heart had hit upon the right idea. When Pollux had eaten his breakfast he went to his table exactly as he had done the clay before; but the sight of the work in hand had quite a different effect to the mere raw clay and wax. His eyes sparkled; he walked round the table with an attentive gaze examining his work as keenly and as eagerly as if it were some fine thing he saw for the first time. Memory revived in his mind. He laughed aloud, clasped his hands and said to himself, "Capital! Something may be made of that!"

His dull weariness slipped off him, as it were; a confident smile parted his lips and he seized the wax with a firm hand. But he did not begin to work at once; he only tried whether his fingers had not lost their cunning, and whether the yielding material was obedient to his will. The wax was no less docile to his touch than in former days, as he pinched or pulled it. Perhaps then the tormenting thought that blighted his life, the dread that in the prison he had ceased to be an artist, and had lost all his faculty was nothing more than a mad delusion! He must at any rate try how he could get on at the work.

No one was by to observe him—he might dare the attempt at once. The sweat of anguish stood in large beads on his brow as he finally concentrated his volition, shook back the hair from his face and took up a lump of the wax in both hands. There stood the portrait of Antinous with the head only half-finished. Now—could he succeed in modelling that lovely head free-hand and from memory?

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His breath came fast, and his hands trembled as he set to work; but soon his hand was as steady as ever, his eye was calm and keen again, and the work progressed. The fine features of the young Bithynian were distinct to his mind's eye, and when, about four hours after, his mother looked in at the window to see what Pollux was doing, whether her little stratagem had succeeded, she cried out with surprise, for the favorite's bust, a likeness in every feature, stood on a plinth side by side with the original sketch. Before she could cross the threshold her son had run to meet her, lifted her in his arms, and kissing her forehead and lips he exclaimed, radiant with delight:

"Mother, I still can work. Mother, mother, I am not lost!"

In the afternoon his brother came in and saw what he had been doing, and now—and not till now—could Teuker honestly be glad to have found his brother again.

While the two artists were sitting together, and the gem-cutter was suggesting to the sculptor, who had complained of the bad light in his parent's house, that he should carry the statue to his master's workshop—which was much lighter—to complete it, Euphorion had quietly gone to some remote corner of his provision-shed and brought to light an amphora full of noble Chian wine which had been given to him by a rich merchant, for whose wedding he had performed the part of Hymenaeus with a chorus of youths. For twenty years had he still preserved this jar of wine for some specially happy occasion. This jar and his best lute were the only objects which Euphorion had carried with his own hand from Lochias to his daughter's house and then again to his own new abode. With an air of dignified pride the singer set the old amphora before his sons, but Doris laid hands upon it at once and said:

"I am glad to bestow the good gift upon you, and would willingly drink a cup of it with you; but a prudent general does not celebrate his triumph before he has won the battle. As soon as the statue of the beautiful lad is completed, I myself, will wreath this venerable jar with ivy, and beg you spare it to us, my dear old man—but not before."

"Mother is right," said Pollux. "And if the amphora is really destined for me, if you will allow it, my father shall not remove the pitch wig from its venerable head, till Arsinoe is mine once more!"

"That is well my boy," cried Doris, "and then I will crown, not merely the jar but all of us too, with nothing but sweet roses."

The next day Pollux, with his unfinished statue, removed to the workshop of his brother's master. The worthy man cleared the best place for the young sculptor, for he thought highly of him and wished to make good, as far as lay in his power, the injustice the poor fellow had suffered from the treachery of Papias. Now, from sunrise till evening fell, Pollux was constant to his work. He gave himself up to the resuscitated pleasure and power of creation

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with real passion. Instead of using wax he had recourse to clay, and formed a tall figure which represented Antinous as the youthful Bacchus, as the god might have appeared to the pirates. A mantle fell in light folds from his left shoulder to his ankles, leaving the broad breast and right arm entirely free; vine-leaves and grapes wreathed his flowing locks, and a pine-cone, flame-shaped, crowned his brow. The left arm was raised in a graceful curve, and his fingers lightly grasped a thyrsus which rested on the ground and stood taller than the god's head; by the side of this magnificent figure stood a mighty wine-jar, half hidden by the drapery.

