

Cleopatra, Complete

Georg Ebers

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CLEOPATRA

By Georg Ebers

Translated from the German by Mary J. Safford

PREFACE.

If the author should be told that the sentimental love of our day was unknown to the pagan world, he would not cite last the two lovers, Antony and Cleopatra, and the will of the powerful Roman general, in which he expressed the desire, wherever he might die, to be buried beside the woman whom he loved to his latest hour. His wish was fulfilled, and the love-life of these two distinguished mortals, which belongs to history, has more than once afforded to art and poesy a welcome subject.

In regard to Cleopatra, especially, life was surrounded with an atmosphere of romance bordering on the fabulous. Even her bitterest foes

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admire her beauty and rare gifts of intellect. Her character, on the contrary, presents one of the most difficult problems of psychology. The servility of Roman poets and authors, who were unwilling frankly to acknowledge the light emanating so brilliantly from the foe of the state and the Emperor, solved it to her disadvantage. Everything that bore the name of Egyptian was hateful or suspicious to the Roman, and it was hard to forgive this woman, born on the banks of the Nile, for having seen Julius Caesar at her feet and compelled Mark Antony to do her bidding. Other historians, Plutarch at their head, explained the enigma more justly, and in many respects in her favour.

It was a delightful task to the author to scan more closely the personality of the hapless Queen, and from the wealth of existing information shape for himself a creature in whom he could believe. Years elapsed ere he succeeded; but now that he views the completed picture, he thinks that many persons might be disposed to object to the brightness of his colours. Yet it would not be difficult for the writer to justify every shade which he has used. If, during his creative work, he learned to love his heroine, it was because, the more distinctly he conjured before his mind the image of this wonderful woman, the more keenly he felt and the more distinctly he perceived how fully she merited not only sympathy and admiration, but, in spite of all her sins and weaknesses, the self-sacrificing affection which she inspired in so many hearts.

It was an author of no less importance than Horace who called Cleopatra "non humilis mulier"--a woman capable of no baseness. But the phrase gains its greatest importance from the fact that it adorns the hymn which the poet dedicated to Octavianus and his victory over Antony and Cleopatra. It was a bold act, in such an ode, to praise the victor's foe. Yet he did it, and his words, which are equivalent to a deed, are among this greatly misjudged woman's fairest claims to renown.

Unfortunately it proved less potent than the opinion of Dio, who often distorted what Plutarch related, but probably followed most closely the farce or the popular tales which, in Rome, did not venture to show the Egyptian in a favourable light.

The Greek Plutarch, who lived much nearer the period of our heroine than Dio, estimated her more justly than most of the Roman historians. His grandfather had heard many tales of both Cleopatra and Antony from his countryman Philotas, who, during the brilliant days when they revelled in Alexandria, had lived there as a student. Of all the writers who describe the Queen, Plutarch is the most trustworthy, but even his narrative must be used with caution. We have closely followed the clear and comprehensive description given by Plutarch of the last days of our heroine. It bears the impress of truth, and to deviate widely from it would be arbitrary.

Unluckily, Egyptian records contain nothing which could have much weight in estimating the character of Cleopatra, though we have likenesses representing the Queen alone, or with her son Caesarion. Very recently (in 1892) the fragment of a colossal double statue was found in Alexandria, which can scarcely be intended for any persons except Cleopatra and Antony hand in hand. The upper part of the female figure is in a state of tolerable preservation, and shows a young and attractive face. The male figure was doubtless sacrificed to Octavianus's command to destroy Antony's statues. We are indebted to Herr Dr. Walther, in Alexandria, for an excellent photograph of this remarkable piece of sculpture. Comparatively few other works of plastic art, in which we here

include coins, that could render us familiar with our heroine's appearance, have been preserved.

Though the author must especially desire to render his creation a work of art, it is also requisite to strive for fidelity. As the heroine's portrait must reveal her true character, so the life represented here must correspond in every line with the civilization of the period described. For this purpose we placed Cleopatra in the centre of a larger group of people, whom she influences, and who enable her personality to be displayed in the various relations of life.

Should the author succeed in making the picture of the remarkable woman, who was so differently judged, as "lifelike" and vivid as it stamped itself upon his own imagination, he might remember with pleasure the hours which he devoted to this book.

GEORG EBERS

TUTZING ON THE STARNBERGER SEE, October 5, 1893.

CLEOPATRA.

CHAPTER I.

Gorgias, the architect, had learned to bear the scorching sunbeams of the Egyptian noonday. Though not yet thirty, he had directed--first as his late father's assistant and afterwards as his successor--the construction of the huge buildings erected by Cleopatra in Alexandria.

Now he was overwhelmed with commissions; yet he had come hither ere the hours of work were over, merely to oblige a youth who had barely passed the confines of boyhood.

True, the person for whom he made this sacrifice was Caesarion, the son whom Cleopatra had given to Julius Caesar. Antony had honoured him with the proud title of "King of kings"; yet he was permitted neither to rule nor even to issue orders, for his mother kept him aloof from affairs of state, and he himself had no desire to hold the sceptre.

Gorgias had granted his wish the more readily, because it was apparent that he wanted to speak to him in private, though he had not the least idea what Caesarion desired to confide, and, under any circumstances, he could give him only a brief interview. The fleet, at whose head the Queen had set sail, with Mark Antony, for Greece, must have already met Octavianus's galleys, and doubtless a battle wherein the destiny of the world was decided had also been fought upon the land, Gorgias believed that the victory would fall to Antony and the Queen, and wished the noble pair success with his whole heart. He was even obliged to act as if the battle had been already determined in their favour, for the architectural preparations for the reception of the conquerors were entrusted to his charge, and that very day must witness the decision of the location of the colossal statues which represented Antony hand in hand with his royal love.

The epitrop Mardion, a eunuch, who as Regent, represented Cleopatra; and Zeno, the Keeper of the Seal, who rarely opposed him, wished to have the piece of sculpture erected in a different place from the one he favoured. The principal objection to the choice made by the powerful head of the government was that it had fallen on land owned by a private individual. This might lead to difficulties, and Gorgias opposed it. As an artist, too, he did not approve Mardion's plan; for though, on Didymus's land, the statues would have faced the sea, which the Regent and the Keeper of the Seal regarded as very important, no fitting background could have been obtained.

At any rate, the architect could now avail himself of Caesarion's invitation to overlook from the appointed place of meeting--the lofty steps of the Temple of Isis--the Bruchium, and seek the best site for the twin statues. He was anxious to select the most suitable one; the master who had created this work of art had been his friend, and had closed his eyes in death shortly after its completion.

The sanctuary whence Gorgias commenced his survey was in one of the fairest portions of the Bruchium, the Alexandrian quarter, where stood the royal palace with its extensive annexes, the finest temples--except the Serapeum, situated in another part of the city--and the largest theatres; the Forum invited the council of Macedonian citizens to its assemblies, and the Museum afforded a resort for the scholars.

The little square closed in the east by the Temple of Isis was called the "Corner of the Muses," on account of the two marble statues of women before the entrance of the house, which, with its large garden facing the square northward and extending along the sea, belonged to Didymus, an old and highly respected scholar and member of the Museum.

The day had been hot, and the shade of the Temple of Isis was very welcome to the architect.

This sanctuary rested upon a lofty foundation, and a long flight of steps led to the cella. The spot afforded Gorgias a wide prospect.

Most of the buildings within his vision belonged to the time of Alexander and his successors in the house of the Ptolemies, but some, and by no means the least stately, were the work of Gorgias himself or of his father. The artist's heart swelled with enthusiastic delight at the sight of this portion of his native city.

He had been in Rome, and visited many other places numbered among the world's fairest and most populous cities; but not one contained so many superb works of art crowded together in so small a space.

"If one of the immortals themselves," he murmured, "should strive to erect for the inhabitants of Olympus a quarter meet for their grandeur and beauty, it could scarcely be much more superb or better fitted to satisfy the artistic needs which we possess as their gift, and it would surely be placed on the shore of such a sea."

While speaking, he shaded his keen eyes with his hand. The architect, who usually devoted his whole attention to the single object that claimed his notice, now permitted himself the pleasure of enjoying the entire picture in whose finishing touches he had himself borne a part; and, as his practised eye perceived in every temple and colonnade the studied and

finished harmony of form, and the admirable grouping of the various buildings and statues, he said to himself, with a sigh of satisfaction, that his own art was the noblest and building the highest of royal pleasures. No doubt this belief was shared by the princes who, three centuries before, had endeavoured to obtain an environment for their palaces which should correspond with their vast power and overflowing wealth, and at the same time give tangible expression to their reverence for the gods and their delight in art and beauty. No royal race in the universe could boast of a more magnificent abode. These thoughts passed through Gorgias's mind as the deep azure hue of sea and sky blended with the sunlight to bring into the strongest relief all that the skill and brains of man, aided by exhaustless resources, had here created.

Waiting, usually a hard task for the busy architect, became a pleasure in this spot; for the rays streaming lavishly in all directions from the diadem of the sovereign sun flooded with dazzling radiance the thousands of white marble statues on the temples and colonnades, and were reflected from the surfaces of the polished granite of the obelisks and the equally smooth walls of the white, yellow, and green marble, the syenite, and the brown, speckled porphyry of sanctuaries and palaces. They seemed to be striving to melt the bright mosaic pictures which covered every foot of the ground, where no highway intersected and no tree shaded it, and flashed back again from the glimmering metal or the smooth glaze in the gay tiles on the roofs of the temples and houses. Here they glittered on the metal ornaments, yonder they seemed to be trying to rival the brilliancy of the gilded domes, to lend to the superb green of the tarnished bronze surfaces the sparkling lustre of the emerald, or to transform the blue and red lines of the white marble temples into lapis-lazuli and coral and their gilded decorations into topaz. The pictures in the mosaic pavement of the squares, and on the inner walls of the colonnades, were doubly effective against the light masses of marble surrounding them, which in their turn were indebted to the pictures for affording the eye an attractive variety instead of dazzling monotony.

Here the light of the weltering sun enhanced the brilliancy of colour in the flags and streamers which fluttered beside the obelisks and Egyptian pylons, over the triumphal arches and the gates of the temples and palaces. Yet even the exquisite purplish blue of the banner waving above the palace on the peninsula of Lochias, now occupied by Cleopatra's children, was surpassed by the hue of the sea, whose deep azure near the shore merged far away into bands of lighter and darker blue, blending with dull or whitish green.

Gorgias was accustomed to grasp fully whatever he permitted to influence him, and though still loyal to his custom of associating with his art every remarkable work of the gods or man, he had not forgotten in his enjoyment of the familiar scene the purpose of his presence in this spot.

No, the garden of Didymus was not the proper place for his friend's last work.

While gazing at the lofty plane, sycamore, and mimosa trees which surrounded the old scholar's home, the quiet square below him suddenly became astir with noisy life, for all classes of the populace were gathering in front of the sequestered house, as if some unusual spectacle attracted them.

What could they want of the secluded philosopher?

Gorgias gazed earnestly at them, but soon turned away again; a gay voice from below called his name.

A singular procession had approached the temple--a small body of armed men, led by a short, stout fellow, whose big head, covered with bushy curls, was crowned with a laurel wreath. He was talking eagerly to a younger man, but had paused with the others in front of the sanctuary to greet the architect. The latter shouted a few pleasant words in reply. The laurel-crowned figure made a movement as if he intended to join him, but his companion checked him, and, after a short parley, the older man gave the younger one his hand, flung his heavy head back, and strutted onward like a peacock, followed by his whole train.

The other looked after him, shrugging his shoulders; then called to Gorgias, asking what boon he desired from the goddess.

"Your presence," replied the architect blithely.

"Then Isis will show herself gracious to you," was the answer, and the next instant the two young men cordially grasped each other's hands.

Both were equally tall and well formed; the features bore witness to their Greek origin; nay, they might have been taken for brothers, had not the architect's whole appearance seemed sturdier and plainer than that of his companion, whom he called "Dion" and friend. As the latter heaped merry sarcasms upon the figure wearing the laurel wreath who had just left him, Anaxenor, the famous zither-player, on whom Antony had bestowed the revenues of four cities and permission to keep body-guard, and Gorgias's deeper voice sometime assented, sometimes opposed with sensible objections, the difference between these two men of the same age and race became clearly apparent.

Both showed a degree of self-reliance unusual, at their age; but the architect's was the assurance which a man gains by toil and his own merit, Dion's that which is bestowed by large possession and a high position in society. Those who were ignorant that the weight of Dion's carefully prepared speech had more than once turned the scale in the city councils would probably have been disposed to take him for one of the careless worldlings who had no lack of representatives among the gilded youth of Alexandria; while the architect's whole exterior, from his keen eye to the stouter leather of his sandals, revealed earnest purpose and unassuming ability.

Their friendship had commenced when Gorgias built a new palace for Dion. During long business association people become well acquainted, even though their conversations relate solely to direction and execution. But in this case, he who gave the orders had been only the inspirer and adviser, the architect the warm-hearted friend, eager to do his utmost to realize what hovered before the other's mind as the highest attainable excellence. So the two young men became first dear, and finally almost indispensable to each other. As the architect discovered in the wealthy man of the world many qualities whose existence he had not suspected, the latter was agreeably surprised to find in the artist, associated with his solidity of character, a jovial companion, who--this first made him really beloved by his friend--had no lack of weaknesses.

When the palace was completed to Dion's satisfaction and became one of the most lauded ornaments of the city, the young men's friendship assumed a new form, and it would have been difficult to say which received the

most benefit.

Dion had just been stopped by the zither-player to ask for confirmation of the tidings that the united forces of Antony and Cleopatra had gained a great victory on sea and land.

In the eating-house at Kanopus, where he had breakfasted, everyone was full of the joyful news, and rivers of wine had been drunk to the health of the victors and the destruction of the malicious foe. "In these days," cried Dion, "not only weak-brained fellows, like the zither-player, believe me omniscient, but many sensible men also. And why? Because, forsooth, I am the nephew of Zeno, the Keeper of the Seal, who is on the brink of despair because he himself knows nothing, not even the veriest trifle."

"Yet he stands nearest to the Regent," observed Gorgias, "and must learn, if any one does, how the fleet fares."

"You too!" sighed his friend. "Had I been standing so far above the ground as you, the architect--by the dog, I should not have failed to note the quarter whence the wind blew! It has been southerly a whole fortnight, and keeps back the galleys coming from the north. The Regent knows nothing, absolutely nothing, and my uncle, of course, no more. But if they do learn anything they will be shrewd enough not to enrich me with it."

"True, there are other rumours afloat," said the architect thoughtfully. "If I were in Mardion's place--"

"Thank the Olympians that you are not," laughed his companion. "He has as many cares as a fish has scales. And one, the greatest. That pert young Antyllus was over-ready with his tongue yesterday at Barine's. Poor fellow! He'll have to answer for it to his tutor at home."

"You mean the remark about the Queen's accompanying the fleet?"

"St!" said Dion, putting his finger on his lips, for many men and women were now ascending the temple steps. Several carried flowers and cakes, and the features of most expressed joyful emotion. The news of the victory had reached their ears, and they wanted to offer sacrifices to the goddess whom Cleopatra, "the new Isis," preferred to all others.

The first court-yard of the sanctuary was astir with life. They could hear the ringing of the sistrum bells and the murmuring chant of the priests. The quiet fore-court of the little temple of the goddess, which here, in the Greek quarter of palaces, had as few visitors as the great Temple of Isis in the Rhakotis was overcrowded, had now become the worst possible rendezvous for men who stood so near the rulers of the government. The remark made about the Queen the evening before by Antyllus, Antony's nineteen-year-old son, at the house of Barine, a beautiful young woman who attracted all the prominent men in Alexandria, was the more imprudent because it coincided with the opinion of all the wisest heads. The reckless youth enthusiastically revered his father, but Cleopatra, the object of Antony's love, and--in the Egyptians' eyes--his wife, was not Antyllus's mother. He was the son of Fulvia, his father's first wife, and feeling himself a Roman, would have preferred a thousand times to live on the banks of the Tiber. Besides, it was certain--Antony's staunchest friends made no attempt to conceal the fact--that the Queen's presence with the army exerted a disturbing

influence, and could not fail to curb the daring courage of the brave general. Antyllus, with the reckless frankness inherited from his father, had expressed this view in the presence of all Barine's guests, and in a form which would be only too quickly spread throughout Alexandria, whose inhabitants relished such speeches.

These remarks would be slow in reaching the plain people who were attracted to the temple by the news of the victory, yet many doubtless knew Caesarion, whom the architect was awaiting here. It would be wiser to meet the prince at the foot of the steps. Both men, therefore, went down to the square, though the crowds seeking the temple and thronging the space before Didymus's house made it more and more difficult to pace to and fro.

They were anxious to learn whether the rumour that Didymus's garden was to be taken for the twin statues had already spread abroad, and their first questions revealed that this was the case. It was even stated that the old sage's house was to be torn down, and within a few hours. This was vehemently contradicted; but a tall, scrawny man seemed to have undertaken to defend the ruler's violence.

The friends knew him well. It was the Syrian Philostratus, a clever extempore speaker and agitator of the people, who placed his clever tongue at the disposal of the highest bidder.

"The rascal is probably now in my uncle's employ," said Dion. "The idea of putting the piece of sculpture there originated with him, and it is difficult to turn him from such plans. There is some secret object to be gained here. That is why they have brought Philostratus. I wonder if the conspiracy is connected in any way with Barine, whose husband--unfortunately for her--he was before he cast her off."

"Cast her off!" exclaimed Gorgias wrathfully. "How that sounds! True, he did it, but to persuade him the poor woman sacrificed half the fortune her father had earned by his brush. You know as well as I that life with that scoundrel would be unbearable."

"Very true," replied Dion quietly. "But as all Alexandria melted into admiration after her singing of the 'yalemos' at the Adonis festival, she no longer needed her contemptible consort."

"How can you take pleasure, whenever it is possible, in casting such slurs upon a woman, whom but yesterday you called blameless, charming, peerless?"

"That the light she sheds may not dazzle your eyes. I know how sensitive they are."

"Then spare, instead of irritating them. Besides, your suggestion gives food for thought Barine is the granddaughter of the man whose garden they want, and the advocate would probably be glad to injure both. But I'll spoil his game. It is my business to choose the site for the statues."

"Yours?" replied Dion. "Unless some one who is more powerful opposes you. I would try to win my uncle, but there are others superior to him. The Queen has gone, it is true; but Iras, whose commands do not die away in empty air, told me this morning that she had her own ideas about the erection of the statue."

"Then you bring Philostratus here!" cried the architect.

"I?" asked the other in amazement.

"Ay, you," asserted Gorgias. "Did not you say that Iras, with whom you played when a boy is now becoming troublesome by watching your every step? And then--you visit Barine constantly and she so evidently prefers you, that the fact might easily reach the ears of Iras."

"As Argus has a hundred, jealousy has a thousand eyes," interrupted Dion, "yet I seek nothing from Barine, save two pleasant hours when the day is drawing towards its close. No matter; Iras, I suppose, heard that I was favoured by this much-admired woman. Iras herself has some little regard for me, so she bought Philostratus. She is willing to pay something for the sake of injuring the woman who stands between us, or the old man who has the good or evil fortune of being her rival's grandfather. No, no; that would be too base! And believe me, if Iras desired to ruin Barine, she need not make so long a circuit. Besides, she is not really a wicked woman. Or is she? All I know is that where any advantage is to be gained for the Queen, she does not shrink even from doubtful means, and also that the hours speed swiftly for any one in her society. Yes, Iras, Iras--I like to utter the name. Yet I do not love her, and she--loves only herself, and--a thing few can say--another still more. What is the world, what am I to her, compared with the Queen, the idol of her heart? Since Cleopatra's departure, Iras seems like the forsaken Ariadne, or a young roe which has strayed from its mother. But stop; she may have a hand in the game: the Queen trusted her as if she were her sister, her daughter. No one knows what she and Charmian are to her. They are called waiting-women, but are their sovereign's dearest friends. When, on the departure of the fleet, Cleopatra was compelled to leave Iras here--she was ill with a fever--she gave her the charge of her children, even those whose beards were beginning to grow, the 'King of kings' Caesarion, whose tutor punishes him for every act of disobedience; and the unruly lad Antyllus, who has forced his way the last few evenings into our friend's house."