For a whole week Pollux had devoted himself to this task during all the hours of daylight with unflagging zeal and diligence. Before night fell he was accustomed to leave his work and walk up and down in front of Paulina's house, but for the present he refrained from knocking at the door and asking after the girl he loved. He had heard from his mother how anxiously she was guarded from him and his; still Paulina's severity would certainly not have hindered the artist from making the attempt to possess himself of his dearest treasure. What held him back from even approaching Arsinoe, was the vow he had made to himself never to tempt her to quit her new and sheltered home till he had acquired a firm certainty of being once for all an artist, a true artist, who might hope to do something great, and who might dare to link the fate of the woman he loved, with his own.

When, on the eighth morning of his labors, he was taking a few minutes rest, his brother's master came past the rapidly advancing work, and after contemplating it for some time exclaimed:

"Splendid, splendid! Our time has produced nothing to compare with it!"

An hour later Pollux was standing at the door of Paulina's town-house, and let the knocker fall heavily on the door. The steward opened to him and asked him what he wanted. He asked to speak with dame Paulina, but she was not at home. Then he asked after Arsinoe, the daughter of Keraunus, who had found a home with the rich widow. The servant shook his head.

"My mistress is having her searched for," he said. "She disappeared yesterday evening. The ungrateful creature! She has tried to run away several times before now."

The artist laughed, slapped the steward on the back, and said:

"I will soon find her!" and he sprang away down the street, and back to his parents.

Arsinoe had received much kindness in Paulina's house, but she had also gone through many bad hours. For months she had been obliged to believe that her lover was dead.

Pontius had told her that Pollux had entirely vanished and her benefactress persisted in always speaking of him as of one dead. The poor child had shed many tears for him, and when the longing to talk of him with some one who had known him had taken possession of her she had entreated Paulina to allow her to go to see his mother or to let Doris visit her. But the widow had desired her to give up all thought of the idol-maker and his belongings, speaking with contempt of the gate-keeper's worthy wife. Just at that time Selene also left the city, and now Arsinoe's longing for her old friends grew to a passionate craving to see them again.

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One day she yielded to the promptings of her heart and slipped out into the street to seek Doris; but the door-keeper, who had been charged by Paulina never to allow her to go outside the door without his mistress's express permission, noticed her and brought her back to her protectress— not this time only, but, on several subsequent occasions when she attempted to escape.

It was not merely her longing to talk about Pollux which made her new home unendurable to Arsinoe, but many other reasons besides. She felt like a prisoner; and in fact she was one, for after each attempt at flight her freedom of movement was still farther impeded. It is true that she had soon ceased to submit patiently to all that was required of her and even had often opposed her adoptive mother with vehement words, tears and execrations, but these unpleasant scenes, which always ended by a declaration on Paulina's part that she forgave the girl, had always resulted in a long break in her drives and in a variety of small annoyances. Arsinoe was beginning to hate her benefactress and everything that surrounded her, and the hours of catechising and of prayer, which she could not escape, were a positive martyrdom. Ere long the doctrine to which Paulina sought to win her was confounded in her mind with that which it was intended to drive out, and she defiantly shut her heart against it.

Bishop Eumenes, who had been elected in the spring Patriarch of the Christians of Alexandria, visited her oftener than usual during the summer when Paulina lived in her suburban villa. Paulina, it is true, had fancied she could do without his help, and that she could and must carry her task through to the end by herself; but the worthy old man had felt sympathetically drawn to the poor ill-guided child, and sought to soothe and calm her mind and show her the goal, towards which Paulina desired to lead her, in all its beauty. After such discourses Arsinoe would be softened and felt inclined to believe in God and to love Christ, but no sooner had her protectress called her again into the school-room and put the very same things before her in her own way than the girl's heartstrings drew close again; and when she was desired to pray she raised her hands, indeed, but out of sheer defiance, she prayed in spirit to the Greek gods.

Frequently Paulina received visits from heathen acquaintances in rich dresses and the sight of them always reminded Arsinoe of former days. How poor she had been then! and yet she had always had a blue or a red ribbon to plait in her hair and trim the edge of her peplum. Now she might wear none but white dresses and the least scrap of colored ornament to dress her hair or smarten her robe was strictly forbidden. Such vain trifles, Paulina would say, were very well for the heathen, but the Lord looked not at the body but at the heart.

Ah! and the poor little heart of the hapless child could not offer a very pleasing sight to the Father in Heaven, for hatred and disgust, sadness, impatience, and blasphemy seethed in it from morning till night. This young nature was surely formed for love and contentment, and both had left her weeping. Still Arsinoe never ceased to yearn for them.

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When November had begun and another attempt to run away during their move back to the town-house had failed, Paulina tried to punish her by never speaking a word to her for a fortnight, and forbidding even the slave-women to speak to her. In these two weeks the talkative girl was reduced almost to desperation, and she even thought of throwing herself off the roof down into the court-yard. But she clung too dearly to life to carry this horrible project into execution. On the first of December Paulina once more spoke to her, forgave her ingratitude, as usual in a long, kind speech, and told her how many hours she had spent in praying for her enlightenment and improvement.

Paulina spoke the truth, and yet but half the truth, for she had never felt a real love for Arsinoe, and had now for a long time watched her come and go with actual dislike; but she required her conversion in order that the warmest wish of her heart might find fulfilment. It was for the happiness of her daughter, and not for the sake of her recalcitrant companion, that she prayed for her enlightenment and never ceased in her efforts to open the callous heart of her adopted child to the true faith.

In the afternoon preceding that morning when Pollux had at last knocked at the Christian widow's door, the sun shone with particular brilliancy, and Paulina had allowed the girl to go out with her. They spent some little time with a Christian family who dwelt on the shore of Lake Mareotis, and so it fell out that they did not return home till late in the evening. Arsinoe had long learnt, while she sat apparently gazing at the ground, to keep her eyes out of the carriage and to see everything that was going on around her; and as the chariot turned into their own street she spied in the distance a tall man who looked like her long-wept Pollux. She fixed her eyes upon him, and had some difficulty in keeping herself from calling out aloud, for he it was who walked slowly down the street. She could not be mistaken, for the torches of two slaves who were walking in front of a litter had broadly lighted up his face and figure.

He was not lost—he was living, and seeking her. She could have shouted aloud for joy, but she did not stir till Paulina's chariot was standing still in front of her house. The door-keeper bustled out as usual to help his mistress to step out of the high-slung vehicle. Thus Paulina for an instant turned her back, and in that moment Arsinoe sprang out of the opposite side of the chariot, and was flying down towards the street where she had seen her lover. Before Paulina could discover that she was gone the runaway found herself in the midst of the throng which, when the day's work was over, poured out from the workshops and factories on their way home.

Paulina's slaves, who were sent out at once to seek the fugitive, had to return home this time empty-handed; but Arsinoe, on her part, had not succeeded in finding him she sought. For an hour she looked round and about her in vain; then she perceived that her search must be unsuccessful, and wondered how she might find her way to his parents' house. Rather than return to her benefactress she would have joined the roofless crew who passed the night on the hard marble pavement of the forecourts of the temple.

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At first she rejoiced in the sense of recovered liberty, but when none of the passers-by could tell her where Euphorion, the singer, lived, and some young men followed her and addressed her with impudent speeches, terror made her turn aside into a street which led to the Bruchiom; her persecutors had not even then ceased to follow her, when a litter, escorted by lictors and several torch-bearers, was carried past. It was Julia, the kind wife of the prefect, who sat in it; Arsinoe recognized her at once, followed her, and reached the door of her residence at the same moment as she herself. As the matron got out of her litter she observed the girl who placed herself modestly, but with hands uplifted in entreaty, at the side of her path. Julia greeted the pretty creature in whom she had once taken a motherly interest with affectionate sympathy, beckoned Arsinoe to her, smiled as she listened to her request for a night's shelter, and led her with much satisfaction to her husband.