"Antony, his own father, introduced him to her."

"Very true, and Antyllus took Caesarion there. This vexed Iras, like everything which may disturb the Queen. Barine is troublesome on account of Cleopatra, whom she wishes to spare every annoyance, and perhaps she dislikes her a little for my sake. Now she wants to inflict on the old man, Barine's grandfather, whom she loves, some injury which the spoiled, imprudent woman will scarcely accept quietly, and which will rouse her to commit some folly that can be used against her. Iras will hardly seek her life, but she may have in mind exile or something of that kind. She knows people as well as I know her, my neighbour and playmate, whom many a time I was obliged to lift down from some tree into which the child had climbed as nimbly as a kitten."

"I myself suggested this conjecture, yet I cannot credit her with such unworthy intrigues," cried Gorgias.

"Credit her?" repeated Dion, shrugging his shoulders. "I only transport myself in imagination to the court and to the soul of the woman who helps make rain and sunshine there. You have columns rounded and beams hewed that they may afterwards support the roof to which in due time you wish to direct attention. She and all who have a voice in the management of court affairs look first at the roof and then seek anything to raise and

support it, though it should be corpses, ruined lives, and broken hearts. The point is that the roof shall stand until the architect, the Queen, sees and approves it. As to the rest--But there is the carriage--It doubtless brings--You were--"

He paused, laid his hand on his friend's arm, and whispered hastily: "Iras is undoubtedly at the bottom of this, and it is not Antyllus, but yonder dreaming lad, for whom she is moving. When she spoke of the statues just now, she asked in the same breath where I had seen him on the evening of the day before yesterday, and that was the very time he called on Barine. The plot was made by her, and Iras is doing all the work. The mouse is not caught while the trap is closed, and she is just raising her little hand to open it."

"If only she does not use some man's hand," replied the architect wrathfully, and then turned towards the carriage and the elderly man who had just left it, and was now approaching the two friends.

CHAPTER II.

When Caesarion's companion reached Dion and Gorgias, the former modestly made a movement to retire. But Archibius was acquainted with both, and begged him to remain. There was an air of precision and clearness in the voice and quiet movements of this big, broad-shouldered man, with his robust frame and well-developed limbs. Though only a few years beyond forty, not merely his grey hair but the calm, impressive dignity of his whole manner indicated a more advanced age.

"The young King yonder," he began in a deep, musical voice, motioning towards the equipage, "wished to speak to you here in person, Gorgias, but by my advice he refrained from mingling with the crowd. I have brought him hither in a closed carriage. If the plan suits you, enter it and talk with him while I keep watch here. Strange things seem to be occurring, and yonder--or am I mistaken? Has the monster dragged along there any connection with the twin statues of the Queen and her friend? Was it you who selected that place for them?"

"No," replied the architect. "The order was issued over my head and against my will."

"I thought so," replied the other. "This is the very matter of which Caesarion wishes to speak. If you can prevent the erection of the statues on Didymus's land, so much the better. I will do everything in my power to aid you, but in the Queen's absence that is little."

"Then what can be said of my influence?" asked the architect. "Who, in these days, knows whether the sky will be blue or grey to-morrow? I can guarantee one thing only: I will do my best to prevent this injury of an estimable citizen, interference with the laws of our city, and violation of good taste."

"Say so to the young King, but express yourself cautiously," replied Archibius as the architect turned towards the carriage.

As soon as Dion and the older man were alone, the latter inquired the cause of the increasing uproar, and as, like every well-disposed

Alexandrian, he esteemed Archibius, and knew that he was intimately acquainted with the owner of the imperilled garden, and therefore with his granddaughter Barine, he confided his anxiety to him without reserve.

"Iras is your niece, it is true," he said in his open-hearted manner, "but I know that you understand her character. It suits her now to fling a golden apple into the path of a person whom she dislikes and believes incautious, that she may pick it up and thus afford her an opportunity to bring a charge of theft."

Noting the inquiring glance Archibius fixed upon him as he made this comparison, he changed his tone and continued more earnestly: "Zeus is great, but destiny is superior even to him. Zeus can accomplish much, but when Iras and your sister Charmian, who unfortunately is now with the Queen, wish to effect anything, he, like the Regent Mardion, must give way. The more lovable Cleopatra is, the more surely every one prizes a position near her person above aught else, especially such trifles as law and justice."

"These are harsh words," responded Archibius, and seem the more bitter in proportion to the germ of truth which they contain. Our court shares the fate of every other in the East, and those to whom Rome formerly set the example of holding law and justice sacred--"

"Can now go there," interrupted Dion, "to learn how rudely both are trampled under foot. The sovereigns here and there may smile at one another like the augurs. They are like brothers--"

"But with the difference," Archibius broke in, "that the head of our public affairs is the very embodiment of affability and grace; while in Rome, on the contrary, harsh severity and bloody arrogance, or even repulsive servility, guide the reins."

Here Archibius interrupted himself to point to the shouting throng advancing towards them. "You are right," Dion answered. "Let us defer this discussion till we can pursue it in the house of the charming Barine. But I rarely meet you there, though by blood you are so nearly allied to her father. I am her friend--at my age that might easily mean her lover. But in our case the comparison would not suit. Yet perhaps you will believe me, for you have the right to call yourself the friend of the most bewitching of women."

A sorrowful smile flitted over the grave, set features of the older man, who, raising his hand as if in protest, answered carelessly: "I grew up with Cleopatra, but a private citizen loves a queen only as a divinity. I believe in your friendship for Barine, though I deem it dangerous."

"If you mean that it might injure the lovely woman," replied Dion, raising his head more proudly as if to intimate that he required no warning, even from him, "perhaps you are right. Only I beg you not to misunderstand me. I am not vain enough to suppose that I could win her heart, but unfortunately there are many who cannot forgive the power of attraction which she exerts over me as well as upon all. So many men gladly visit Barine's house that there are an equal number of women who would rejoice to close it. Among them, of course, is Iras. She dislikes my friend; nay, I fear that what you witness yonder is the apple she flung in order, if not to ruin, at least to drive her from the city, ere the Queen--may the gods grant her victory!--ere Cleopatra returns. You know your niece Iras. Like your sister Charmian, she will shrink from

nothing to remove an annoyance from her mistress's pathway, and it will hardly please Cleopatra when she learns that the two youths whose welfare lies nearest her heart--Antyllus and Caesarion--seek Barine's house, no matter how stainless the latter's reputation may be."

"I have just heard of it," replied Archibius, "and I, too, am anxious. Antony's son has inherited much of his father's insatiable love of pleasure. But Caesarion! He has not yet ventured out of the dreamland which surrounds him into actual life. What others scarcely perceive deals him a serious blow. I fear Eros is sharpening arrows for him which will pierce deep into his heart. While talking with me he seemed strangely changed. His dreamy eyes glittered like a drunkard's when he spoke of Barine. I fear, I fear--"

"Impossible!" cried Dion, in surprise, nay, almost terror. "If that is the case, Iras is not wholly wrong, and we must deal with the matter differently. But it is of the first importance to conceal the fact that Caesarion has any interest in the affairs of the old house-owner. To seek to maintain the old man's right to his own property is a matter of course, and I will undertake to do this and try to get yonder orator home. Just see how the braggart is swinging his arms in Iras's service! As for Barine, it will be well to induce her to leave of her own free will a city where it will be made unpleasant for her. Try to persuade her to pursue this course. If I went to her with such a suggestion, I, who yesterday--No, no! Besides, she might hear that Iras and I--She would imagine all sorts of absurdities. You know what jealousy means. To you, whom she esteems, she would surely listen, and she need not go far from the city. If the heart of this enthusiastic boy--who might some day desire to be 'King of kings' not only in name--should really be fired with love for Barine, what serious misfortune might follow! We must secure her from him. She could not go to my country house among the papyrus plantations at Sebennys. It would afford too much license for evil tongues. But you--your villa at Kanopus is too near--but, if I am not mistaken, you have--"

"My estate in the lake region is remote enough, and will be at her disposal," interrupted the other. "The house is always kept ready for my reception. I will do my best to persuade her, for your advice is prudent. She must be withdrawn from the boy's eyes."

"I shall learn the result of your mission tomorrow," cried Dion eagerly--"nay, this evening. If she consents, I will tell Iras, as if by accident, that Barine has gone to Upper Egypt to drink new milk, or something of that kind. Iras is a shrewd woman, and will be glad if she can keep aloof from such trifles during the time which will decide the fate of Cleopatra and of the world."

"My thoughts, too, are always with the army," said Archibius. "How trivial everything else seems compared with the result which will be determined in the next few days! But life is made up of trifles. They are food, drink, maintenance. Should the Queen return triumphant, and find Caesarion in wrong paths--"

"We must close them against him," exclaimed Dion.

"That the boy may not follow Barine?" asked Archibius, shaking his head. "I think we need feel no anxiety on that score. He will doubtless eagerly desire to do so, but with him there is a wide gulf between the wish and its fulfilment. Antyllus is differently constituted. He would be quite

capable of ordering a horse to be saddled, or the sails of a boat to be spread in order to pursue her--beyond the Cataract if necessary. So we must maintain the utmost secrecy concerning the place to which Barine voluntarily exiles herself."

"But she is not yet on her way," replied Dion with a faint sigh. "She is bound to this city by many ties."

"I know it," answered Archibius, confirming his companion's fear. The latter, pointing to the equipage, said in a rapid, earnest tone: "Gorgias is beckoning. But, before we part, let me beseech you to do everything to persuade Barine to leave here. She is in serious danger. Conceal nothing from her, and say that her friends will not leave her too long in solitude."

Archibius, with a significant glance, shook his finger at the young man in playful menace, and then went up to the carriage.

Caesarion's clear-cut but pallid face, whose every feature resembled that of his father, the great Caesar, bent towards them from the opening above the door, as he greeted both with a formal bend of the head and a patronizing glance. His eyes had sparkled with boyish glee when he first caught sight of the friend from whom he had been separated several weeks, but to the stranger he wished to assume the bearing which beseemed a king. He desired to make him feel his superior position, for he was ill-disposed towards him. He had seen him favoured by the woman whom he imagined he loved, and whose possession he had been promised by the secret science of the Egyptians, whose power to unveil the mysteries of the future he firmly believed. Antyllus, Antony's son, had taken him to Barine, and she had received him with the consideration due his rank. Spite of her bright graciousness, boyish timidity had hitherto prevented any word of love to the young beauty whom he saw surrounded by so many distinguished men of mature years. Yet his beaming, expressive eyes must have revealed his feelings to her. Doubtless his glances had not been unobserved, for only a few hours before an Egyptian woman had stopped him at the temple of his father, Caesar, to which, according to the fixed rules governing the routine of his life, he went daily at a certain hour to pray, to offer sacrifices, to anoint the stone of the altar, or to crown the statue of the departed emperor.

Caesarion had instantly recognized her as the female slave whom he had seen in Barine's atrium, and ordered his train to fall back.

Fortunately his tutor, Rhodon, had not fulfilled his duty of accompanying him. So the youth had ventured to follow the slave woman, and in the shadow of the mimosas, in the little grove beside the temple, he found Barine's litter. His heart throbbed violently as, full of anxious expectation, he obeyed her signal to draw nearer. Still, she had granted him nothing save the favour of gratifying one of her wishes. But his heart had swelled almost to bursting when, resting her beautiful white arm on the door of her litter, she had told him that unjust men were striving to rob her grandfather Didymus of his garden, and she expected him, who bore the title of the "King of kings" to do his best to prevent such a crime.

It had been difficult for him to grasp her meaning while she was speaking. There was a roaring sound in his ears as if, instead of being in the silent temple grove, he was standing on a stormy day upon the surf-beaten promontory of Lochias. He had not ventured to raise his eyes

and look into her face. Not until she closed with the question whether she might hope for his assistance did her gaze constrain him to glance up. Ah, what had he not fancied he read in her imploring blue eyes! how unspeakably beautiful she had appeared!

He had stood before her as if bereft of his senses. His sole knowledge was that he had promised, with his hand on his heart, to do everything in his power to prevent what threatened to cause her pain. Then her little hand, with its sparkling rings, was again stretched towards him, and he had resolved to kiss it; but while he glanced around at his train, she had already waved him a farewell, and the litter was borne away.

He stood motionless, like the figure of a man on one of his mother's ancient vases, staring in bewilderment after the flying figure of Happiness, whom he might easily have caught by her floating locks. How he raged over the miserable indecision which had defrauded him of so much joy! Yet nothing was really lost. If he succeeded in fulfilling her wishes, she could not fail to be grateful; and then--

He pondered over the person to whom he should apply--Mardion, the Regent, or the Keeper of the Seal? No, they had planned the erection of the group of sculpture in the philosopher's garden. To Iras, his mother's confidante? Nay, last of all to her. The cunning woman would have perceived his purpose and betrayed it to the Regent. Ah, if Charmian, his mother's other attendant, had been present! but she was with the fleet, which perhaps was even now engaged in battle with the enemy.

At this recollection his eyes again sought the ground--he had not been permitted to take the place in the army to which his birth entitled him, while his mother and Charmian--But he did not pursue this painful current of thought; for a serious reproach had forced itself upon him and sent the blood to his cheeks. He wished to be considered a man, and yet, in these fateful days, which would determine the destiny of his mother, his native city, Egypt, and that Rome which he, the only son of Caesar, was taught to consider his heritage, he was visiting a beautiful woman, thinking of her, and of her alone. His days and half the nights were passed in forming plans for securing her love, forgetful of what should have occupied his whole heart.

Only yesterday Iras had sharply admonished him that, in times like these, it was the duty of every friend of Cleopatra, and every foe of her foes, to be with the army at least in mind.

He had remembered this, but, instead of heeding the warning, the thought of her had merely recalled her uncle, Archibius, who possessed great influence, not merely on account of his wealth but because every one also knew his high standing in the regard of the Queen. Besides, the clever, kindly man had always been friendly to him from childhood, and like a revelation came the idea of applying to him, and to the architect Gorgias, who had a voice in the matter, and by whom he had been strongly attracted during the period while he was rebuilding the wing assigned to the prince in the palace at Lochias.

So one of the attendants was instantly despatched with the little tablet which invited Gorgias to the interview at the Temple of Isis.

Then, in the afternoon, Caesarion went secretly in a boat to the little palace of Archibius, situated on the seashore at Kanopus, and now as the latter, with his friend, stood beside the carriage door, he explained to

them that he was going with the architect to old Didymus to assure him of his assistance.

This was unadvisable in every respect, but it required all the weight of the older man's reasons to induce the prince to yield. The consequences which might ensue, should the populace discover that he was taking sides against the Regent, would be incalculable. But submission and withdrawal were especially difficult to the young "King of kings." He longed to pose as a man in Dion's presence, and as this could not be, he strove to maintain the semblance of independence by yielding his resolve only on the plea of not desiring to injure the aged scholar and his granddaughter. Finally, he again entreated the architect to secure Didymus in the possession of his property. When at last he drove away with Archibius, twilight was already gathering, torches were lighted in front of the temple and the little mausoleum adjoining the cella, and pitch-pans were blazing in the square.

CHAPTER III.

"The lad is in an evil plight," said Gorgias, shaking his head thoughtfully as the equipage rolled over the stone pavement of the Street of the King.

"And over yonder, added Dion," "the prospect is equally unpleasing. Philostratus is setting the people crazy. But the hired mischief-maker will soon wish he had been less ready to seize Iras's gold coins."

"And to think," cried the architect, "that Barine was this scoundrel's wife! How could it--"

"She was but a child when they married her," interrupted Dion. "Who consults a girl of fifteen in the choice of a husband? And Philostratus--he was my classmate at Rhodus--at that time had the fairest prospects. His brother Alexas, Antony's favourite, could easily advance him. Barine's father was dead, her mother was accustomed to follow Didymus's counsel, and the clever fellow had managed to strew dust in the old man's eyes. Long and lank as he is, he is not bad-looking even now.

"When he appeared as an orator he pleased his hearers. This turned his head, and a spendthrift's blood runs in his veins. To bring his fair young bride to a stately mansion, he undertook the bad cause of the thievish tax-collector Pyrrhus, and cleared him."

"He bought a dozen false witnesses."

"There were sixteen. Afterwards they became as numerous as the open mouths you see shouting yonder. It is time to silence them. Go to the old man's house and soothe him--Barine also, if she is there. If you find messengers from the Regent, raise objections to the unprecedented decree. You know the portions of the law which can be turned to Didymus's advantage."

"Since the reign of Euergetes II, registered landed property has been unassailable, and his was recorded."

"So much the better. Tell the officials also, confidentially, that you

know of objections just discovered which may perhaps change the Regent's views."

"And, above all, I shall insist upon my right to choose the place for the twin statues. The Queen herself directed the others to heed my opinion."

"That will cast the heaviest weight into the scale. We shall meet later. You will prefer to keep away from Barine to-night. If you see her, tell her that Archibius said he would visit her later--for an object I will explain afterwards. I shall probably go to Iras to bring her to reason. It will be better not to mention Caesarion's wish."

"Certainly--and you will give nothing to yonder brawler."

"On the contrary. I feel very generous. If Peitho will aid me, the insatiate fellow will get more than may be agreeable to him."

Then grasping the architect's hand, Dion forced his way through the throng surrounding the high platform on wheels, upon which the closely covered piece of sculpture had been rolled up. The gate of the scholar's house stood open, for an officer in the Regent's service had really entered a short time before, but the Scythian guards sent by the exegetus Demetrius, one of Barine's friends, were keeping back the throng of curious spectators.

Their commander knew Gorgias, and he was soon standing in the impluvium of the scholar's house, an oblong, rootless space, with a fountain in the centre, whose spray moistened the circular bed of flowers around it. The old slave had just lighted some three-branched lamps which burned on tall stands. The officers sent by the Regent to inform Didymus that his garden would be converted into a public square had just arrived.

When Gorgias entered, these magistrates, their clerks, and the witnesses accompanying them--a group of twenty men, at whose head was Apollonius, a distinguished officer of the royal treasury--were in the house. The slave who admitted the architect informed him of it.

In the atrium a young girl, doubtless a member of the household, stopped him. He was not mistaken in supposing that she was Helena, Didymus's younger granddaughter, of whom Barine had spoken. True, she resembled her sister neither in face nor figure, for while the young matron's hair was fair and waving, the young girl's thick black tresses were wound around her head in a smooth braid. Very unlike Barine's voice, too, were the deep, earnest tones trembling with emotion, in which she confronted him with the brief question, concealing a faint reproach, "Another demand?"

After first ascertaining that he was really speaking to Helena, his friend's sister, he hastily told her his name, adding that, on the contrary, he had come to protect her grandfather from a serious misfortune.

When his glance first rested upon her in the dimly lighted room, the impression she made upon him was by no means favourable. The pure brow, which seemed to him too high for a woman's face, wore an indignant frown; and though her mouth was beautiful in form, its outlines were often marred by a passionate tremor that lent the exquisitely chiselled features a harsh, nay, bitter expression. But she had scarcely heard the motive of his presence ere, pressing her hand upon her bosom with a sigh of relief, she eagerly exclaimed:

"Oh, do what you can to avert this terrible deed! No one knows how the old man loves this house. And my grandmother! They will die if it is taken from them."