Titianus was ill; still he was glad once more to see the ill-fated palace-steward's pretty daughter; he listened to her story of her flight with many signs of disapprobation, but kindly withal, and expressed the warmest satisfaction at hearing that the sculptor Pollux was still in the land of the living.

The grand and lordly bed in one of the strangers' rooms in the prefect's house had held many a more illustrious guest, but never one whose sleep was brightened by happier dreams than the poor orphaned "little fugitive," who, no longer ago than yesterday, had cried herself to sleep.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Arsinoe was up betimes on the following morning; much embarrassed by all the splendor that surrounded her, she walked up and down her room thinking of Pollux. Then she stopped to take pleasure in her own image displayed in a large mirror which stood on a dressing-table, and between whiles she compared the couch, on which she lay clown again at full length, with those in Paulina's house. Once more she felt herself a prisoner, but this time she liked her prison, and presently, when she heard slaves passing by her room, she flew to the door to listen, for it was just possible that Titianus might have sent to fetch Pollux, and would allow him to come to see her. At last a slave-woman came in, brought her some breakfast, and desired her from Julia to go into the garden and look at the flowers and aviaries till she should be sent for.

Early that morning the news had reached the prefect that Antinous had sought his death in the Nile, and it had shocked him greatly, less on account of the hapless youth than for Hadrian's sake. When he had given the proper official orders to announce the melancholy news and to desire the citizens to give some public expression of their sympathy with the Emperor's sorrow, he gave audience to the Patriarch Eumenes.

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This venerable man, ever since the transactions which he had conducted— with reference to the thanksgiving of the Christians for the safety of the Emperor after the fire, had been one of the most esteemed friends of Titianus and Julia. The prefect discussed with the Patriarch the inauspicious effects that the death of the young fellow might be expected to have on the Emperor, and as a result, on the government, although the favorite had had no qualities of mind to distinguish him.

“Whenever Hadrian,” continued Titianus, “would give his unresting brain an hour’s relaxation, and release himself from disappointment and vexation and the severe toil and anxiety of which his life is overfull, he would go out hunting with the bold youth or would have the handsome, good-hearted boy into his own room. The sight of the Bithynian’s beauty delighted his eye, and how well Antinous knew how to listen to him — silent, modest and attentive! Hadrian loved him as a son, and the poor fellow clung to his master in return with more than a son’s fidelity; his death itself proved it. Caesar himself said to me once; “In the midst of the turmoil of waking life, when I see Antinous a feeling comes over me as if a beautiful dream stood incorporate before my eyes.”

“Caesar’s grief at losing him must indeed be great,” said the Patriarch.

“And the loss will add to the gloom of his grave and brooding nature, render his restless scheming and wandering still more capricious, and increase his suspiciousness and irritability.”

“And the circumstances under which Antinous perished,” added Eumenes, “will afford new ground for his attachment to superstitions.”

“That is to be feared. We have not happy days before us; the revolt in Judaea, too, will again cost thousands of lives.”

“If only it had been granted to you to assume the government of that province.”

“But you know, my worthy friend, the condition I am in. On my bad days I am incapable of commanding a thought or opening my lips. When my breathlessness increases I feel as if I were being suffocated. I have placed many decades of my life at the disposal of the state, and I now feel justified in devoting the diminished strength which is left me to other things. I and my wife think of retiring to my property by lake Larius, and there to try whether we may succeed, she and I, in becoming worthy of the salvation and capable of apprehending the truth that you have offered us. You are there Julia? As the determination to retire from the world has matured in us, we have, both of us, remembered more than once the words of the Jewish sage, which you lately told us of. When the angel of God drove the first man out of Paradise, he said: ‘Henceforth your heart must be your Paradise.’ We are turning our backs on the pleasure of a city life—”

“And we do so without regret,” said Julia, interrupting her husband, “for we bear in our minds the germ of a more indestructible, purer, and more lasting happiness.”

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"Amen!" said the Patriarch. "Where two such as you dwell together there the Lord is third in the bond." "Give us your disciple Marcianus to be our travelling-companion," said Titianus.

"Willingly," said Eumenes. "Shall he come to visit you when I leave you?"

"Not immediately," replied Julia. "I have this morning an important and at the same time pleasant business to attend to. You know Paulina, the widow of Pudeus. She took into her keeping a pretty young creature—"

"And Arsinoe has run away from her."

"We took her in here," said Titianus. "Her protectress seems to have failed in attracting her to her, or in working favorably on her nature."

"Yes," said the Patriarch. "There was but one key to her full, bright heart—Love—but Paulina tried to force it open with coercion and persistent driving. It remained closed—nay, the lock is spoiled.—But, if I may ask, how came the girl into your house?"

"That I can tell you later, we did not make her acquaintance for the first time yesterday."

"And I am going to fetch her lover to her," cried the prefect's wife.

"Paulina will claim her of you," said the Patriarch. "She is having her sought for everywhere; but the child will never thrive under her guidance."

"Did the widow formally adopt Arsinoe?" asked Titianus.

"No; she proposed doing so as soon as her young pupil—"

"Intentions count for nothing in law, and I can protect our pretty little guest against her claim."

"I will fetch her," said Julia. "The time must certainly have seemed very long to her already. Will you come with me, Eumenes?"

"With pleasure," replied the old man, "Arsinoe and I are excellent friends; a conciliatory word from me will do her good, and my blessing cannot harm even a heathen. Farewell, Titianus, my deacons are expecting me."

When Julia returned to the sitting-room with her protegee, the child's eyes were wet with tears, for the kind words of the venerable old man had gone to her heart and she knew and acknowledged that she had experienced good as well as evil from Paulina.

The matron found her husband no longer alone. Wealthy old Plutarch with his two supporters was with him, and in black garments, which were decorated with none but white flowers, instead of many colored garments; he presented a singular appearance. The old man was discoursing eagerly to the prefect; but as soon as he saw Arsinoe he broke off his harangue, clapped his hands and was quite excited with the pleasure of seeing once more the fair Roxana for whom he had once visited in vain all the gold-workers' shops in the city.

“But I am tired,” cried Plutarch, with quite youthful vivacity, “I am quite tired of keeping the ornaments for you. There are quite enough other useless things in my house. They belong to you, not to me, and this very day I will send them to the noble Julia, that she may give them to you. Give me your hand, dear child; you have grown paler but more womanly. What do you think, Titianus, she would still do for Roxana; only your wife must find a dress for her again. All in white, and no ribband in your hair!—like a Christian.”

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"I know some one who will find out the way to fitly crown these soft tresses," replied Julia. "Arsinoe is the bride of Pollux, the sculptor."

"Pollux!" exclaimed Plutarch, in extreme excitement. "Move me forward, Antaeus and Atlas, the sculptor Pollux is her lover? A great, a splendid artist! The very same, noble Titianus, of whom I just now speaking to you."

"You know him?" asked the prefect's wife.

"No, but I have just left the work-shop of Periander, the gem-cutter, and there I saw the model of a statue of Antinous that is unique, marvellous, incomparable! The Bithynian as Dionysus! The work would do no discredit to a Phidias, to a Lysippus. Pollux was out of the way, but I laid my hand at once on his work; the young master must execute it immediately in marble. Hadrian will be enchanted with this portrait of his beautiful and devoted favorite. You must admire it, every connoisseur must! I will pay for it, the only question is whether I or the city should present it to Caesar. This matter your husband must decide."

Arsinoe was radiant with joy at these words, but she stepped modestly into the background as an official came in and handed Titianus a dispatch that had just arrived.

The prefect read it; then turning to his friend and his wife, he said:

"Hadrian ascribes to Antinous the honors of a god."