Her large eyes rested upon him with a warm, imploring light; and the stern, almost repellent voice thrilled with love for her relatives. He must lend his aid here, and how gladly he would do so! He assured her of this; and Helena, who had heard him mentioned as a man of ability, saw in him a helper in need, and begged him, with touching fervour, to show her grandfather, when he came before the officers, that all was not lost.

The astonished architect asked if Didymus did not know what was impending, and Helena hastily replied:

"He is working in the summer-house by the sea. Apollonius is a kind-hearted man, and will wait until I have prepared my grandfather. I must go to him. He has already sent Philotas--his pupil, who finds and unrolls his books--a dozen times to inquire the cause of the tumult outside; but I replied that the crowds were flocking to the harbour on account of the Queen. There is often a mob shouting madly; but nothing disturbs my grandfather when he is absorbed in his work; and his pupil--a young student from Amphissa--loves him and does what I bid him. My grandmother, too, knows nothing yet. She is deaf, and the female slaves dare not tell her. After her recent attack of giddiness, the doctor said that any sudden shock might injure her. If only I can find the right words, that my grandfather may not be too sorely hurt!"

"Shall I accompany you?" asked Gorgias kindly.

"No," she answered hurriedly. "He needs time ere he will trust strangers. Only, if Apollonius discloses the terrible truth, and his grief threatens to overpower him, comfort him, and show him that we still have friends who are ready to protect us from such disaster."

She waved her hand in token of gratitude, and hurried through the little side gate into the garden. Gorgias looked after her with sparkling eyes, and drew a long breath. How good this girl must be, how wisely she cared for her relatives! How energetically the young creature behaved! He had seen his new acquaintance only in the dim light, but she must be beautiful. Her eyes, lips, and hair certainly were. How his heart throbbed as he asked himself the question whether this young girl, who was endowed with every gift which constituted the true worth of womanhood, was not preferable to her more attractive sister Barine!--when the thought darted through his mind that he had cause to be grateful to the beard which covered his chin and cheeks, for he felt that he, a sedate, mature man, must have blushed. And he knew why. Only half an hour before he had felt and admitted to Dion that he considered Barine the most desirable of women, and now another's image cast a deep shadow over hers and filled his heart with new, perhaps stronger emotions.

He had had similar experiences only too often, and his friends, Dion at their head, had perceived his weakness and spoiled many an hour for him by their biting jests. The series of tall and short, fair and dark beauties who had fired his fancy was indeed of considerable length, and every one on whom he had bestowed his quickly kindled affections had seemed to him the one woman he must make his own, if he would be a happy man. But ere he had reached the point of offering his hand, the question had arisen in his mind whether he might not love another still more

ardently. So he had begun to persuade himself that his heart yearned for no individual, but the whole sex--at least the portion which was young and could feel love--and therefore he would scarcely be wise to bind himself to any one. True, he knew that he was capable of fidelity, for he clung to his friends with changeless loyalty, and was ready to make any sacrifice in their behalf. With women, however, he dealt differently. Was Helena's image, which now floated before him so bewitchingly, destined to fade as swiftly? The contrary would have been remarkable. Yet he firmly believed that this time Eros meant honestly by him. The laughing loves who twined their rose garlands around him and Helena's predecessors had nothing to do with this grave maiden.

These reflections darted through his brain with the speed of lightning, and still stirred his heart when he was ushered into the impluvium, where the magistrates were impatiently awaiting the owner of the house. With the lucidity peculiar to him, he explained his reasons for hoping that their errand would be vain, and Apollonius replied that no one would rejoice more than he himself if the Regent should authorize him, on the morrow, to countermand his mission. He would gladly wait there longer to afford the old man's granddaughter an opportunity to soften the tidings of the impending misfortune.

The kind-hearted man's patience, however, was not tested too long; for when Helena entered the summer-house Didymus had already been informed of the disaster which threatened him and his family. The philosopher Euphranor, an elderly member of the Museum, had reached him through the garden gate, and, spite of Philotas's warning sign, told him what was occurring. But Didymus knew the old philosopher, who, a recluse from the world like himself, was devoting the remainder of his life and strength to the pursuit of science. So he only shook his head incredulously, pushed back the thin locks of grey hair which hung down on his cheeks over the barest part of his skull, and exclaimed reproachfully, though as if the matter under discussion was of the most trivial importance: "What have you been hearing? We'll see about it!"

He had risen as he spoke, and too abruptly surprised by the news to remember the sandals on the mat and the upper robe which lay on a chest of drawers at the end of the room, he was in the act of quitting it, when his friend, who had silently watched his movements, stopped him, and Helena entered.

The grey-haired sage turned to her, and, vexed by his friend's doubts, begged her to convince her grandfather that even matters which do not please us may nevertheless be of some importance. She did so as considerately as possible, thinking meanwhile of the architect and his hopes.

Didymus, with his eyes bent on the ground, shook his grey head again and again. Then, suddenly raising it, he rushed to the door, and without heeding the upper garment which Helena still held in her hand, tore it open, shouting, "But things must and shall be changed!"

Euphranor and his granddaughter followed. Though his head was bowed, he crossed the little garden with a swift, firm tread, and, without noticing the questions and warnings of his companions, walked at once to the impluvium. The bright light dazzled his weakened eyes, and his habit of gazing into vacancy or on the ground compelled him to glance from side to side for some time, ere he could accustom himself to it. Apollonius approached, greeted him respectfully, and assured him that he deeply

regretted having interrupted him in the work for which the whole world was waiting, but he had come on important business.

"I know, I know," the old scholar answered with a smile of superiority. "What is all this ado about?"

As he spoke he looked around the group of spectators, among whom he knew no one except Apollonius, who had charge of the museum accounts, and the architect, for whom he had composed the inscription on the Odeum, which he had recently built. But when his eyes met only unfamiliar faces, the confidence which hitherto had sustained him began to waver, though still convinced that a demand such as the philosopher suggested could not possibly be made upon him, he continued: "It is stated that there is a plan for turning my garden into a public square. And for what purpose? To erect a piece of sculpture. But there can be nothing serious in the rumour, for my property is recorded in the land register, and the law--"

"Pardon me," Apollonius broke in, "if I interrupt you. We know the ordinance to which you refer, but this case is an exceptional one. The Regent desires to take nothing from you. On the contrary, he offers, in the name of the Queen, any compensation you yourself may fix for the piece of land which is to be honoured by the statues of the highest personages in the country--Cleopatra and Antony, hand in hand. The piece of sculpture has already been brought here. A work by the admirable artist Lysander, who passed too early to the nether world, certainly will not disfigure your house. The little summer-house by the sea must be removed to-morrow, it is true; you know that our gracious Queen may return any day-victorious if the immortals are just. This piece of sculpture, which is created in her honour, to afford her pleasure, must greet her on her arrival, so the Regent send me to-day to communicate his wish, which, as he represents the Queen--"

"Yet," interrupted the architect, who had again warmly assured the old man's granddaughter of his aid, "yet your friends will endeavour to persuade the Regent to find another place for the statues."

"They are at liberty to do so," said the officer. "What will happen later the future will show. My office merely requires me to induce the worthy owner of this house and garden to submit to-day to the Queen's command, which the Regent and my own heart bid me clothe in the form of a request."

During this conversation the old man had at first listened silently to the magistrate's words, gazing intently into his face. So it was true. The demand to yield up his garden, and even the little house, for fifty years the scene of his study and creative work, for the sake of a statue, would be made. Since this had become a certainty, he had stood with his eyes fixed upon the ground. Grief had paralyzed his tongue, and Helena, who felt this, for the aged head seemed as if it were bending under a heavy burden, had drawn close to his side.

The shouts and howls of the throng outside echoed through the open roof of the impluvium, but the old man did not seem to hear them, and did not even notice his granddaughter. Yet, no sooner did he feel her touch than he hurriedly shrank away, flung back his drooping head, and gazed around the circle of intruders.

The dull, questioning eyes of the old commentator and writer of many books now blazed with the hot fire of youthful passion and, like a

wrestler who seeks the right grip, he measured Apollonius and his companions with wrathful glances. The fragile recluse seemed transformed into a warrior ready for battle. His lips and the nostrils of his delicate nose quivered, and when Apollonius began to say that it would be wise to remove the contents of the summer-house that day, as it would be torn down early the next morning, Didymus raised his arms, exclaiming:

"That will not be done. Not a single roll shall be removed! They will find me at work as usual early to-morrow morning, and if it is still your wish to rob me of my property you must use violence to attain your purpose."

"Calm yourself," replied Apollonius. "Every one beneath the moon must submit to a higher power; the gods bow to destiny, we mortals to the sovereign. You are a sage; I, merely mindful of the behests of duty, administer my office. But I know life, and if I may offer my counsel, you will accept what cannot be averted, and I will wager ten to one that you will have the best of it; that the Queen will place in your hands means--"

"Sufficient to build a palace on the site of the little house of which I was robbed," Didymus interrupted bitterly. Then rage burst forth afresh "What do I care for your money? I want my rights, my good, guaranteed rights. I insist upon them, and whoever assails the ground which my grandfather and father bequeathed to me--"

He hesitated, for the throng outside had burst into a loud shout of joy; and when it died away, and the old man began once more defiantly to claim his rights, he was interrupted by a woman's clear tones, addressing him with the Greek greeting, "Rejoice!"--a voice so gay and musical that it seemed to dispel the depression which rested like a grey fog on the whole company.

While Didymus was listening to the excited populace, and the new-comer was gazing at the old man whose rigid obstinacy could scarcely be conquered by kindness, the younger men were looking at the beautiful woman who joined them. Her haste had flushed her cheeks, and from beneath the turquoise-blue kerchief that covered her fair locks a bewitching face smiled at her sister, the architect, and her grandfather.

Apollonius and many of his companions felt as if happiness in person had entered this imperilled house, and many an eye brightened when the infuriated old man exclaimed in an altered tone, "You here, Barine?" and she, without heeding the presence of the others, kissed his cheek with tender affection.

Helena, Gorgias, and the old philosopher Euphranor, had approached her, and when the latter asked with loving reproach, "Why, Barine, how did you get through the howling mob?" she answered gaily: "That a learned member of the Museum may receive me with the query whether I am here, though from childhood a kind or--what do you think, grandfather?--a malign fate has preserved me from being overlooked, and some one else reprovingly asks how I passed through the shouting mob, as if it were a crime to wade into the water to hold out a helping hand to those we love best when it is up to their chins! But, oh! dear, this howling is too hideous!"

While speaking, she pressed her little hands on the part of the kerchief which concealed her ears, and said no more until the noise subsided, although she declared that she was in a hurry, and had only come to learn

how matters were. Meanwhile it seemed as if she was so full of quick, pulsing life, that it was impossible to leave even a moment unused, if it were merely to bestow or answer a friendly glance.

The architect and her sister were obliged to return hurried answers to hasty questions; and as soon as she ascertained what had brought the strangers there she thanked Apollonius, and said that old friends would do their best to spare her grandfather such a sorrow.

In reply to repeated inquiries from the two old men in regard to her arrival there, she answered: "Nobody will believe it, because in this hurry I could not keep my mouth shut; but I acted like a mute fish and reached the water." Then, drawing her grandfather aside, she whispered to him that, when she left her boat at the harbour, Archibius had seen her from his carriage, and instantly stopped it to inform her of his intended visit that evening. He was coming to discuss an important matter. Therefore she must receive the worthy man, whom she sincerely liked, so she could not stay. Then turning to the others still with her kerchief on her head ready for departure--she asked what the people meant by their outcries. The architect replied that Philostratus had endeavoured to make the crowd believe that the only appropriate site for the statues of which she had heard was her grandfather's garden, and he thought he knew in whose behalf the fellow was acting.

"Certainly not in the Regent's," said Apollonius, in a tone of sincere conviction; but Barine, over whose sunny brow a shadow had flitted when Gorgias uttered the orator's name, assented with a slight bend of the head, and then whispered hurriedly, yet earnestly, that she would answer for the old man's allowing himself to be persuaded, if he had only time to collect his thoughts.

The next morning, when the market was crowded, the officer might commence his negotiations afresh, if the Regent insisted on his plan. Meanwhile she would do her best to persuade her grandfather to yield, though he was not exactly one of the class who are easily guided. Apollonius might remind the Regent that it would be advisable at this time to avoid a public scandal, to remember Didymus's age, and the validity of his claim.

While Apollonius was talking with his companions, Barine beckoned to the architect, and hastily took leave of the others, protesting that she was in no danger, since she would slip away again like a fish, only this time she would use her tongue, and hoped by its means to win to the support of Didymus's just cause a man who would already have ended all the trouble had the Queen only been in Alexandria.

Until now the eyes and ears of the whole company had been fixed upon Barine. No one had desired anything better than to gaze at and listen to her.

Not until she had quitted the room with Gorgias did the officials discuss the matter together, and soon after Apollonius went away with his companions, to hold another conference with the Regent about this unpleasant business. This time the architect had followed the young beauty with very mingled feelings. Only an hour before he would have rejoiced to be permitted to accompany and protect Barine; now he would have gladly remained with her sister, who had returned his farewell greeting so gratefully and yet with such maidenly modesty. But even the most vacillating man cannot change one fancy for another as he would replace a black piece on the draughtboard with a white one, and he still

found it delightful to be so near Barine. Only the thought that Helena might believe that he stood on very intimate terms with her sister had darted with a disquieting influence through his brain when the latter invited him to accompany her.

In the garden Barine begged him, before they went to the landing-place where the boat was moored, to help her ascend the narrow flight of steps leading to the flat roof of the gatekeeper's little house.

Here they could watch unseen the tumult in the square below, for it was surrounded by dense laurel bushes. Bright flames were blazing in the pitch-pans before the two temples at the side of the Corner of the Muses, and their light was increased by the torches held in the hands of Scythians. Yet no individuals could be distinguished in the throng. The marble walls of the temples shimmered, the statues at Didymus's gate, and the hermae along the street of the King which passed the threatened house and connected the north of the Corner of the Muses with the sea-shore, loomed from the darkness in the brilliancy of the reflected light, but the smoke of the torches darkened the sky and dimmed the starlight.

The only persons distinctly visible were Dion, who had stationed himself on the lofty framework of the platform on which the muffled statues had been drawn hither, and the attorney Philostratus, who stood on the pedestal of one of the dolphins which surrounded the fountain between the Temple of Isis and the street. The space, a dozen paces wide, which divided them, permitted the antagonists to understand each other, and the attention of the whole throng was fixed upon the wranglers.

These verbal battles were one of the greatest pleasures of the Alexandrians, and they greeted every clever turn of speech with shouts of applause, every word which displeased them with groans, hisses, and cat-calls.

Barine could see and hear what was passing below. She had pushed aside the foliage of the laurel bushes which concealed her, and, with her hand raised to her ear, stood listening to the two disputants. When the scoundrel whom she had called husband, and for whom her contempt had become too deep for hate, sneeringly assailed her family as having been fed from generation to generation from the corn-bin of the Museum, she bit her lips. But they soon curled, as if what she heard aroused her disgust, for the speaker now turned to Dion and accused him of preventing the kindly disposed Regent from increasing the renown of the great Queen and affording her noble heart a pleasure.

"My tongue," he cried, "is the tool which supports me. Why am I using it here till it is weary and almost paralyzed? In honour of Cleopatra, our illustrious Queen, and her generous friend, to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude. Let all who love her and the divine Antony, the new Herakles and Dionysus--both will soon make their entry among us crowned with the laurels of victory--join the Regent and every well-disposed person in seizing yonder bit of land so meanly withheld by base avarice and a sentiment--a sentiment, do you hear?--which I do not name more plainly, simply because wickedness is repulsive to me, and I do not stand here as an accuser. Whoever upholds the word-monger who spouts forth books as the dolphin at my side does water, may do so. I shall not envy him. But first look at Didymus's ally and panegyrist. There he stands opposite to me. It would have been better for him had the dolphin at his feet taught him silence. Then he might have remained in the obscurity which befits him.

"But whether willing or not, I must drag him forth, and I will show you Dion, fellow-citizens, though I would far rather have you see things which arouse less ire. The dim light prevents your distinguishing the colour of his robe, but I know it, for I saw it in the glare of day. It is hyacinthine purple. You know what that costs. It would support the wives and children of many among you for ten long years. 'How heavy must be the purse which can expose such a treasure to sun and rain!' is the thought of every one who sees him strutting about as proudly as a peacock. And his purse is loaded with many talents. Only it is a pity that, day after day, most of you must give your children a little less bread and deprive yourselves of many a draught of wine to deck him out so bravely. His father, Eumenes, was a tax-collector, and what the leech extorted from you and your children, the son now uses to drive, clad in hyacinthine purple, a four-horse chariot, which splashes the mire from the street into your faces as it rolls onward. By the dog! the gentleman does not weigh so very much, yet he needs four horses to drag him. And, fellow-citizens, do you know why? I'll tell you. He's afraid of sticking fast everywhere, even in his speech."

Here Philostratus lowered his voice, for the phrase "sticking fast" had drawn a laugh from some of his hearers; but Dion, whose father had really amassed, in the high position of a receiver of taxes, the handsome fortune which his son possessed, did not delay his reply.

"Yes, yes," he retorted scornfully, "yonder Syrian babbler hit the mark this time. He stands before me, and who does not easily stick fast when marsh and mire are so near? As for the hyacinthine purple cloak, I wear it because I like it. His crocus-yellow one is less to my taste, though he certainly looks fine enough in it in the sunlight. It shines like a buttercup in the grass. You know the plant. When it fades--and I ask whether you think Philostratus looks like a bud--when it fades, it leaves a hollow spiral ball which a child's breath could blow away. Suppose in future we should call the round buttercup seed-vessels 'Philostratus heads'? You like the suggestion? I am glad, fellow-citizens, and I thank you. It proves your good taste. Then we will stick to the comparison. Every head contains a tongue, and Philostratus says that his is the tool which supports him."

"Hear the money-bag, the despiser of the people!" interrupted Philostratus furiously. "The honest toil by which a citizen earns a livelihood is a disgrace in his eyes."

"Honest toil, my good friend," replied Dion, "is scarcely in question here. I spoke only of your tongue.--You understand me, fellow-citizens. Or, if any of you are not yet acquainted with this worthy man, I will show him to you, for I know him well. He is my foe, yet I can sincerely recommend him to many of you. If any one has a very bad, shamefully corrupt cause to bring before the courts, I most earnestly counsel him to apply to the buttercup man perched on yonder fountain. He will thank me for it. Believe me, Didymus's cause is just, precisely because this advocate so eagerly assails it. I told you just now the matter under discussion. Which of you who owns a garden can say in future, 'It is mine,' if, during the absence of the Queen, it is allowable to take it away to be used for any other purpose? But this is what threatens Didymus. If this is to be the custom here, let every one beware of sowing a radish or planting a bush or a tree, for should the wife of some great noble desire to dry her linen there, he may be deprived of it ere the former can ripen or the latter give shade."

Loud applause followed this sentence, but Philostratus shouted in a voice that echoed far and wide: "Hear me, fellow-citizens; do not allow yourselves to be deceived! No one is to be robbed here. The project is to purchase, at a high price, the spot which the city needs for her adornment, and to honour and please the Queen. Are the Regent and the citizens to lose this opportunity of expressing the gratitude of years, and the rejoicing over the greatest of victories, of which we shall soon hear, because an evil-disposed person--the word must be uttered--a foe to his country, opposes it?"

"Now the mire is coming too near me," Dion angrily responded, "and I might really stick fast, as I was warned; for I do not envy the ready presence of mind of any person whose tongue would not falter when the basest slander scattered its venom over him. You all know, fellow-citizens, through how many generations the Didymus family has lived to the honour of this city, doing praiseworthy work in yonder house. You know that the good old man who dwells there was one of the teachers of the royal children."