"Fortunate Pollux!" exclaimed Plutarch. "He has executed the first statue of the new divinity. I will present it to the city, and they shall place it in the temple to Antinous of which we must lay the first stone before Caesar is back here again. Farewell, my noble friends! Greet your bridegroom from me, my child. His work belongs to me. Pollux will be the first among his fellow-artists, and it has been my privilege to discover this new star—the eighth artist whose merit I have detected while he was still unknown. Your future brother-in-law too, Teuker, will turn out well. I am having a stone cut by him with a portrait of Antinous. Once more farewell; I must go to the Council. We shall have to discuss the subject of a temple to the new divinity. Move on you two!"

An hour after Plutarch had quitted the prefect's house Julia's chariot was standing at the entrance of a lane, much too narrow to admit a vehicle with horses, and which ended in a little plot on which stood Euphorion's humble house. Julia's outrunners easily found out the residence of the sculptor's parents, led the matron and Arsinoe to the spot, and showed them the door they should knock at.

"What a color you have, my little girl!" said Julia. "Well, I will not intrude on your meeting, but I should like to deliver you with my own hand into those of your future

mother. Go to that little house, Arctus, and beg dame Doris to step out here. Only say that some one wishes to speak with her, but do not mention my name."

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Arsinoe's heart beat so violently that she was incapable of saying a word of thanks to her kind protectress. "Step behind this palm-tree," said the lady. Arsinoe obeyed; but she felt as though it was some outside volition, and not her own, that guided her to her hiding-place. She heard nothing of the first words spoken by the Roman lady and Doris. She only saw the dear old face of her Pollux's mother, and in spite of her reddened eyes and the wrinkles which trouble had furrowed in her face, she could not tire of looking at it. It reminded her of the happiest days of her childhood, and she longed to rush forward and throw her arms round the neck of the kindly, good-hearted woman. Then she heard Julia say: "I have brought her to you. She is just as sweet and as maidenly and lovely as she was the first time we saw her in the theatre."

"Where is she? Where is she?" asked Doris in a trembling voice.

Julia pointed to the palm, and was about to call Arsinoe, but the girl could no longer restrain her longing to fall on the neck of some one dear to her, for Pollux had come out of the door to see who had asked for his mother, and to see him and to fly to his breast with a cry of joy had been one and the same act to Arsinoe.

Julia gazed at the couple with moistened eyes, and when, after many kind words for old and young alike, she took leave of the happy group, she said:

"I will provide for your outfit my child, and this time I think you will wear it, not merely for one transient hour but through a long and happy life."

Joyful singing sounded out that evening from Euphorion's little home. Doris and her husband, and Pollux and Arsinoe, Diotima and Teuker, decked with garlands, reclined round the amphora which was wreathed with roses, drinking to pleasure and joy, to art and love, and to all the gifts of the present. The sweet bride's long hair was once more plaited with handsome blue ribbons.

Three weeks after these events Hadrian was again in Alexandria. He kept aloof from all the festivals instituted in honor of the new god Antinous, and smiled incredulously when he was told that a new star had appeared in the sky, and that an oracle had declared it to be the soul of his lost favorite.

When Plutarch conducted the Emperor and his friends to see the Bacchus Antinous, which Pollux had completed in the clay, Hadrian was deeply struck and wished to know the name of the master who had executed this noble work of art. Not one of his companion's had the courage to speak the name of Pollux in his presence; only Pontius ventured to come forward for his young friend. He related to Hadrian the hapless artist's history and begged him to forgive him. The Emperor nodded his approval, and said:

"For the sake of this lost one he shall be forgiven."

Pollux was brought into his presence, and Hadrian, holding out his hand said as he pressed the sculptor's:

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“The Immortals have bereft me of his love and faithfulness, but your art has preserved his beauty for me and for the world—”

Every city in the Empire vied in building temples and erecting statues to the new god, and Pollux, Arsinoe’s happy husband, was commissioned to execute statues and busts of Antinous for a hundred towns; but he refused most of the orders, and would send out no work as his own that he had not executed himself on a new conception. His master, Papias, returned to Alexandria, but he was received there by his fellow-artists with such insulting contempt, that in an evil hour he destroyed himself. Teuker lived to be the most famous gem-engraver of his time.

Soon after Selene’s martyrdom dame Hannah quitted Besa; the office of Superior of the Deaconesses at Alexandria was intrusted to her, and she exercised it with much blessing till an advanced age. Mary, the deformed girl, remained behind in the Nile-port, which under Hadrian was extended into the magnificent city of Antmoe. There were there two graves from which she could not bear to part.

Four years after Arsinoe’s marriage with Pollux, Hadrian called the young sculptor to Rome; he was there to execute the statue of the Emperor in a quadriga. This work was intended to crown and finish his mausoleum constructed by Pontius, and Pollux carried it out in so admirable a manner, that when it was ended, Hadrian said to him with a smile:

“Now you have earned the right to pronounce sentence of death on the works of other masters.” Euphorion’s son lived in honor and prosperity to see his children, the children of his faithful wife Arsinoe—who was greatly admired by the Tiber-grow up to be worthy citizens. They remained heathen; but the Christian love which Eumenes had taught Paulina’s foster-daughter was never forgotten, and she kept a kindly place for it in her heart and in her household. A few months before the young couple left Alexandria, Doris had peacefully gone to her last rest, and her husband died soon after her; the want of his faithful companion was the complaint he succumbed to.

On the shores of the Tiber, Pontius was still the sculptor’s friend. Balbilla and her husband gave their corrupt fellow-citizens the example of a worthy, faithful marriage on the old Roman pattern. The poetess’s bust had been completed by Pollux in Alexandria, and with all its tresses and little curls, it found favor in Balbilla’s eyes.

Verus was to have enjoyed the title of Caesar even during Hadrian’s lifetime, but after a long illness he died the first. Lucilla nursed him with unfailing devotion and enjoyed the longed-for monopoly of his attentions through a period of much suffering. It was on their son that in later years the purple devolved.

The predictions of the prefect Titianus were fulfilled, for the Emperor’s faults increased with years and the meaner side of his mind and nature came into sharper relief.

Titianus and his wife led a retired life by lake Larius, far from the world, and both were baptized before they died. They never pined for the turmoil of a pleasure-seeking world or its dazzling show, for they had learnt to cherish in their own hearts all that is fairest in life.

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It was the slave Mastor who brought to Titianus the news of the sovereign's death. Hadrian had given him his freedom before he died and had left him a handsome legacy.

The prefect gave him a piece of land to farm and continued in friendly relations with his Christian neighbor and his pretty daughter, who grew up among her father's co-religionists.

When Titianus had told his wife the melancholy news he added solemnly:

"A great sovereign is dead. The pettinesses which disfigured the man Hadrian will be forgotten by posterity, for the ruler Hadrian was one of those men whom Fate sets in the places they belong to, and who, true to their duty, struggle indefatigably to the end. With wise moderation he was so far master of himself as to bridle his ambition and to defy the blame and prejudice of all the Romans. The hardest, and perhaps the wisest, resolution of his life was to abandon the provinces which it would have exhausted the power of the Empire to retain. He travelled over every portion of his dominion within the limits he himself had set to it, shrinking from neither frost nor heat, and he tried to be as thoroughly acquainted with every portion of it as if the Empire were a small estate he had inherited. His duties as a sovereign forced him to travel, and his love of travel lightened the duty. He was possessed by a real passion to understand and learn everything. Even the Incomprehensible set no limits to his thirst for knowledge, but ever striving to see farther and to dig deeper than is possible to the mind of man, he wasted a great part of his mighty powers in trying to snatch aside the curtain which hides the destinies of the future. No one ever worked at so many secondary occupations as he, and yet no former Emperor ever kept his eye so unerringly fixed on the main task of his life, the consolidation and maintenance of the strength of the state and the improvement and prosperity of its citizens."

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