"And yet," cried Philostratus, "only the day before yesterday he walked arm in arm in the Paneum garden with Arius, the tutor of Octavianus, our own and our Queen's most hated foe. In my presence, and before I know not how many others, Didymus distinguished this Arius as his most beloved pupil."

"To give you that title," retorted Dion, "would certainly fill any teacher with shame and anger, no matter how far you had surpassed him in wisdom and knowledge. Nay, had you been committed to the care of the herring dealers, instead of the rhetoricians, every honest man among them would disown you, for they sell only good wares for good money, while you give the poorest in exchange for glittering gold. This time you trample under foot the fair name of an honourable man. But I will not suffer it; and you hear, fellow-citizens, I now challenge this Syrian to prove that Didymus ever betrayed his native land, or I will brand him in your presence a base slanderer, an infamous, venal destroyer of character!"

"An insult from such lips is easily borne," replied Philostratus in a tone of scornful superiority; but there was a pause ere he again turned to the listening throng, and with all the warmth he could throw into his voice continued: "What do I desire, then, fellow-citizens? What is the sole object of my words? I stand here with clean hands, impelled solely by the impulse of my heart, to plead for the Queen. In order to secure the only suitable site for the statues to be erected to Cleopatra's honour and fame, I enter into judgment with her foes, expose myself to the insult with which boastful insolence is permitted to vent its wrath upon me. But I am not dismayed, though, in pursuing this course, I am acting against the law of Nature; for the infamous man against whom I raise my voice was my teacher, too, and ere he turned from the path of right and virtue--under influences which I will not mention here--he numbered me also, in the presence of many witnesses, among his best pupils. I was certainly one of the most grateful--I chose his granddaughter--the truth must be spoken--for my wife. The possession--"

"Possession!" interrupted Dion in a loud, excited tone. "The corpse cast ashore by the waves might as well boast possession of the sea!"

The dim torchlight was sufficient to reveal Philostratus's pallor to the bystanders. For a moment the orator seemed to lose his self-control, but he quickly recovered himself, and shouted: "Fellow-citizens, dear

friends! I was about to make you witnesses of the misery which a woman, whose wickedness is even greater than her beauty, brought upon an inexperienced--"

But he went no further; for his hearers--many of whom knew the brilliant, generous Dion, and Barine, the fair singer at the last Adonis festival--gave the orator tokens of their indignation, which were all the more pitiless because of the pleasure they felt in seeing an expert vanquished by an untrained foe. The wordy war would not have ended so quickly, however, had not restlessness and alarm taken possession of the crowd. The shout, "Back! disperse!" ran through the multitude, and directly after the trampling of hoofs and the commands of the leader of a troop of Libyan cavalry were heard. The matter at stake was not sufficiently important to induce the populace to offer an armed force resistance which might have entailed serious danger. Besides, the blustering war of tongues had reached a merry close, and loud laughter blended with the shouts of fear and warning; for the surging throng had swept with unexpected speed towards the fountain and plunged Philostratus into the basin. Whether this was due to the wrath of some enemy, or to mere accident, could not be learned; the vain efforts of the luckless man to crawl out of the water up the smooth marble were so comical, and his gestures, after helping hands had dragged him dripping upon the pavement of the square, were so irresistibly funny, that more laughing than angry voices were heard, especially when some one cried, "His hands were soiled by blackening Didymus, so the washing will do him good." "Some wise physicians flung him into the water," retorted another; "he needed the cold application after the blows Dion dealt him."

The Regent, who had sent the troop of horsemen to drive the crowd away from Didymus's house, might well be pleased that the violent measure encountered so little resistance.

The throng quickly scattered, and was speedily attracted by something new at the Theatre of Dionysus--the zither-player Anaxenor had just announced from its steps that Cleopatra and Antony had won the most brilliant victory, and had sung to the accompaniment of his lute a hymn which had deeply stirred all hearts. He had composed it long before, and seized the first opportunity--the report had reached his ears while breakfasting in Kanopus--to try its effect.

As soon as the square began to empty, Barine left her post of observation. It was long since her heart had throbbed so violently. Not one of the many suitors for her favour had been so dear to her as Dion; but she now felt that she loved him.

What he had just done for her and her grandfather was worthy of the deepest gratitude; it proved that he did not come to her house, like most of her guests, merely to while away the evening hours.

It had been no small matter for the young aristocrat, in the presence of the whole multitude, to enter into a debate with the infamous Philostratus, and how well he had succeeded in silencing the dreaded orator! Besides, Dion had even taken her part against his own powerful uncle, and perhaps by his deed drawn upon himself the hostility of his enemy's brother, Alexas, Antony's powerful favourite. Barine might assure herself that he, who was the peer of any Macedonian noble in the city, would have done this for no one else.

She felt as if the act had ransomed her.

When, after an unhappy marriage and many desolate days, she had regained her former bright cheerfulness and saw her house become the centre of the intellectual life of the city, she had striven until now to extend the same welcome to all her guests. She had perceived that she ought not to give any one the power over her which is possessed by the man who knows that he is beloved, and even to Dion she had granted little more than to the others. But now she saw plainly that she would resign the pleasure of being a universally admired woman, whose modest home attracted the most distinguished men in the city, for the far greater happiness which would be hers as Dion's beloved wife.

With him, cherished by his love, she believed that she could find far greater joy in solitude than in the gay course of her present life.

She knew now what she must do if Dion sought her, and the architect, for the first time, found her a silent companion. He had willingly accompanied her back to her grandfather's house, where he had again met her sister Helena, while she had quitted it disappointed, because her brave defender had not returned there.

After the interruption of the debate Dion had been in a very cheerful mood. The pleasant sensation of having championed a good cause, and the delightful consciousness of success were not new to him, but he had rarely felt so uplifted as now. He most ardently longed for his next meeting with Barine, and imagined how he would describe what had happened and claim her gratitude for his friendly service. The scene had risen clearly before his mind, but scarcely had the radiant vision of the future faded when the unusually bright expression of his manly face was clouded by a grave and troubled one.

The darkness of the night, illumined only by the flare of the pitch-pans, had surrounded him, yet it had seemed as if he were standing with Barine in the full light of noon in the blossoming garden of his own palace, and, after asking a reward for his sturdy championship, she had clung to him with deep emotion, and he had passionately kissed her tearful face.

The face had quickly vanished, yet it had been as distinct as the most vivid picture in a dream. Was Barine more to him than he supposed? Had he not been drawn to her, during the past few months, by the mere charm of her pliant intellect and her bright beauty? Had a new, strong passion awakened within him? Was he in danger of seeing the will which urged him to preserve his freedom conquered? Had he cause to fear that some day, constrained by a mysterious, invincible power, in defiance of the opposition of calm reason, he might perhaps bind himself for life to this Barine, the woman who had once been the wife of a Philostratus, and who bestowed her smiles on all who found admittance to her house seeking a feast for the eye, a banquet for the ear, a pleasant entertainment?

Though her honor was as stainless as the breast of a swan--and he had no reason to doubt it--she would still be classed with Aspasia and other women whose guests sought more than songs and agreeable conversations. The gifts with which the gods had so lavishly endowed her had already been shared with too many to permit him, the last scion of a noble Macedonian house, to think of leading her, as mistress, to the palace whose erection he had so carefully and successfully planned with Gorgias.

Surely it lacked nothing save the gracious rule of a mistress.

But if she should consent to become his without the blessing of Hymen?
No.

He could not thus dishonor the granddaughter of Didymus, the man who had been his father's revered teacher, a woman whom he had always rejoiced that, spite of the gay freedom with which she received so many admirers, he could still esteem. He would not do so, though his friends would have greeted such scruples with a smile of superiority. Who revered the sacredness of marriage in a city whose queen was openly living for the second time with the husband of another? Dion himself had formed many a brief connection, but for that very reason he could not place a woman like Barine on the same footing with those whose love he had perhaps owed solely to his wealth. He had never lacked courage and resolution, but he felt that this time he would have to resist a power with which he had never coped.

That accursed face! Again and again it rose before his mental vision, smiling and beckoning so sweetly that the day must come when the yearning to realize the dream would conquer all opposition. If he remained near her he would inevitably do what he might afterwards regret, and therefore he would fain have offered a sacrifice to Peitho to induce her to enhance Archibius's powers of persuasion and induce Barine to leave Alexandria. It would be hard for him to part from her, yet much would be gained if she went into the country. Between the present and the distant period of a second meeting lay respite from peril, and perhaps the possibility of victory. Dion did not recognize himself. He seemed as unstable as a swaying reed, because he had conquered his wish to re-enter old Didymus's house and encourage him, and passed on to his own home. But he would probably have found Barine still with her grandfather, and he would not meet her, though every fibre of his being longed for her face, her voice, and a word of gratitude from her beloved lips. Instead of joy, he was filled with the sense of dissatisfaction which overpowers a man standing at a crossing in the roads, who sees before him three goals, yet can be fully content with neither.

The Street of the King, along which he suffered himself to be carried by the excited throng, ran between the sea and the Theatre of Dionysus. The thought darted through his mind that his friend the architect desired to erect the luckless statues of the royal lovers in front of this stately building. He would divert his thoughts by examining the site which Gorgias had chosen.

The zither-player finished his hymn just as Dion approached the theatre, and the crowd began to disperse. Every one was full of the joyful tidings of victory, and one shouted to another what Anaxenor, the favourite of the great Antony, who must surely know, had just recited in thrilling verse. Many a joyous Io and loud Evox to Cleopatra, the new Isis, and Antony, the new Dionysus, resounded through the air, while bearded and smooth, delicate Greek and thick Egyptian lips joined in the shout, "To the Sebasteum!" This was the royal palace, which faced the government building containing the Regent's residence. The populace desired to have the delightful news confirmed, and to express, by a public demonstration, the grateful joy which filled every heart.

Dion, too, was eager to obtain certainty, and, though usually averse to mingling with the populace during such noisy outbursts of feeling, he was preparing to follow the crowd thronging towards the Sebasteum, when the shouts of runners clearing a passage for a closed litter fell upon his ear.

It was occupied by Iras, the Queen's trusted attendant. If any one could give accurate information, it was she; yet it would hardly be possible to gain an opportunity of conversing with her in this throng. But Iras must have had a different opinion; she had seen Dion, and now called him to her side. There were hoarse tones in her voice, usually so clear and musical, which betrayed the emotion raging in her breast as she assailed the young Macedonian noble with a flood of questions. Without giving him the usual greeting, she hastily desired to know what was exciting the people, who had brought the tidings of victory, and whither the multitude was flocking?

Dion had found it difficult not to be forced from the litter while answering. Iris perceived this, and as they were just passing the Maeander, the labyrinth, which was closed after sunset, she ordered her bearers to carry the litter to the entrance, made herself known to the watchman, ordered the outer court to be opened, the litter to be placed there, and the bearers and runners to wait outside for her summons, which would soon be given.

This unusual haste and excitement filled Dion with just solicitude. She refused his invitation to alight and walk up and down, declaring that life offered so many labyrinths that one need not seek them. He, too, seemed to be following paths which were scarcely straight ones. "Why," she concluded, thrusting her head far out of the opening in the litter, "are you rendering it so difficult for the Regent and your own uncle to execute their plans, making common cause with the populace, like a paid agitator?"

"Like Philostratus, you mean, on whom I bestowed a few blows in addition to the golden guerdon received from your hand?"

"Ay, like him, for aught I care. Probably it was you, too, who had him flung into the water, after you had vented your wrath on him? You managed your cause well. What we do for love's sake is usually successful. No matter, if only his brother Alexas does not rouse Antony against you. For my part, I merely desire to know why and for whom all this was done."

"For whom save the good old man who was my father's preceptor, and his just claim?" replied Dion frankly. "Moreover--for no site more unsuitable could be found than his garden--in behalf of good taste."

Iras laughed a shrill, short laugh, and her narrow, regularly formed face, which might have been called beautiful, had not the bridge of the straight delicate nose been too long and the chin too small, darkened slightly, as she exclaimed, "That is frank at least."

"You ought to be accustomed to that from me," replied Dion calmly. "In this case, however, the expert, Gorgias, fully shares my opinion."

"I heard that too. You are both the most constant visitors of--what is the woman's name?--the bewitching Barine."

"Barine?" repeated Dion, as if the mention of the name surprised him. "You take care, my friend, that our conversation does honour to its scene, the labyrinth. I speak of works of the sculptor's art, and you pretend that I am referring to what is most certainly a very successful living work from the creative hands of the gods. I was very far from thinking of the granddaughter of the old scholar for whom I interceded."

"Ay," she scornfully retorted, "young gentlemen in your position, and with your habits of life, always think of their fathers estimable teachers rather than of the women who, ever since Pandora opened her box, have brought all sorts of misfortunes into the world. But," she added, pushing back her dark locks from her high forehead, "I don't understand myself, how, with the mountain of care that now burdens my soul, I can waste even a single word upon such trifles. I care as little for the aged scholar as I do for his legion of commentaries and books, though they are not wholly unfamiliar to me. For any concern of mine he might have as many grandchildren as there are evil tongues in Alexandria, were it not that just at this time it is of the utmost importance to remove everything which might cast a shadow on the Queen's pathway. I have just come from the palace of the royal children at Lochias, and what I learned there. But that--I will not, I cannot believe it. It fairly stifles me!"

"Have you received bad news from the fleet?" questioned Dion, with sincere anxiety; but she only bent her head in assent, laying her fan of ostrich-plumes on her lips to enjoin silence, at the same time shivering so violently that he perceived it, even in the dusk. It was evident that speech was difficult, as she added in a muffled tone: "It must be kept secret--Rhodian sailors--thank the gods, it is still very doubtful--it cannot, must not be true--and yet the prattle of that zither-player, which has filled the multitude with joyous anticipation, is abominable--the great ones of the earth are often most sorely injured by those who owe them the most gratitude. I know you can be silent, Dion. You could as a boy, if anything was to be hidden from our parents. Would you still be ready to plunge into the water for me, as in those days? Scarcely. Yet you may be trusted, and, even in this labyrinth, I will do so. My heart is heavy. But not one word to any person. I need no confidant and could maintain silence even towards you, but I am anxious that you should understand me, you who have just taken such a stand. Before I entered my litter at Lochias, the boy returned, and I talked with him."

"Young Caesarion loves Barine," replied Dion with grave earnestness.

"Then this horrible folly is known?" asked Iras excitedly. "A passion far deeper than I should ever have expected this dreamer to feel has taken possession of him. And if the Queen should now return--perhaps less successful than we desire--if she looks to those from whom she still expects pleasure, satisfaction, lofty deeds, and learns what has befallen the boy--for what does not that sun-bright intellect learn and perceive? He is dear to her, dearer than any of you imagine. How it will increase her anxiety, perhaps her suffering! With what good reason she will be angered against those whom duty and love should have commanded to guard the boy!"

"And therefore," added Dion, "the stone of offence must be removed. Your first step to secure this object was the attack on Didymus."

He had judged correctly and perceived that, in her assault upon the old scholar, she had at first intended to play into the hands of the rulers, work against the old philosopher and his relatives, among whose number was Barine; for the Egyptian law permitted the relatives of those who were convicted of any crime against the sovereign or the government to be banished with the criminal. This attack upon an innocent person was disgraceful, yet every word Iras uttered made Dion feel, every feature of her face betrayed, that it was not merely base jealousy, but a nobler

emotion, that caused her to assail the guiltless sage--love for her mistress, the desire which dominated her whole being to guard Cleopatra from grief and trouble in these trying times. He knew Iras's iron will and the want of consideration with which she had learned to pursue her purpose at the court. His first object was to protect Barine from the danger which threatened her; but he also wished to relieve the anxiety of Iras, the daughter of Krates, his father's neighbour, with whom he had played in boyhood and for whom he had never ceased to feel a tender interest.

His remark surprised her. She saw that her plot was detected by the man whose esteem she most valued, and a loving woman is glad to recognize the superiority of her lover. Besides, from her earliest childhood--and she was only two years younger than Dion--she had belonged to circles where no quality was more highly prized than mental pliancy and keenness. Her dark eyes, which at first had glittered distrustfully and questioningly and afterwards glowed with a gloomy light, now gained a new expression. Her gaze sought her friend's with a tender, pleading look as, admitting his charge, she began: "Yes! Dion, the philosopher's granddaughter must not stay here. Or do you see any other way to protect the unhappy boy from incalculable misfortune? You know me well enough to be aware that, like you, I am reluctant to infringe another's rights, that except in case of necessity I am not cruel. I value your esteem. No one is more truthful, and yesterday you averred that Eros had no part in your visits to the much-admired young woman, that you joined her guests merely because the society you found at her house afforded a pleasant stimulus to the mind. I have ceased to believe in many things, but not in you and your words, and if hearing that you had taken sides with the grandfather, I fancied that you were secretly seeking the thanks and gratitude of the granddaughter, why--surely the atrocious maxim that Zeus does not hear the vows of lovers comes from you men--why, suspicion again reared its head. Now you seem to share my opinion--"

"Like you," Dion interrupted, "I believe that Barine ought to be withdrawn from the boy's pursuit, which cannot be more unpleasant to you than to her. As Caesarion neither can nor ought to leave Alexandria while affairs are so threatening, nothing is left except to remove the young woman--but, of course, in all kindness."

"In a golden chariot, garlanded with roses, if you so desire," cried Iras eagerly.

"That might attract attention," answered Dion, smiling and raising his hand as if to enjoin moderation. "Your mode of action does not please me, even now that I know its purpose, but I will gladly aid you to attain your object. Your crooked paths also lead to the goal, and perhaps one is less likely to stumble in them; but straight ways suit me better, and I

think I have already found the right one. A friend will invite Barine to an estate far away from here, perhaps in the lake regions."

"You?" cried Iras, her narrow eyebrows suddenly contracting.

"Do you imagine that she would go with me?" he asked, in a faintly reproachful tone. "No. Fortunately, we have older friends, and at their head is one who happens to be your uncle and at the same time is wax in the hands of the Queen."

"Archibius?" exclaimed Iras. "Ah! if he could persuade her to do so!"

"He will try. He, too, is anxious about the lad. While we are talking here, he is inviting Barine to his estate. The country air will benefit her."

"May she bloom there like a young shepherdess!"

"You are right to wish her the best fortune; for if the Queen does not return victorious, the irritability of our Alexandrians will be doubled. When you laid hands on Didymus's garden, you were so busily engaged in building the triumphal arch that you forgot--"

"Who would have doubted the successful issue of this war?" cried Iras. "And they will, they will conquer. The Rhodian said that the fleet was scattered. The disaster happened on the Acharnanian coast. How positive it sounded! But he had it only at second and third hand. And what are mere rumours? The source of the false tidings is discovered later. Besides, even if the naval battle were really lost, the powerful army, which is far superior to Octavianus's forces, still remains. Which of the enemy's generals could cope with Antony on the land? How he will fight when all is at stake--fame, honour, sovereignty, hate, and love! Away with this fear, based on mere rumour! After Dyrrachium Caesar's cause was deemed lost, and how soon Pharsalus made him master of the world! Is it worthy of a sensible person to suffer courage to be depressed by a sailor's gossip? And yet--yet! It began while I was ill. And then the swallows on the Antonias, the admiral's ship. We have already spoken of it. Mardiou and your uncle Zeno saw with their own eyes the strange swallows drive away those which had built their nest on the helm of the Antonias, and kill the young ones with their cruel beaks. An evil omen!

"I cannot forget it. And my dream, while I lay ill with fever far away from my mistress! But I have already lingered here too long. No, Dion, no. I am grateful for the rest here--I can now feel at ease about Caesarian. Place the monument where you choose. The people shall see and hear that we respect their opposition, that we are just and friendly. Help me to turn this matter to the advantage of the Queen, and if Archibius succeeds in getting Barine away and keeping her in the country, then--if I had aught that seemed to you desirable it should be yours. But what does the petted Dion care for his fading playfellow?"

"Fading?" he repeated in a tone of indignant reproach. "Say rather the fully developed flower has learned from her royal friend the secret of eternal youth."

With a swift impulse of gratitude Iras bent her face towards him in the dusk, extending the slender white hand--next to Cleopatra's famed as the most beautiful at court--for him to kiss, but when he merely pressed his lips lightly on it with no shadow of tenderness, she hastily withdrew it, exclaiming as if overwhelmed by sudden repentance: "This idle, hollow dalliance at such a time, with such a burden of anxiety oppressing the heart! It is un worthy, shameful! If Barine goes with Archibius, her time will scarcely hang heavy on his estates. I think I know some one who will speedily follow to bear her company.--Here, Sasis! the bearers! To the Tower of Nilus, before the Gate of the Sun!"

Dion gazed after her litter a short time, then passed his hand through his waving brown hair, walked swiftly to the shore and, without pausing long to choose, sprang into one of the boats which were rented for pleasure voyages. Ordering the sailors who were preparing to accompany

him to remain on shore, he stretched the sail with a practised hand, and ran out towards the mouth of the harbour. He needed some strong excitement, and wished to go himself in search of news.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Contempt had become too deep for hate
Jealousy has a thousand eyes
Zeus does not hear the vows of lovers

CLEOPATRA

By Georg Ebers

Volume 2.

CHAPTER IV.

The house facing the garden of the Paneum, where Barine lived, was the property of her mother, who had inherited it from her parents. The artist Leonax, the young beauty's father, son of the old philosopher Didymus, had died long before.

After Barine's unhappy marriage with Philostratus was dissolved, she had returned to her mother, who managed the affairs of the household. She too, belonged to a family of scholars and had a brother who had won high repute as a philosopher, and had directed the studies of the young Octavianus. This had occurred long before the commencement of the hostility which separated the heirs of Caesar and Mark Antony. But even after the latter had deserted Octavia, the sister of Octavianus, to return to Cleopatra, the object of his love, and there was an open breach between the two rivals for the sovereignty of the world, Antony had been friendly to Arius and borne him no grudge for his close relations to his rival. The generous Roman had even given his enemy's former tutor a fine house, to show him that he was glad to have him in Alexandria and near his person.

The widow Berenike, Barine's mother, was warmly attached to her only brother, who often joined her daughter's guests. She was a quiet, modest woman whose happiest days had been passed in superintending the education of her children, Barine, the fiery Hippias, and the quiet Helena, who for several years had lived with her grandparents and, with faithful devotion, assumed the duty of caring for them. She had been more easily guided than the two older children; for the boy's aspiring spirit had often drawn him beyond his mother's control, and the beautiful, vivacious girl had early possessed charms so unusual that she could not remain unnoticed.

Hippias had studied oratory, first in Alexandria and later in Athens and Rhodes. Three years before, his uncle Arius had sent him with excellent

letters of introduction to Rome to become acquainted with the life of the capital and try whether, in spite of his origin, his brilliant gifts of eloquence would forward his fortunes there.

Two miserable years with an infamous, unloved husband had changed the wild spirits of Barine's childhood into the sunny cheerfulness now one of her special charms. Her mother was conscious of having desired only her best good in uniting the girl of sixteen to Philostratus, whom the grandfather Didymus then considered a very promising young man, and whose advancement, in addition to his own talents, his brother Alexas, Antony's favourite, promised to aid. She had believed that this step would afford the gay, beautiful girl the best protection from the perils of the corrupt capital; but the worthless husband had caused both mother and daughter much care and sorrow, while his brother Alexas, who constantly pursued his young sister-in-law with insulting attentions, was the source of almost equal trouble. Berenike often gazed in silent astonishment at the child, who, spite of such sore grief and humiliation, had preserved the innocent light-heartedness which made her seem as if life had offered her only thornless roses.

Her father, Leonax, had been one of the most distinguished artists of the day, and Barine had inherited from him the elastic artist temperament which speedily rebounds from the heaviest pressure. To him also she owed the rare gift of song, which had been carefully cultivated and had already secured her the first position in the woman's chorus at the festival of the great goddesses of the city. Every one was full of her praises, and after she had sung the Yalamos in the palace over the waxen image of the favourite of the gods, slain by the boar, her name was eagerly applauded. To have heard her was esteemed a privilege, for she sang only in her own house or at religious ceremonials "for the honour of the gods."

The Queen, too, had heard her, and, after the Adonis festival, her uncle Arius had presented her to Antony, who expressed his admiration with all the fervour of his frank nature, and afterwards came to her house a second time, accompanied by his son Antyllus. Doubtless he would have called on her frequently and tested upon her heart his peculiar power over women, had he not been compelled to leave the city on the day after his last visit.

Berenike had reproved her brother for bringing the Queen's lover to Barine, for her anxiety was increased by the repeated visits of Antony's son, and still more aroused by that of Caesarion, who was presented by Antyllus.

These youths were not numbered among the guests whose presence she welcomed and whose conversation afforded her pleasure. It was flattering that they should honour her simple home by their visits, but she knew that Caesarion came without his tutor's knowledge, and perceived, by the expression of his eyes, what drew him to her daughter. Besides, Berenike, in rearing the two children, who had been the source of so much anxiety had lost the joyous confidence which had characterized her own youth. Whenever life presented any new phase, she saw the dark side first. If a burning candle stood before her, the shadow of the candlestick caught her eye before the light. Her whole mental existence became a chain of fears, but the kind-hearted woman loved her children too tenderly to permit them to see it. Only it was a relief to her heart when some of her evil forebodings were realized, to say that she had foreseen it all.

No trace of this was legible in her face, a countenance still pretty and pleasing in its unruffled placidity. She talked very little, but what she did say was sensible, and proved how attentively she understood how to listen. So she was welcome among Barine's guests. Even the most distinguished received something from her, because he felt that the quiet woman understood him.

Before Barine had returned that evening, something had occurred which made her mother doubly regret the accident to her brother Arius the day before. On his way home from his sister's he had been run over by a chariot darting recklessly along the Street of the King, and was carried, severely injured, to his home, where he now lay helpless and fevered. Nor did it lessen his sufferings to hear his two sons threaten to take vengeance on the reckless fellow who had wrought their father this mischief, for he had reason to believe Antyllus the perpetrator of the deed, and a collision between the youths and the son of Antony could only result in fresh disaster to him and his, especially as the young Roman seemed to have inherited little of his father's magnanimous generosity. Yet Arius could not be vexed with his sons for stigmatizing, in the harshest terms, the conduct of the man who had gone on without heeding the accident. He had cautioned his sister against the utterly unbridled youth whose father he had himself brought to her house. With what good reason he had raised his voice in warning was now evident. At sunset that very day several guests had arrived as usual, followed by Antyllus, a youth of nineteen. When the door-keeper refused to admit him, he had rudely demanded to see Barine, thrust aside the prudent old porter, who endeavoured to detain him, and, in spite of his protestations, forced his way into his dead master's work-room, where the ladies usually received their visitors. Not until he found it empty would he retire, and then he first fastened a bouquet of flowers he had brought to a statue of Eros in burnt clay, which stood there. Both the porter and Barine's waiting-maid declared that he was drunk; they saw it when he staggered away with the companions who had waited for him in the garden outside.

This unseemly and insulting conduct filled Berenike with the deepest indignation. It must not remain unpunished, and, while waiting for her daughter, she imagined what evil consequences might ensue if Antyllus were forbidden the house and accused to his tutor, and how unbearable, on the other hand, he might become if they omitted to do so.

She was full of sad presentiments, and as, with such good reason, she feared the worst, she cherished a faint hope that her daughter might perhaps bring home some pleasant tidings; for she had had the experience that events which had filled her with the utmost anxiety sometimes resulted in good fortune.

At last Barine appeared, and it was indeed long since she had clasped her mother in her arms with such joyous cheerfulness.

The widow's troubled heart grew lighter. Her daughter must have met with something unusually gratifying, she looked so happy, although she had surely heard what had happened here; for her cloak was laid aside and her hair newly arranged, so she must have been to her chamber, where she was dressed by her loquacious Cyprian slave, who certainly could not keep to herself anything that was worth mentioning. The nimble maid had shown her skill that day.

"Any stranger would take her for nineteen," thought her mother. "How becoming the white robe and blue-bordered peplum are to her; how softly

the azure bombyx ribbon is wound around the thick waves of her hair! Who would believe that no curling-irons had touched the little golden locks that rest so gracefully on her brow, that no paint-brush had any share in producing the rose and white hues on her cheek, or the alabaster glimmer of her arms? Such beauty easily becomes a Danae dower; but it is a magnificent gift of the gods! Yet why did she put on the bracelet which Antony gave her after his last visit? Scarcely on my account. She can hardly expect Dion at so late an hour. Even while I am rejoicing in the sight of her beauty, some new misfortune may be impending."

So ran the current of her thoughts while her daughter was gaily describing what she had witnessed at her grandfather's. Meanwhile she had nestled comfortably among the cushions of a lounge; and when she mentioned Antyllus's unseemly conduct, she spoke of it, with a carelessness that startled Berenike, as a vexatious piece of rudeness which must not occur again.

"But who is to prevent it?" asked the mother anxiously.

"Who, save ourselves?" replied Barine. "He will not be admitted."

"And if he forced his way in?"

Barine's big blue eyes flashed angrily, and there was no lack of decision in her voice as she exclaimed, "Let him try it!"

"But what power have we to restrain the son of Antony?" asked Berenike. "I do not know."

"I do," replied her daughter. "I will be brief, for a visitor is coming."

"So late?" asked the mother anxiously.

"Archibius wishes to discuss an important matter with us."

The lines on the brow of the older woman smoothed, but it contracted again as she exclaimed inquiringly: "Important business at so unusual an hour! Ah, I have expected nothing good since early morning! On my way to my brother's a raven flew up before me and fluttered towards the left into the garden."

"But I," replied Barine, after receiving, in reply to her inquiry, a favourable report concerning her uncle's health-"I met seven--there were neither more nor less; for seven is the best of numbers--seven snow-white doves, which all flew swiftly towards the right. The fairest of all came first, bearing in its beak a little basket which contained the power that will keep Antony's son away from us. Don't look at me in such amazement, you dear receptacle of every terror."

"But, child, you said that Archibius was coming so late to discuss an important matter," rejoined the mother.

"He must be here soon."

"Then cease this talking in riddles; I do not guess them quickly."

"You will solve this one," returned Barine; "but we really have no time to lose. So-my beautiful dove was a good, wise thought, and what it carried in its basket you shall hear presently. You see, mother, many

will blame us, though here and there some one may pity; but this state of things must not continue. I feel it more and more plainly with each passing day; and several years must yet elapse ere this scruple becomes wholly needless. I am too young to welcome as a guest every one whom this or that man presents to me. True, our reception-hall was my father's work-room and you, my own estimable, blameless mother, are the hostess here; but though superior to me in every respect, you are so modest that you shield yourself behind your daughter until the guests think of you only when you are absent. So those who seek us both merely say, 'I am going to visit Barine'--and there are too many who say this--I can no longer choose, and this thought--"

"Child! child!" interrupted her mother joyfully, "what god met you as you went out this morning?"

"Surely you know," she answered gaily; "it was seven doves, and, when I took the little basket from the bill of the first and prettiest one, it told me a story. Do you want to hear it?"

"Yes, yes; but be quick, or we shall be interrupted."

Then Barine leaned farther back among the cushions, lowered her long lashes, and began: "Once upon a time there was a woman who had a garden in the most aristocratic quarter of the city--here near the Paneum, if you please. In the autumn, when the fruit was ripening, she left the gate open, though all her neighbours did the opposite. To keep away unbidden lovers of her nice figs and dates, she fastened on the gate a tablet bearing the inscription: 'All may enter and enjoy the sight of the garden; but the dogs will bite any one who breaks a flower, treads upon the grass, or steals the fruit.'

"The woman had nothing but a lap-dog, and that did not always obey her. But the tablet fulfilled its purpose; for at first none came except her neighbours in the aristocratic quarter. They read the threat, and probably without it would have respected the property of the woman who so kindly opened the door to them. Thus matters went on for a time, until first a beggar came, and then a Phoenician sailor, and a thievish Egyptian from the Rhakotis--neither of whom could read. So the tablet told them nothing; and as, moreover, they distinguished less carefully between mine and thine, one trampled the turf and another snatched from the boughs a flower or fruit. More and more of the rabble came, and you can imagine what followed. No one punished them for the crime, for they did not fear the barking of the lap-dog, and this gave even those who could read, courage not to heed the warning. So the woman's pretty garden soon lost its peculiar charm; and the fruit, too, was stolen. When the rain at last washed the inscription from the tablet, and saucy boys scrawled on it, there was no harm done; for the garden no longer offered any attractions, and no one who looked into it cared to enter. Then the owner closed her gate like the neighbours, and the next year she again enjoyed the green grass and the bright hues of the flowers. She ate her fruit herself, and the lap-dog no longer disturbed her by its barking."

"That is," said her mother, "if everybody was as courteous and as well bred as Gorgias, Lysias, and the others, we would gladly continue to receive them. But since there are rude fellows like Antyllus--"

"You have understood the story correctly," Barine interrupted. "We are certainly at liberty to invite to our house those who have learned to

read our inscription. To-morrow visitors will be informed that we can no longer receive them as before."

"Antyllus's conduct affords an excellent pretext," her mother added. "Every fair-minded person must understand--"

"Certainly," said Barine, "and if you, shrewdest of women, will do your part--"

"Then for the first time we can act as we please in our own home. Believe me, child--if you only do not--"

"No ifs!--not this time!" cried the young beauty, raising her hand beseechingly. "It gives me such delight to think of the new life, and if matters come to pass as I hope and wish--then--do not you also believe, mother, that the gods owe me reparation?"

"For what?" asked the deep voice of Archibius, who had entered unannounced, and was now first noticed by the widow and her daughter.

Barine hastily rose and held out both hands to her old friend, exclaiming, "Since they bring you to us, they are already beginning the payment."

CHAPTER V.

An artist, especially a great artist, finds it easy to give his house an attractive appearance. He desires comfort in it, and only the beautiful is comfortable to him. Whatever would disturb harmony offends his eye, and to secure the noblest ornament of his house he need not invite any stranger to cross its threshold. The Muse, the best of assistants, joins him unbidden.

Leonax, Barine's father, had been thus aided to transform the interior of his house into a very charming residence. He had painted on the walls of his own work-room incidents in the life of Alexander the Great, the founder of his native city, and on the frieze a procession of dancing Cupids.

Here Barine now received her guests, and the renown of these paintings was not one of the smallest inducements which had led Antony to visit the young beauty and to take his son, in whom he wished to awaken at least a fleeting pleasure in art. He also knew how to prize her beauty and her singing, but the ardent passion which had taken possession of him in his mature years was for Cleopatra alone. He whose easily won heart and susceptible fancy had urged him from one commonplace love to another had been bound by the Queen with chains of indestructible and supernatural power. By her side a Barine seemed to him merely a work of art endowed with life and a voice that charmed the ear. Yet he owed her some pleasant hours, and he could not help bestowing gifts upon any one to whom he was indebted for anything pleasant. He liked to be considered the most generous spendthrift on earth, and the polished bracelet set with a gem, on which was carved Apollo playing on his lyre, surrounded by the listening Muses, looked very simple, but was really an ornament of priceless value, for the artist who made it was deemed the best stone-cutter in Alexandria in the time of Philadelphus, and each one of

the tiny figures sculptured on the bit of onyx scarcely three fingers wide was a carefully executed masterpiece of the most exquisite beauty. Antony had chosen it because he deemed it a fitting gift for the woman whose song had pleased him. He had not thought of asking its value; indeed, only a connoisseur would have perceived it; and as the circlet was not showy and well became her beautiful arm, Barine liked to wear it.

Had not the war taken him away, Antony's second visit would certainly not have been his last. Besides the singing which enthralled him, the conversation had been gay and brilliant, and in addition to Leonax's paintings, he had seen other beautiful works of art which the former had obtained by exchanging with many distinguished companions.

Nor was there any lack of plastic creations in the spacious apartment, to which the flashing of the water poured by a powerful man from the goatskin bottle on his shoulder into a shell lent a special charm.

The master who had carved this stooping Nubian had also created the much-discussed statues of the royal lovers. The clay Eros, who with bent knee was aiming at a victim visible to himself alone, was also his work. Antony, when paying his second visit, had laughingly laid the garland he wore before "the greatest of human conquerors," while a short time ago his son Antyllus had rudely thrust his bouquet of flowers into the opening of the curved right arm which was drawing the string. In doing so the statue had been injured. Now the flowers lay unheeded upon the little altar at the end of the large room, lighted only by a single lamp; for the ladies had left it with their guest. They were in Barine's favourite apartment, a small room, where there were several pictures by her dead father.

Antyllus's bouquet, and the damage to the clay statue of Eros, had played a prominent part in the conversation between the three, and rendered Archibius's task easier.

Berenike had greeted the guest with a complaint of the young Roman's recklessness and unseemly conduct, to which Barine added the declaration that they had now sacrificed enough to Zeus Xenios, the god of hospitality. She meant to devote her future life to the modest household gods and to Apollo, to whom she owed the gift of song.

Archibius had listened silently in great surprise until she had finished her explanation and declared that henceforth she intended to live alone with her mother, instead of having her father's workshop filled with guests.

The young beauty's vivid imagination transported her to this new and quieter life. But, spite of the clear and glowing hues in which she described her anticipations, her grey-haired listener could not have believed in them fully. A subtle smile sometimes flitted over his grave, somewhat melancholy face--that of a man who has ceased to wrestle in the arena of life, and after severe conflict now preferred to stand among the spectators and watch others win or lose the prize of victory. Doubtless the wounds which he had received still ached, yet his sorrowful experiences did not prevent his being an attentive observer. The expression of his clear eyes showed that he mentally shared whatever aroused his sympathy. Whoever understood how to listen thus, and, moreover--the prominence of the brow above the nose showed it--was also a trained thinker, could not fail to be a good counsellor, and as such he was regarded by many, and first of all by the Queen.

The wise deliberation, which was one of his characteristic traits, showed itself on this occasion; for though he had come to persuade Barine try a country residence, he refrained from doing until she had exhausted the story of her own affairs and inquired the important cause of his visit.

In the principal matter his request was granted ere he made it. So he could begin with the query whether the mother and daughter did not think that the transition to the new mode of life could be effected more easily if they were absent from the city a short time. It would awaken comment they should close their house against guests on the morrow, and as the true reason could not be given, many would be offended. If, on the contrary, they could resolve to quit the capital for a few weeks, many, it is true, would lament their decision, but what was allotted to all alike could be resented by no one.

Berenike eagerly assented, but Barine grew thoughtful. Then Archibius begged her to speak frankly, and after she had asked where they could he proposed his country estate.

His keen grey eyes had perceived that something, bound her so firmly to the city that in the case of a true woman like Barine it must be an affair of the heart. He had evidently judged correctly, for, at his prediction that there would be no lack of visits from her dearest friends, she raised her head, her blue eyes sparkled brightly, and when Archibius paused she to her mother, exclaiming gaily "We will go!"

Again the vivid imagination daughter conjured the future before her in distinct outlines. She alone knew whom she meant when she spoke of the visitor she expected at Irenia, Archibius's estate. The name meant "The place of peace," and it pleased her.

Archibius listened smilingly; but when she began to assign him also a part in driving the little Sardinian horses and pursuing the birds, he interrupted her with the statement that whether he could speedily allow himself a pleasure which he should so keenly enjoy--that of breathing the country air with such charming guests--would depend upon the fate of another. Thank the gods, he had been able to come here with a lighter heart, because, just before his departure, he had heard of a splendid victory gained by the Queen. The ladies would perhaps permit him to remain a little longer, as he was expecting confirmation of the news.

It was evident that he awaited it in great suspense, and that his heart was by no means free from anxiety.

Berenike shared it, and her pleasant face, which had hitherto reflected her delight at her daughter's sensible resolution, was now clouded with care as Archibius began: "The object of my presence here? You are making it very easy for me to attain it. If I deemed it honest, I could now conceal the fact that I had sought you to induce you to leave the city. I see no peril from the boyish insolence of the son of Antony. The point in question, child, is merely to put yourself out of the reach of Caesarion."

"If you could place me in the moon, it would please me best, as far as he is concerned," replied Barine eagerly. "That is just what induced me to change our mode of life, since my door cannot be closed against the boy who, though still under a tutor, uses his rank as a key to open it. And just think of being compelled to address that dreamer, with eyes pleading

for help, by the title of 'king!'"

"Yet what mighty impulse might not be slumbering in the breast of a son of Julius Caesar and Cleopatra?" said Archibius. "And passion--I know, my child, that it is no fault of yours--has now awakened within him. Whatever the result may be, it must fill his mother's heart with anxiety. That is why it is needful to hasten your departure, and to keep your destination a secret. He will attempt no violence; but--he is the child of his parents--and some unexpected act may be anticipated from him."

"You startle me!" cried Barine. "You transform the cooing dove which entered my house into a dangerous griffin."

"As such you may regard him," said the other, warningly. "You will be a welcome guest, Barine, but I invited you, whom I have loved from your earliest childhood, the daughter of my dearest friend, not merely to do you a service at Irenia, but to save from grief or even annoyance the person to whom--who is not aware of it--I owe everything."

The words conveyed to both ladies the knowledge that, though they were dear to Archibius, he would sacrifice them, and with them, perhaps, all the rest of the world, for the peace and happiness of the Queen.

Barine had expected nothing else. She knew that Cleopatra had made the philosopher's son a wealthy man and the owner of extensive estates; but she also felt that the source of his loyal devotion to the Queen, over whom he watched like a tender father, was due to other causes. Cleopatra prized him also. Had he been ambitious, he could have stood at the helm of the ship of state, as Eptrop long ago, but--the whole city knew it--he had more than once refused to accept a permanent office, because he believed that he could serve his mistress better as an unassuming, unnoticed counsellor. Berenike had told Barine that the relations between Cleopatra and Archibius dated back to their childhood, but she had learned no particulars. Various rumours were afloat which, in the course of time, had been richly adorned and interwoven with anecdotes, and Barine naturally lent the most ready credence to those which asserted that the princess, in her earliest youth, had cherished a childish love for the philosopher's son. Now her friend's conduct led her to believe it.

When Archibius paused, the young beauty assured him that she understood him; and as the alabaster hanging lamp and a three-branched light cast a brilliant glow upon the portrait which her father had painted of the nineteen-year-old Queen, and afterwards copied for his own household, she pointed to it, and, pursuing the current of her own thoughts, asked the question:

"Was she not marvellously beautiful at that time?"

"As your father's work represents her," was the reply. "Leonax painted the portrait of Octavia, on the opposite side, the same year, and perhaps the artist deemed the Roman the fairer woman." He pointed as he spoke to a likeness of Octavianus's sister, whom Barine's father had painted as the young wife of Marcellus, her first husband.

"Oh, no!" said Berenike. "I still remember perfectly how Leonax returned in those days. What woman might not have been jealous of his enthusiasm for the Roman Hera? At that time I had not seen the portrait, and when I asked whether he thought Octavia more beautiful than the Queen, for whom

Eros had inflamed his heart, as in the case of most of the beautiful women he painted, he exclaimed--you know his impetuous manner--'Octavia stands foremost in the ranks of those who are called "beautiful" or "less beautiful"; the other, Cleopatra, stands alone, and can be compared with no one.'

Archibius bent his head in assent, then said firmly, "But, as a child, when I first saw her, she would have been the fairest even in the dance of the young gods of love."

"How old was she then?" asked Barine, eagerly.

"Eight years," he answered. "How far in the past it is, yet I have not forgotten a single hour!" Barine now earnestly entreated him to tell them the story of those days, but Archibius gazed thoughtfully at the floor for some time ere he raised his head and answered: "Perhaps it will be well if you learn more of the woman for whose sake I ask a sacrifice at your hands. Arius is your brother and uncle. He stands near to Octavianus, for he was his intellectual guide, and I know that he reveres the Roman's sister, Octavia, as a goddess. Antony is now struggling with Octavianus for the sovereignty of the world. Octavia succumbed in the conflict against the woman of whom you desire to hear. It is not my place to judge her, but I may instruct and warn. Roman nations burn incense to Octavia, and, when Cleopatra's name is uttered, they veil their faces indignantly. Here in Alexandria many imitate them. Whoever upholds shining purity may hope to win a share of the radiance emanating from it. They call Octavia the lawful wife, and Cleopatra the criminal who robbed her of her husband's heart."

"Not I!" exclaimed Barine eagerly. "How often I have heard my uncle say that Antony and Cleopatra were fired with the most ardent love for each other! Never did the arrows of Eros pierce two hearts more deeply. Then it became necessary to save the state from civil war and bloodshed. Antony consented to form an alliance with his rival, and, as security for the sincerity of the reconciliation, he gave his hand in marriage to Octavia, whose first husband, Marcellus, had just died--his hand, I say, only his hand, for his heart was captive to the Queen of Egypt. And if Antony was faithless to the wife to whom statecraft had bound him, he kept his pledge to the other, who had an earlier, better title. If Cleopatra did not give up the man to whom she had sworn fidelity forever, she was right--a thousand times right! In my eyes--no matter how often my mother rebukes me--Cleopatra, in the eyes of the immortals, is and always will be Antony's real wife; the other, though on her marriage day no custom, no word, no stroke of the stylus, no gesture was omitted, is the intruder in a bond of love which rejoices the gods, however it may anger mortals, and--forgive me, mother--virtuous matrons."

Berenike had listened with blushing cheeks to her vivacious daughter; now with timid earnestness she interrupted: "I know that those are the views of the new times; that Antony in the eyes of the Egyptians, and probably also according to their customs, is the rightful husband of the Queen. I know, too, that you are both against me. Yet Cleopatra is in reality a Greek, and therefore--eternal gods!--I can sincerely pity her; but the marriage has been solemnized, and I cannot blame Octavia. She rears and cherishes, as if they were her own, the children of her faithless husband and Fulvia, his first wife, who have no claim upon her. It is more than human to take the stones from the path of the man who became her foe, as she does. No woman in Alexandria can pray more fervently than I that Cleopatra and her friend may conquer Octavianus. His cold nature, highly

as my brother esteems him, is repellent to me. But when I gaze at Octavia's beautiful, chaste, queenly, noble countenance, the mirror of true womanly purity--"

"You can rejoice," Archibius added, completing the sentence, and laying his right hand soothingly on the arm of the excited woman, "only it would be advisable at this time to put the portrait elsewhere, and rest satisfied with confiding your opinion of Octavia to your brother and a friend as reliable as myself. If we conquer, such things may pass; if not--The messenger tarries long--"

Here Barine again entreated him to use the time. She had only once had the happiness of being noticed by the Queen--just after her song at the Adonis festival. Then Cleopatra had advanced to thank her. She said only a few kind words, but in a voice which seemed to penetrate the inmost depths of her heart and bind her with invisible threads. Meanwhile Barine's eyes met those of her sovereign, and at first they roused an ardent desire to press her lips even on the hem of her robe, but afterwards she felt as if a venomous serpent had crawled out of the most beautiful flower.

Here Archibius interrupted her with the remark that he remembered perfectly how, after the song, Antony had addressed her at the same time as the Queen, and Cleopatra lacked no feminine weakness.

"Jealousy?" asked Barine, in astonishment. "I was not presumptuous enough to admit it. I secretly feared that Alexas, the brother of Philostratus, had prejudiced her. He is as ill-disposed towards me as the man who was my husband. But everything connected with those two is so base and shameful that I will not allow it to cloud this pleasant hour. Yet the fear that Alexas might have slandered me to the Queen is not groundless.

"He is as shrewd as his brother, and through Antony, into whose favour he ingratiated himself, is always in communication with Cleopatra. He went to the war with him."

"I learned that too late, and am utterly powerless against Antony," replied Archibius.

"But was it not natural that I should fear he had prejudiced the Queen?" asked Barine. "At any rate, I imagined that I detected a hostile expression in her eyes, and it repelled me, though at first I had been so strongly attracted towards her."

"And had not that other stepped between you, you could not have turned from her again!" said Archibius. "The first time I saw her I was but a mere boy, and she--as I have already said--a child eight years old."

Barine nodded gratefully to Archibius, brought the distaff to her mother, poured water into the wine in the mixing vessel, and after at first leaning comfortably back among the cushions, she soon bent forward in a listening attitude, with her elbow propped on her knee, and her chin supported by her hand. Berenike drew the flax from the distaff, at first slowly, then faster and faster.

"You know my country-house in the Kanopus," the guest began. "It was originally a small summer palace belonging to the royal family, and underwent little change after we moved into it. Even the garden is unaltered. It was full of shady old trees. Olympus, the leech, had chosen

this place, that my father might complete within its walls the work of education entrusted to him. You shall hear the story. At that time Alexandria was in a state of turmoil, for Rome had not recognized the King, and ruled over us like Fate, though it had not acknowledged the will by which the miserable Alexander bequeathed Egypt to him like a field or a slave.

"The King of Egypt, who called himself 'the new Dionysus,' was a weak man, whose birth did not give him the full right to the sovereignty. You know that the people called him the 'fluteplayer.' He really had no greater pleasure than to hear music and listen to his own performances. He played by no means badly on more than one instrument, and, moreover, as a reveller did honour to the other name. Whoever kept sober at the festival of Dionysus, whose incarnate second self he regarded himself, incurred his deepest displeasure.

"The flute-player's wife, Queen Tryphoena, and her oldest daughter--she bore your name, Berenike--ruined his life. Compared with them, the King was worthy and virtuous. What had become of the heroes and the high-minded princes of the house of Ptolemy? Every passion and crime had found a home in their palaces!

"The flute-player, Cleopatra's father, was by no means the worst. He was a slave to his own caprices; no one had taught him to bridle his passions. Where it served his purpose, even death was summoned to his aid; but this was a custom of the last sovereigns of his race. In one respect he was certainly superior to most of them--he still possessed a capacity to feel a loathing for the height of crime, to believe in virtue and loftiness of soul, and the possibility of implanting them in youthful hearts. When a boy, he had been under the influence of an excellent teacher, whose precepts had lingered in his memory and led him to determine to withdraw his favourite children--two girls--from their mother's sway, at least as far as possible.

"I learned afterwards that it had been his desire to confide the princesses wholly to my parents' care. But an invincible power opposed this. Though Greeks might be permitted to instruct the royal children in knowledge, the Egyptians would not yield the right to their religious

education. The leech Olympus--you know the good old man--had insisted that the delicate Cleopatra must spend the coldest winter months in Upper Egypt, where the sky was never clouded, and the summer near the sea in a shady garden. The little palace at Kanopus was devoted to this purpose.

"When we moved there it was entirely unoccupied, but the princesses were soon to be brought to us. During the winter Olympus preferred the island of Philae, on the Nubian frontier, because the famous Temple of Isis was there, and its priests willingly undertook to watch over the children.

"The Queen would not listen to any of these plans. Leaving Alexandria and spending the winter on a lonely island in the tropics was an utterly incomprehensible idea. So she let the King have his way, and no doubt was glad to be relieved from the care of the children; for, even after her royal husband's exile from the city, she never visited her daughters. True, death allowed her only a short time to do so.

"Her oldest daughter, Berenike, who became her successor, followed her example, and troubled herself very little about her sisters. I heard afterwards that she was very glad to know that they were in charge of

persons who filled their minds with other thoughts than the desire to rule. Her brothers were reared at Lochias by our countryman Theodotus, under the eyes of their guardian, Pothinus.

"Our family life was of course wholly transformed by the reception of the royal children. In the first place, we moved from our house in the Museum Square into the little palace at Kanopus, and the big, shady garden delighted us. I remember, as though it were but yesterday, the morning--I was then a boy of fifteen--when my father told us that two of the King's daughters would soon become members of the household. There were three of us children--Charmian, who went to the war with the Queen, because Iras, our niece, was ill; I myself; and Straton, who died long ago. We were urged to treat the princesses with the utmost courtesy and consideration, and we perceived that their reception really demanded respect; for the palace, which we had found empty and desolate, was refurnished from roof to foundation.

"The day before they were expected horses, chariots, and litters came, while boats and a splendid state galley, fully manned, arrived by sea. Then a train of male and female slaves appeared, among them two fat eunuchs.

"I can still see the angry look with which my father surveyed all these people. He drove at once to the city, and on his return his clear eyes were as untroubled as ever. A court official accompanied him, and only that portion of the useless amount of luggage and number of persons that my father desired remained.

"The princesses were to come the next morning--it was at the end of February--flowers were blooming in the grass and on the bushes, while the foliage of the trees glittered with the fresh green which the rising sap gives to the young leaves. I was sitting on a strong bough of a sycamore-tree, which grew opposite to the house, watching for them. Their arrival was delayed and, as I gazed meanwhile over the garden, I thought it must surely please them, for not a palace in the city had one so beautiful.

"At last the litters appeared; they had neither runners nor attendants, as my father had requested, and when the princesses alighted--both at the same moment--I knew not which way to turn my eyes first, for the creature that fluttered like a dragon-fly rather than stepped from the first litter, was not a girl like other mortals--she seemed like a wish, a hope. When the dainty, beautiful creature turned her head hither and thither, and at last gazed questioningly, as if beseeching help, into the faces of my father and mother, who stood at the gate to receive her, it seemed to me that such must have been the aspect of Psyche when she stood pleading for mercy at the throne of Zeus.

"But it was worth while to look at the other also. Was that Cleopatra? She might have been the elder, for she was as tall as her sister, but how utterly unlike! From the waving hair to every movement of the hands and body the former--it was Cleopatra--had seemed to me as if she were flying. Everything about the second figure, on the contrary, was solid, nay, even seemed to offer positive resistance. She sprang from the litter and alighted on the ground with both feet at once, clung firmly to the door, and haughtily flung back her head, crowned with a wealth of dark locks. Her complexion was pink and white, and her blue eyes sparkled brightly enough; but the expression with which she gazed at my parents was defiant rather than questioning, and as she glanced around her red

lips curled scornfully as though she deemed her surroundings despicable and unworthy of her royal birth.

"This irritated me against the seven-year-old child, yet I said to myself that, though it was very beautiful here--thanks to my father's care--perhaps it appeared plain and simple when compared with the marble, gold, and purple of the royal palace whence she came. Her features, too, were regular and beautiful, and she would have attracted attention by her loveliness among a multitude. When I soon heard her issue imperious commands and defiantly insist upon the fulfilment of every wish, I thought, in my boyish ignorance, that Arsinoe must be the elder; for she was better suited to wield a sceptre than her sister. I said so to my brother and Charmian; but we all soon saw which really possessed queenly majesty; for Arsinoe, if her will were crossed, wept, screamed, and raged like a lunatic, or, if that proved useless, begged and teased; while if Cleopatra wanted anything she obtained it in a different way. Even at that time she knew what weapons would give her victory and, while using them, she still remained the child of a king.

"No artisan's daughter could have been further removed from airs of majestic pathos than this embodiment of the most charming childlike grace; but if anything for which her passionate nature ardently longed was positively refused, she understood how to attain it by the melody of her voice, the spell of her eyes, and in extreme cases by a silent tear. When to such tears were added uplifted hands and a few sweet words, such as, 'It would make me happy,' or, 'Don't you see how it hurts me?' resistance was impossible; and in after-years also her silent tears and the marvellous music of her voice won her a victory in the decisive questions of life.

"We children were soon playmates and friends, for my parents did not wish the princesses to begin their studies until after they felt at home with us. This pleased Arsinoe, although she could already read and write; but Cleopatra more than once asked to hear something from my father's store of wisdom, of which she had been told.

"The King and her former teacher had cherished the highest expectations from the brilliant intellect of this remarkable child, and Olympus once laid his hand on my curls and bade me take care that the princess did not outstrip the philosopher's son. I had always occupied one of the foremost places, and laughingly escaped, assuring him that there was no danger.

"But I soon learned that this warning was not groundless. You will think that the old fool's heart has played him a trick, and in the magic garden of childish memories the gifted young girl was transformed into a goddess. That she certainly was not; for the immortals are free from the faults and weaknesses of humanity."

"And what robbed Cleopatra of the renown of resembling the gods?" asked Barine eagerly.

A subtle smile, not wholly free from reproach, accompanied Archibius's reply: "Had I spoken of her virtues, you would hardly have thought of asking further details. But why should I try to conceal what she has displayed to the world openly enough throughout her whole life? Falsehood and hypocrisy were as unfamiliar to her as fishing is to the sons of the desert. The fundamental principles which have dominated this rare creature's life and character to the present day are two ceaseless desires: first, to surpass every one, even in the most difficult

achievements; and, secondly, to love and to be loved in return. From them emanated what raised her above all other women. Ambition and love will also sustain her like two mighty wings on the proud height to which they have borne her, so long as they dwell harmoniously in her fiery soul. Hitherto a rare favour of destiny has permitted this, and may the Olympians grant that thus it may ever be!"

Here Archibius paused, wiped the perspiration from his brow, asked if the messenger had arrived, and ordered him to be admitted as soon as he appeared. Then he went on as calmly as before:

"The princesses were members of our household, and in the course of time they seemed like sisters. During the first winter the King allowed them to spend only the most inclement months at Philae, for he was unwilling to live without them. True, he saw them rarely enough; weeks often elapsed without a visit; but, on the other hand, he often came day after day to our garden, clad in plain garments, and borne in an unpretending litter, for these visits were kept secret from every one save the leech Olympus.

"I often saw the tall, strong man, with red, bloated face, playing with his children like a mechanic who had just returned from work. But he usually remained only a short time, seeming to be satisfied with having seen them again. Perhaps he merely wished to assure himself that they were comfortable with us. At any rate, no one was permitted to go near the group of plane-trees where he talked with them.

"But it is easy to hide amid the dense foliage of these trees, so my knowledge that he questioned them is not solely hearsay.

"Cleopatra was happy with us from the beginning; Arsinoe needed a longer time; but the King valued only the opinion of his older child, his darling, on whom he feasted his eyes and ears like a lover. He often shook his heavy head at the sight of her, and when she gave him one of her apt replies, he laughed so loudly that the sound of his deep, resonant voice was heard as far as the house.

"Once I saw tear after tear course down his flushed cheeks, and yet his visit was shorter than usual. The closed 'harmamaxa' in which he came bore him from our house directly to the vessel which was to convey him to Cyprus and Rome. The Alexandrians, headed by the Queen, had forced him to leave the city and the country.

"He was indeed unworthy of the crown, but he loved his little daughter like a true father. Still, it was terrible, monstrous for him to invoke curses upon the mother and sister of the children, in their presence, and in the same breath command them to hate and execrate them, but to love and never forget him.

"I was then seventeen and Cleopatra ten years old. I, who loved my parents better than my life, felt an icy chill run through my veins and then a touch upon my heart like balsam, as I heard little Arsinoe, after her father had gone, whisper to her sister, 'We will hate them--may the gods destroy them!' and when Cleopatra answered with tearful eyes, 'Let us rather be better than they, very good indeed, Arsinoe, that the immortals may love us and bring our father back.'

"'Because then he will make you Queen,' replied Arsinoe sneeringly, still trembling with angry excitement.

"Cleopatra gazed at her with a troubled look.

"Her tense features showed that she was weighing the meaning of the words, and I can still see her as she suddenly drew up her small figure, and said proudly, 'Yes, I will be Queen!'

"Then her manner changed, and in the sweetest tones of her soft voice, she said beseechingly, 'You won't say such naughty things again, will you?'

"This was at the time that my father's instruction began to take possession of her mind. The prediction of Olympus was fulfilled. True, I attended the school of oratory, but when my father set the royal maiden a lesson, I was permitted to repeat mine on the same subject, and frequently I could not help admitting that Cleopatra had succeeded better than I.

"Soon there were difficult problems to master, for the intellect of this wonderful child demanded stronger food, and she was introduced into philosophy. My father himself belonged to the school of Epicurus, and succeeded far beyond his expectations in rousing Cleopatra's interest in his master's teachings. She had been made acquainted with the other great philosophers also, but always returned to Epicurus, and induced the rest of us to live with her as a true disciple of the noble Samian.

"Your father and brother have doubtless made you familiar with the precepts of the Stoa; yet you have certainly heard that Epicurus spent the latter part of his life with his friends and pupils in quiet meditation and instructive conversation in his garden at Athens. We, too--according to Cleopatra's wish--were to live thus and call ourselves 'disciples of Epicurus.'

"With the exception of Arsinoe, who preferred gayer pastimes, into which she drew my brother Straton--at that time a giant in strength--we all liked the plan. I was chosen master, but I perceived that Cleopatra desired the position, so she took my place.

"During our next leisure afternoon we paced up and down the garden, and the conversation about the chief good was so eager, Cleopatra directed it with so much skill, and decided doubtful questions so happily, that we reluctantly obeyed the brazen gong which summoned us to the house, and spent the whole evening in anticipating the next afternoon.

"The following morning my father saw several country people assembled before the secluded garden; but he did not have time to inquire what they wanted; for Timagenes, who shared the instruction in history--you know he was afterwards taken to Rome as a prisoner of war--rushed up to him, holding out a tablet which bore the inscription Epicurus had written on the gate of his garden: 'Stranger, here you will be happy; here is the chief good, pleasure.'

"Cleopatra had written this notice in large letters on the top of a small table before sunrise, and a slave had secretly fastened it on the gate for her.

"This prank might have easily proved fatal to our beautiful companionship, but it had been done merely to make our game exactly like the model.

"My father did not forbid our continuing this pastime, but strictly prohibited our calling ourselves 'Epicureans' outside of the garden, for this noble name had since gained among the people a significance wholly alien. Epicurus says that true pleasure is to be found only in peace of mind and absence of pain."

"But every one," interrupted Barine, "believes that people like the wealthy Isidorus, whose object in life is to take every pleasure which his wealth can procure, are the real Epicureans. My mother would not have confided me long to a teacher by whose associates 'pleasure' was deemed the chief good."

"The daughter of a philosopher," replied Archibius, gently shaking his head, "ought to understand what pleasure means in the sense of Epicurus, and no doubt you do. True, those who are further removed from these things cannot know that the master forbids yearning for individual pleasure. Have you an idea of his teachings? No definite one? Then permit me a few words of explanation. It happens only too often that Epicurus is confounded with Aristippus, who places sensual pleasure above intellectual enjoyment, as he holds that bodily pain is harder to endure than mental anguish. Epicurus, on the contrary, considers intellectual pleasure to be the higher one; for sensual enjoyment, which he believes free to every one, can be experienced only in the present, while intellectual delight extends to both the past and the future. To the Epicureans the goal of life, as has already been mentioned, is to attain the chief blessings, peace of mind, and freedom from pain. He is to practise virtue only because it brings him pleasure; for who could remain virtuous without being wise, noble, and just?--and whoever is all these cannot have his peace of mind disturbed, and must be really happy in the exact meaning of the master. I perceived long since the peril lurking in this system of instruction, which takes no account of moral excellence; but at that time it seemed to me also the chief good.

"How all this charmed the mind of the thoughtful child, still untouched by passion! It was difficult to supply her wonderfully vigorous intellect with sufficient sustenance, and she really felt that to enrich it was the highest pleasure. And to her, who could scarcely endure to have a rude hand touch her, though a small grief or trivial disappointment could not be averted, the freedom from pain which the master had named as the first condition for the existence of every pleasure, and termed the chief good, seemed indeed the first condition of a happy life.

"Yet this child, whom my father once compared to a thinking flower, bore without complaint her sad destiny--her father's banishment, her mother's death, her sister Berenike's profligacy. Even to me, in whom she found a second brother and fully trusted, she spoke of these sorrowful things only in guarded allusions. I know that she understood what was passing fully and perfectly, and how deeply she felt it; but pain placed itself between her and the 'chief good,' and she mastered it. And when she sat at work, with what tenacious power the delicate creature struggled until she had conquered the hardest task and outstripped Charmian and even me!

"In those days I understood why, among the gods, a maiden rules over learning, and why she is armed with the weapons of war. You have heard how many languages Cleopatra speaks. A remark of Timagenes had fallen into her soul like a seed. 'With every language you learn,' he had said, 'you will gain a nation.' But there were many peoples in her father's kingdom, and when she was Queen they must all love her. True, she began

with the tongue of the conquerors, not the conquered. So it happened that we first learned Lucretius, who reproduces in verse the doctrines of Epicurus. My father was our teacher, and the second year she read Lucretius as if it were a Greek book. She had only half known Egyptian; now she speedily acquired it. During our stay at Philae she found a troglodyte who was induced to teach her his language. There were Jews enough here in Alexandria to instruct her in theirs, and she also learned its kindred tongue, Arabic.

"When, many years later, she visited Antony at Tarsus, the warriors imagined that some piece of Egyptian magic was at work, for she addressed each commander in his own tongue, and talked with him as if she were a native of the same country.

"It was the same with everything. She outstripped us in every branch of study. To her burning ambition it would have been unbearable to lag behind.

"The Roman Lucretius became her favourite poet, although she was no more friendly to his nation than I, but the self-conscious power of the foe pleased her, and once I heard her exclaim 'Ah! if the Egyptians were Romans, I would give up our garden for Berenike's throne.'

"Lucretius constantly led her back to Epicurus, and awakened a severe conflict in her unresting mind. You probably know that he teaches that life in itself is not so great a blessing that it must be deemed a misfortune not to live. It is only spoiled by having death appear to us as the greatest of misfortunes. Only the soul which ceases to regard death as a misfortune finds peace. Whoever knows that thought and feeling end with life will not fear death; for, no matter how many dear and precious things the dead have left here below, their yearning for them has ceased with life. He declares that providing for the body is the greatest folly, while the Egyptian religion, in which Anubis strove to strengthen her faith, maintained precisely the opposite.

"To a certain degree he succeeded, for his personality exerted a powerful influence over her; and besides, she naturally took great pleasure in mystical, supernatural things, as my brother Straton did in physical strength, and you, Barine, enjoy the gift of song. You know Anubis by sight. What Alexandrian has not seen this remarkable man? and whoever has once met his eyes does not easily forget him. He does indeed rule over mysterious powers, and he used them in his intercourse with the young princess. It is his work if she cleaves to the religious belief of her people, if she who is a Hellene to the last drop of blood loves Egypt, and is ready to make any sacrifice for her independence and grandeur. She is called 'the new Isis,' but Isis presides over the magic arts of the Egyptians, and Anubis initiated Cleopatra into this secret science, and even persuaded her to enter the observatory and the laboratory--

"But all these things had their origin in our garden of Epicurus, and my father did not venture to forbid it; for the King had sent a message from Rome to say that he was glad to have Cleopatra find pleasure in her own people and their secret knowledge.

"The flute-player, during his stay on the Tiber, had given his gold to the right men or bound them as creditors to his interest. After Pompey, Caesar, and Crassus had concluded their alliance, they consented at Lucca to the restoration of the Ptolemy. Millions upon millions would not have seemed to him too large a price for this object. Pompey would rather have

gone to Egypt himself, but the jealousy of the others would not permit it. Gabinius, the Governor of Syria, received the commission.

"But the occupants of the Egyptian throne were not disposed to resign it without a struggle. You know that meanwhile Queen Berenike, Cleopatra's sister, had been twice married. She had her miserable first husband strangled--a more manly spouse had been chosen by the Alexandrians for her second consort. He bravely defended his rights, and lost his life on the field of battle.

"The senate learned speedily enough that Gabinius had brought the Ptolemy back to his country; the news reached us more slowly. We watched for every rumour with the same passionate anxiety as now.

"At that time Cleopatra was fourteen, and had developed magnificently. Yonder portrait shows the perfect flower, but the bud possessed, if possible, even more exquisite charm. How clear and earnest was the gaze of her bright eyes! When she was gay they could shine like stars, and then her little red mouth had an indescribably mischievous expression, and in each cheek came one of the tiny dimples which still delight every one. Her nose was more delicate than it is now, and the slight curve which appears in the portrait, and which is far too prominent in the coins, was not visible. Her hair did not grow dark until later in life. My sister Charmian had no greater pleasure than to arrange its wavy abundance. It was like silk, she often said, and she was right. I know this, for when at the festival of Isis, Cleopatra, holding the sistrum, followed the image of the goddess, she was obliged to wear it unconfined. On her return home she often shook her head merrily, and her hair fell about her like a cataract, veiling her face and figure. Then, as now, she was not above middle height, but her form possessed the most exquisite symmetry, only it was still more delicate and pliant.

"She had understood how to win all hearts. Yet, though she seemed to esteem our father higher, trust me more fully, look up to Anubis with greater reverence, and prefer to argue with the keen-witted Timagenes, she still appeared to hold all who surrounded her in equal favour, while Arsinoe left me in the lurch if Straton were present, and whenever the handsome Melnodor, one of my father's pupils, came to us, she fairly devoured him with her glowing eyes.

"As soon as it was rumoured that the Romans were bringing the King back, Queen Berenike came to us to take the young girls to the city. When Cleopatra entreated her to leave her in our parents' care and not interrupt her studies, a scornful smile flitted over Berenike's face, and turning to her husband Archelaus, she said scornfully, 'I think books will prove to be the smallest danger.'

"Pothinus, the guardian of the two princesses' brothers, had formerly permitted them at times to visit their sisters. Now they were no longer allowed to leave Lochias, but neither Cleopatra nor Arsinoe made many inquiries about them. The little boys always retreated from their caresses, and the Egyptian locks on their temples, which marked the age of childhood, and the Egyptian garments which Pothinus made them wear, lent them an unfamiliar aspect.

"When it was reported that the Romans were advancing from Gaza, both girls were overpowered by passionate excitement. Arsinoe's glittered in every glance; Cleopatra understood how to conceal hers, but her colour often varied, and her face, which was not pink and white like her

sister's, but--how shall I express it?"

"I know what you mean," Barine interrupted. "When I saw her, nothing seemed to me more charming than that pallid hue through which the crimson of her cheeks shines like the flame through yonder alabaster lamp, the tint of the peach through the down. I have seen it often in convalescents. Aphrodite breathes this hue on the faces and figures of her favourites only, as the god of time imparts the green tinge to the bronze. Nothing is more beautiful than when such women blush."

"Your sight is keen," replied Archibius, smiling. "It seemed indeed as if not Eos, but her faint reflection in the western horizon, was tinting the sky, when joy or shame sent the colour to her cheeks, But when wrath took possession of her--and ere the King's return this often happened--she could look as if she were lifeless, like a marble statue, with lips as colourless as those of a corpse."

"My father said that the blood of Physkon and other degenerate ancestors, who had not learned to control their passions, was asserting itself in her also. But I must continue my story, or the messenger will interrupt me too soon."

"Gabinius was bringing back the King. But from the time of his approach with the Roman army and the auxiliary troops of the Ethnarch of Judea, nothing more was learned of him or of Antipater, who commanded the forces of Hyrkanus; every one talked constantly of the Roman general Antony. He had led the troops successfully through the deserts between Syria and the Egyptian Delta without losing a single man on the dangerous road by the Sirbonian Sea and Barathra, where many an army had met destruction. Not to Antipater, but to him, had the Jewish garrison of Pelusium surrendered their city without striking a blow. He had conquered in two battles; and the second, where, as you know, Berenike's husband fell after a brave resistance, had decided the destiny of the country."

"From the time his name was first mentioned, neither of the girls could hear enough about him. It was said that he was the most aristocratic of aristocratic Romans, the most reckless of the daring, the wildest of the riotous, and the handsomest of the handsome."

"The waiting-maid from Mantua, with whom Cleopatra practised speaking the Roman language, had often seen him, and had heard of him still more frequently--for his mode of life was the theme of gossip among all classes of Roman men and women. His house was said to have descended in a direct line from Hercules, and his figure and magnificent black beard recalled his ancestor. You know him, and know that the things reported of him are those which a young girl cannot hear with indifference, and at that time he was nearly five lustra younger than he is to-day."

"How eagerly Arsinoe listened when his name was uttered! How Cleopatra flushed and paled when Timagenes condemned him as an unprincipled libertine! True, Antony was opening her father's path to his home."

"The flute-player had not forgotten his daughters. He had remained aloof from the battle, but as soon as the victory was decided, he pressed on into the city."

"The road led past our garden."

"The King had barely time to send a runner to his daughters, fifteen

minutes before his arrival, to say that he desired to greet them. They were hurriedly attired in festal garments, and both presented an appearance that might well gladden a father's heart.

"Cleopatra was not yet as tall as Arsinoe, but, though only fourteen, she looked like a full-grown maiden, while her sister's face and figure showed that in years she was still a child. But she was no longer one in heart. Bouquets for the returning sovereign had been arranged as well as haste permitted. Each one of the girls held one in her hand when the train approached.

"My parents accompanied them to the garden gate. I could see what was passing, but could hear distinctly only the voices of the men.

"The King alighted from the travelling chariot, which was drawn by eight white Median steeds. The chamberlain who attended him was obliged to support him. His face, reddened by his potations, fairly beamed as he greeted his daughters. His joyful surprise at the sight of both, but especially of Cleopatra, was evident. True, he kissed and embraced Arsinoe, but after that he had eyes and ears solely for Cleopatra.

"Yet his younger daughter was very beautiful. Away from her sister, she would have commanded the utmost admiration; but Cleopatra was like the sun, beside which every other heavenly body pales. Yet, no; she should not be compared to the sun. It was part of the fascination she exerted that every one felt compelled to gaze at her, to discover the source of the charm which emanated from her whole person.

"Antony, too, was enthralled by the spell as soon as he heard the first words from her lips. He had dashed up to the King's chariot, and seeing the two daughters by their father's side, he greeted them with a hasty salute. When, in reply to the question whether he might hope for her gratitude for bringing her father back to her so quickly, she said that as a daughter she sincerely rejoiced, but as an Egyptian the task would be harder, he gazed more keenly at her.

"I did not know her answer until later; but ere the last sound of her voice had died away, I saw the Roman spring from his charger and fling the bridle to Ammonius--the chamberlain who had assisted the King from the chariot--as if he were his groom. The woman-hunter had met with rare game in his pursuit of the fairest, and while he continued his conversation with Cleopatra her father sometimes joined in, and his deep laughter was often heard.

"No one would have recognized the earnest disciple of Epicurus. We had often heard apt replies and original thoughts from Cleopatra's lips, but she had rarely answered Timagenes's jests with another. Now she found--one could see it by watching the speakers--a witty answer to many of Antony's remarks. It seemed as if, for the first time, she had met some one for whom she deemed it worth while to bring into the field every gift of her deep and quick intelligence. Yet she did not lose for a moment her womanly dignity; her eyes did not sparkle one whit more brightly than during an animated conversation with me or our father.

"It was very different with Arsinoe. When Antony flung himself from his horse, she had moved nearer to her sister, but, as the Roman continued to overlook her, her face crimsoned, she bit her scarlet lips. Her whole attitude betrayed the agitation that mastered her, and I, who knew her, saw by the expression of her eyes and her quivering nostrils that she was

on the point of bursting into tears. Though Cleopatra stood so much nearer to my heart, I felt sorry for her, and longed to touch the arm of the haughty Roman, who indeed looked like the god of war, and whisper to him to take some little notice of the poor child, who was also a daughter of the King.

"But a still harder blow was destined to fall upon Arsinoe; for when the King, who had been holding both bouquets, warned Antony that it was time to depart, he took one, and I heard him say in his deep, loud tones, 'Whoever calls such flowers his daughters does not need so many others.' Then he gave Cleopatra the blossoms and, laying his hand upon his heart, expressed the hope of seeing her in Alexandria, and swung himself upon the charger which the chamberlain, pale with fury, was still holding by the bridle.

"The flute-player was delighted with his oldest daughter, and told my father he would have the young princess conveyed to the city on the day after the morrow. The next day he had things to do of which he desired her to have no knowledge. Our father, in token of his gratitude, should retain for himself and his heirs the summer palace and the garden. He would see that the change of owner was entered in the land register. This was really done that very day. It was, indeed, his first act save one--the execution of his daughter Berenike.

"This ruler, who would have seemed to any one who beheld his meeting with his children a warm-hearted man and a tender father, at that time would have put half Alexandria to the sword, had not Antony interposed. He forbade the bloodshed, and honoured Berenike's dead husband by a stately funeral.

"As the steed bore him away, he turned back towards Cleopatra; he could not have saluted Arsinoe, for she had rushed into the garden, and her swollen face betrayed that she had shed burning tears.

"From that hour she bitterly hated Cleopatra.

"On the day appointed, the King brought the princesses to the city with regal splendour. The Alexandrians joyously greeted the royal sisters, as, seated on a golden throne, over which waved ostrich-feathers, they were borne in state down the Street of the King, surrounded by dignitaries, army commanders, the body-guard, and the senate of the city. Cleopatra received the adulation of the populace with gracious majesty, as if she were already Queen. Whoever had seen her as, with floods of tears, she bade us all farewell, assuring us of her gratitude and faithful remembrance, the sisterly affection she showed me--I had just been elected commander of the Ephebi--" Here Archibius was interrupted by a slave, who announced the arrival of the messenger, and, rising hurriedly, he went to Leonax's workshop, to which the man had been conducted, that he might speak to him alone.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Shadow of the candlestick caught her eye before the light
Soul which ceases to regard death as a misfortune finds peace

CLEOPATRA

By Georg Ebers

Volume 3.

CHAPTER VI.

The men sent by Archibius to obtain news had brought back no definite information; but a short time before, a royal runner had handed him a tablet from Iras, requesting him to visit her the next day. Disquieting, but fortunately as yet unverified tidings had arrived. The Regent was doing everything in his power to ascertain the truth; but he (Archibius) was aware of the distrust of the government, and everything connected with it, felt by the sailors and all the seafaring folk at the harbour. An independent person like himself could often learn more than the chief of the harbour police, with all his ships and men.

The little tablet was accompanied by a second, which, in the Regent's name, authorized the bearer to have the harbour chains raised anywhere, to go out into the open sea and return without interference.

The messenger, the overseer of Archibius's galley slaves, was an experienced man. He undertook to have the "Epicurus"--a swift vessel, which Cleopatra had given to her friend--ready for a voyage to the open sea within two hours. The carriage should be sent for his master, that no time might be lost.

When Archibius had returned to the ladies and asked whether it would be an abuse of their hospitality, if--it was now nearly midnight--he should still delay his departure for a time, they expressed sincere pleasure, and begged him to continue his narrative.

"I must hasten," he hurriedly began, after eating the lunch which Berenike had ordered while he was talking with the messenger, "but the events of the next few years are hardly worth mentioning. Besides, my time was wholly occupied by my studies in the museum.

"As for Cleopatra and Arsinoe, they stood like queens at the head of all the magnificence of the court. The day on which they left our house was the last of their childhood.

"Who would venture to determine whether her father's restoration, or the meeting with Antony, had wrought the great change which took place at that time in Cleopatra?

"Just before she left us, my mother had lamented that she must give her to a father like the flute-player, instead of to a worthy mother; for the best could not help regarding herself happy in the possession of such a daughter. Afterwards her character and conduct were better suited to delight men than to please a mother. The yearning for peace of mind seemed over. Only the noisy festivals, the singing and music, of which there was never any cessation in the palace of the royal virtuoso, seemed to weary her and at such times she appeared at our house and spent several days beneath its roof. Arsinoe never accompanied her; her heart

was sometimes won by a golden-haired officer in the ranks of the German horsemen whom Gabinius had left among the garrison of Alexandria, sometimes by a Macedonian noble among the youths who, at that time, performed the service of guarding the palace.

"Cleopatra lived apart from her, and Arsinoe openly showed her hostility from the time that she entreated her to put an end to the scandal caused by her love affairs.

"Cleopatra held aloof from such things.

"Though she had devoted much time to the magic arts of the Egyptians, her clear intellect had rendered her so familiar with the philosophy of the Hellenes that it was a pleasure to hear her converse or argue in the museum—as she often did—with the leaders of the various schools. Her self-confidence had become very strong. Though, while with us, she said that she longed to return to the days of the peaceful Garden of Epicurus, she devoted herself eagerly enough to the events occurring in the world and to statecraft. She was familiar with everything in Rome, the desires and struggles of the contending parties, as well as the characters of the men who were directing affairs, their qualities, views, and aims.

"She followed Antony's career with the interest of love, for she had bestowed on him the first affection of her young heart. She had expected the greatest achievements, but his subsequent course seemed to belie these lofty hopes. A tinge of scorn coloured her remarks concerning him at that time, but here also her heart had its share.

"Pompey, to whom her father owed his restoration to the throne, she considered a lucky man, rather than a great and wise one. Of Julius Caesar, on the contrary, long before she met him, she spoke with ardent enthusiasm, though she knew that he would gladly have made Egypt a Roman province. The greatest deed which she expected from the energetic Julius was that he would abolish the republic, which she hated, and soar upward to tyrannize over the arrogant rulers of the world—only she would fain have seen Antony in his place. How often in those days she used magic art to assure herself of his future! Her father was interested in these things, especially as, through them, and the power of the mighty Isis, he expected to obtain relief from his many and severe sufferings.

"Cleopatra's brothers were still mere boys, completely dependent upon their guardian, Pothinus, to whom the King left the care of the government, and their tutor, Theodotus, a clever but unprincipled rhetorician. These two men and Achillas, the commander of the troops, would gladly have aided Dionysus, the King's oldest male heir, to obtain the control of the state, in order afterwards to rule him, but the flute-player baffled their plans. You know that in his last will he made Cleopatra, his favourite child, his successor, but her brother Dionysus was to share the throne as her husband. This caused much scandal in Rome, though it was an old custom of the house of Ptolemy, and suited the Egyptians.

"The flute-player died. Cleopatra became Queen, and at the same time the wife of a husband ten years old, for whom she did not even possess the natural gift of sisterly tenderness. But with the obstinate child who had been told by his counsellors that the right to rule should be his alone, she also married the former governors of the country.

"Then began a period of sore suffering. Her life was a perpetual battle

against notorious intrigues, the worst of which owed their origin to her sister. Arsinoe had surrounded herself with a court of her own, managed by the eunuch Ganymedes, an experienced commander, and at the same time a shrewd adviser, wholly devoted to her interest. He understood how to bring her into close relations with Pothinus and other rulers of the state, and thus at last united all who possessed any power in the royal palace in an endeavour to thrust Cleopatra from the throne. Pothinus, Theodotus, and Achillas hated her because she saw their failings and made them feel the superiority of her intellect. Their combined efforts might have succeeded in overthrowing her before, had not the Alexandrians, headed by the Ephebi, over whom I still had some influence, stood by her so steadfastly. Whoever could still be classed as a youth glowed with enthusiasm for her, and most of the Macedonian nobles in the body-guard would have gone to death for her sake, though she had forced them to gaze hopelessly up to her as if she were some unapproachable goddess.

"When her father died she was seventeen, but she knew how to resist oppressors and foes as if she were a man. My sister, Charmian, whom she had appointed to a place in her service, loyally aided her. At that time she was a beautiful and lovable girl, but the spell exerted by the Queen fettered her like chains and bonds. She voluntarily resigned the love of a noble man--he afterwards became your husband, Berenike--in order not to leave her royal friend at a time when she so urgently needed her. Since then my sister has shut her heart against love. It belonged to Cleopatra. She lives, thinks, cares for her alone. She is fond of you, Barine, because your father was so dear to her. Iras, whose name is so often associated with hers, is the daughter of my oldest sister, who was already married when the King entrusted the princesses to our father's care. She is thirteen years younger than Cleopatra, but her mistress holds the first place in her heart also. Her father, the wealthy Krates, made every effort to keep her from entering the service of the Queen, but in vain. A single conversation with this marvellous woman had bound her forever.

"But I must be brief. You have doubtless heard how completely Cleopatra bewitched Pompey's son during his visit to Alexandria. She had not been so gracious to any man since her meeting with Antony, and it was not from affection, but to maintain the independence of her beloved native land. At that time the father of Gnejus was the man who possessed the most power, and statecraft commanded her to win him through his son. The young Roman also took his leave 'full of her,' as the Egyptians say. This pleased her, but the visit greatly aided her foes. There was no slander which was not disseminated against her. The commanders of the body-guard, whom she had always treated as a haughty Queen, had seen her associate with Pompey's son in the theatre as if he were a friend of equal rank; and on many other occasions the Alexandrians saw her repay his courtesies in the same coin. But in those days hatred of Rome surged high. The regents, leagued with Arsinoe, spread the rumour that Cleopatra would deliver Egypt up to Pompey, if the senate would secure to her the sole sovereignty of the new province, and leave her free to rid herself of her royal brother and husband.

"She was compelled to fly, and went first to the Syrian frontier, to gain friends for her cause among the Asiatic princes. My brother Straton--you remember the noble youth who won the prize for wrestling at Olympia, Berenike--and I were commissioned to carry the treasure to her. We doubtless exposed ourselves to great peril, but we did so gladly, and left Alexandria with a few camels, an ox-cart, and some trusted slaves. We were to go to Gaza, where Cleopatra was already beginning to collect

an army, and had disguised ourselves as Nabataean merchants. The languages which I had learned, in order not to be distanced by Cleopatra, were now of great service.

"Those were stirring times. The names of Caesar and Pompey were in every mouth. After the defeat at Dyrrachium the cause of Julius seemed lost, but the Pharsalian battle again placed him uppermost, unless the East rose in behalf of Pompey. Both seemed to be favourites of Fortune. The question now was to which the goddess would prove most faithful.

"My sister Charmian was with the Queen, but through one of Arsinoe's maids, who was devoted to her, we had learned from the palace that Pompey's fate was decided. He had come a fugitive from the defeat of Pharsalus, and begged the King of Egypt--that is, the men who were acting in his name--for a hospitable reception. Pothinus and his associates had rarely confronted a greater embarrassment. The troops and ships of the victorious Caesar were close at hand; many of Gabinius' men were serving in the Egyptian army. To receive the vanquished Pompey kindly was to make the victorious Caesar a foe. I was to witness the terrible solution of this dilemma. The infamous words of Theodotus, 'Dead dogs no longer bite,' had turned the scale.

"My brother and I reached Mount Casius with our precious freight, and pitched our tents to await a messenger, when a large body of armed men approached from the city. At first we feared that we were pursued; but a spy reported that the King himself was among the soldiery, and at the same time a large Roman galley drew near the coast. It must be Pompey's. So they had changed their views, and the King was coming in person to receive their guest. The troops encamped on the flat shore on which stood the Temple of the Casian Amon.

"The September sun shone brightly, and was reflected from the weapons. From the high bank of the dry bed of the river, where we had pitched our tent, we saw something scarlet move to and fro. It was the King's mantle. The waves, stirred by the autumn breeze, rippled lightly, blue as cornflowers, over the yellow sand of the dunes; but the King stood still, shading his eyes with his hand as he gazed at the galley. Meanwhile, Achilles, the commander of the troops, and Septimius, the tribune, who belonged to the Roman garrison in Alexandria, and who, I knew, had served under Pompey and owed him many favours, had entered a boat and put off to the vessel, which could not come nearer the land on account of the shallow water.

"The conference now began, and Achilles's offer of hospitality must have been very warm and well calculated to inspire confidence, for a tall lady--it was Cornelia, the wife of the Emperor--waved her hand to him in token of gratitude."

Here the speaker paused, drew a long breath, and, pressing his hand to his brow, continued "What follows--alas, that it was my fate to witness the dreadful scene! How often a garbled account has been given, and yet the whole was so terribly simple!

"Fortune makes her favourites confiding. Pompey was also. Though more than fifty years old--he lacked two years of sixty--he sprang into the boat quickly enough, with merely a little assistance from a freedman. A sailor--he was a negro--shoved the skiff off from the side of the huge ship as violently as if the pole he used for the purpose was a spear, and the galley his foe. The boat, urged by his companions' oars, had already

moved forward, and he stumbled, the brown cap falling from his woolly head in the act.

"It seems as if I could still see him. Ere I clearly realized that this was an evil omen, the boat stopped.

"The water was shallow. I saw Achilles point to the shore. It could be reached by a single bound. Pompey looked towards the King. The freedman put his hand under his arm to help him rise. Septimius also stood up. I thought he intended to assist him. But no! What did this mean? Something flashed by the Imperator's silver-grey hair as if a spark had fallen from the sky. Would Pompey defend himself, or why did he raise his hand? It was to draw around him the toga, with which he silently covered his face. The tribune's arm was again raised high into the air, and then--what confusion! Here, there, yonder, hands suddenly appeared aloft, bright flashes darted through the clear air. Achilles, the general, dealt blows with his dagger as if he were skilled in murder. The Imperator's stalwart figure sank forward. The freedman supported him.

"Then shouts arose, here a cry of fury, yonder a wail of grief, and, rising above all, a woman's shriek of anguish. It came from the lips of Cornelia, the murdered man's wife. Shouts of applause from the King's camp followed, then the blast of a trumpet; the Egyptians drew back from the shore. The scarlet cloak again appeared. Septimius, bearing in his hand a bleeding head, went towards it and held the ghastly trophy aloft.

"The royal boy gazed into the dull eyes of the victim, who had guided the destinies of many a battlefield, of Rome, of two quarters of the globe. The sight was probably too terrible for the child upon the throne, for he averted his head. The ship moved away from the land, the Egyptians formed into ranks and marched off. Achilles cleansed his blood-stained hands in the sea-water. The freedman beside him washed his master's headless trunk. The general shrugged his shoulders as the faithful fellow heaped reproaches on him."

Here Archibius paused, drawing a long breath. Then he continued more calmly:

"Achillas did not lead the troops back to Alexandria, but eastward, towards Pelusium, as I learned later.

"My brother and I stood on the rocky edge of the ravine. It was long ere either spoke. A cloud of dust concealed the King and his body-guard, the sails of the galley disappeared. Twilight closed in, and Straton pointed westward towards Alexandria. Then the sun set. Red! red! It seemed as if a torrent of blood was pouring over the city.

"Night followed. A scanty fire was glimmering on the strand. Where had the wood been gathered in this desert? How had it been kindled? A wrecked, mouldering boat had lain close beside the scene of the murder. The freedman and his companions had broken it up and fed the flames with withered boughs, the torn garments of the murdered man, and dry sea-weed. A blaze soon rose, and a body was carefully placed upon the wretched funeral pyre. It was the corpse of the great Pompey. One of the Imperator's veterans aided the faithful servant."

Here Archibius sank back again among the cushions, adding in explanation:

"Cordus, the man's name was Servius Cordus. He fared well later. The

Queen provided for him. The others? Fate overtook them all soon enough. Theodotus was condemned by Brutus to a torturing death. Amid his loud shrieks of agony one of Pompey's veterans shouted, 'Dead dogs no longer bite, but they howl when dying!'

"It was worthy of Caesar that he averted his face in horror from the head of his enemy, which Theodotus sent to him. Pothinus, too, vainly awaited the reward of his infamous deed.

"Julius Caesar had cast anchor before Alexandria shortly after the King's return. Not until after his arrival in Egypt did he learn how Pompey had been received there. You know that he remained nine months. How often I have heard it said that Cleopatra understood how to chain him here! This is both true and false. He was obliged to stay half a year; the following three months he did indeed give to the woman whom he loved. Ay, the heart of the man of fifty-four had again opened to a great passion. Like all wounds, those inflicted by the arrows of Eros heal more slowly when youth lies behind the stricken one. It was not only the eyes and the senses which attracted a couple so widely separated by years, but far more the mental characteristics of both. Two winged intellects had met. The genius of one had recognized that of the other. The highest type of manhood had met perfect womanhood. They could not fail to attract each other. I expected it; for Cleopatra had long watched breathlessly the flight of this eagle who soared so far above the others, and she was strong enough to keep at his side.

"We succeeded in joining Cleopatra, and heard that, spite of the hostility of our citizens, Caesar had occupied the palace of the Ptolemies and was engaged in restoring order.

"We knew in what way Pothinus, Achilles, and Arsinoe would seek to influence him. Cleopatra had good reason to fear that her foes might deliver Egypt unconditionally to Rome, if Caesar should leave the reins of government in their hands and shut her out. She had cause to dread this, but she also had the courage to act in person in her own behalf.

"The point now was to bring her into the city, the palace-nay, into direct communication with the dictator. Children tell the tale of the strong man who bore Cleopatra in a sack through the palace portals. It was not a sack which concealed her, but a Syrian carpet. The strong man was my brother Straton. I went first, to secure a free passage.

"Julius Caesar and she saw and found each other. Fate merely drew the conclusion which must result from such premises. Never have I seen Cleopatra happier, more exalted in mind and heart, yet she was menaced on all sides by serious perils. It required all the military genius of Caesar to conquer the fierce hostility which he encountered here. It was this, not the thrall of Cleopatra, I repeat, which first bound him to Egypt. What would have prevented him--as he did later--from taking the object of his love to Rome, had it been possible at that time? But this was not the case. The Alexandrians provided for that.

"He had recognized the flute-player's will, nay, had granted more to the royal house than could have been given to the former. Cleopatra and her brother-husband, Dionysus, were to share the government, and he also bestowed on Arsinoe and her youngest brother the island of Cyprus, which had been wrested from their uncle Ptolemy by the republic. Rome was, of course, to remain the guardian of the brothers and sisters.

"This arrangement was unendurable to Pothinus and the former rulers of the state. Cleopatra as Queen, and Rome--that is Caesar, the dictator, her friend, as guardian--meant their removal from power, their destruction, and they resisted violently.

"The Egyptians and even the Alexandrians supported them. The young King hated nothing more than the yoke of the unloved sister, who was so greatly his superior. Caesar had come with a force by no means equal to theirs, and it might be possible to draw the mighty general into a snare. They fought with all the power at their command, with such passionate eagerness, that the dictator had never been nearer succumbing to peril. But Cleopatra certainly did not paralyze his strength and cautious deliberation. No! He had never been greater; never proved the power of his genius so magnificently. And against what superior power, what hatred he contended! I myself saw the young King, when he heard that Cleopatra had succeeded in entering the palace and meeting Caesar, rush into the street, fairly crazed by rage, tear the diadem from his head, hurl it on the pavement, and shriek to the passers-by that he was betrayed, until Caesar's soldiers forced him back into the palace, and dispersed the mob.

"Arsinoe had received more than she could venture to expect; but she was again most deeply angered. After Caesar's entry into the palace, she had received him as Queen, and hoped everything from his favour. Then her hated sister had come and, as so often happened, she was forgotten for Cleopatra's sake.

"This was too much, and with the eunuch Ganymedes, her confidant, and--as I have already said--an able warrior, she left the palace and joined the dictator's foes.

"There were severe battles on land and sea; in the streets of the city, for the drinkable water excavated by the foe; and against the conflagration which destroyed part of the Bruchium and the library of the museum. Yet, half dead with thirst, barely escaped from drowning, threatened on all sides by fierce hatred, he stood firm, and remained victor also in the open field, after the young King had placed himself at the head of the Egyptians and collected an army.

"You know that the boy was drowned in the flight.

"In battle and mortal peril, amid blood and the clank of arms, Caesar and Cleopatra spent half a year ere they were permitted to pluck the fruit of their common labour. The dictator now made her Queen of Egypt, and gave her, as co-regent, her youngest brother, a boy not half her own age. To Arsinoe he granted the life she had forfeited, but sent her to Italy.

"Peace followed the victory. Now, it is true, grave duties must have summoned the statesman back to Rome, but he tarried three full months longer.

"Whoever knows the life of the ambitious Julius, and is aware what this delay might have cost him, may well strike his brow with his hand, and ask, 'Is it true and possible that he used this precious time to take a trip with the woman he loved up the Nile, to the island of Isis, which is so dear to the Queen, to the extreme southern frontier of the country?' Yet it was so, and I myself went in the second ship, and not only saw them together, but more than once shared their banquets and their conversation. It was giving and taking, forcing down and elevating, a succession of discords, not unpleasant to hear, because experience taught

that they would finally terminate in the most beautiful harmony. It was a festal day for all the senses."

"I imagine the whole Nile journey," interrupted Barine, "to be like the fairy voyage, when the purple silk sails of Cleopatra's galley bore Antony along the Cydnus."

"No, no," replied Archibius, "she first learned from Antony the art of filling this earthly existence with fleeting pleasures. Caesar demanded more. Her intellect offered him the highest enjoyment."

Here he hesitated.

"True, the skill with which, to please Antony, she daily offered him for years fresh charms for every sense, was not a matter of accident."

"And this," cried Barine, "this was undertaken by the woman who had recognized the chief good in peace of mind!"

"Ay," replied Archibius thoughtfully, "yet this was the inevitable result. Pleasure had been the young girl's object in life. Ere passion awoke in her soul, peace of mind was the chief good she knew. When the hour arrived that this proved unattainable, the firmly rooted yearning for happiness still remained the purpose of her existence. My father would have been wiser to take her to the Stoa and impress it upon her that, if life must have a goal, it should be only to live in accordance with the sensibly arranged course of the world, and in harmony with one's own nature. He should have taught her to derive happiness from virtue. He should have stamped goodness upon the soul of the future Queen as the fundamental law of her being. He omitted to do this, because in his secluded life he had succeeded in finding the happiness which the master promises to his disciples. From Athens to Cyrene, from Epicurus to Aristippus, is but a short step, and Cleopatra took it when she forgot that the master was far from recognizing the chief good in the enjoyment of individual pleasure. The happiness of Epicurus was not inferior to that of Zeus, if he had only barley bread and water to appease his hunger and thirst.

"Yet she still considered herself a follower of Epicurus, and later, when Antony had gone to the Parthian war, and she was a long time alone, she once more began to strive for freedom from pain and peace of mind, but the state, her children, the marriage of Antony--who had long been her lover--to Octavia, the yearning of her own heart, Anubis, magic, and the Egyptian teachings of the life after death, above all, the burning ambition, the unresting desire to be loved, where she herself loved, to be first among the foremost--"

Here he was interrupted by the messenger, who informed him that the ship was ready.

CHAPTER VII.

Archibius had buried himself so deeply in the past that it was several minutes ere he could bring himself back to the present. When he did so, he hastily discussed with the two ladies the date of their departure.

It was hard for Berenike to leave her injured brother, and Barine longed to see Dion once more before the journey. Both were reluctant to quit Alexandria ere decisive news had arrived from the army and the fleet. So they requested a few days' delay; but Archibius cut them short, requiring them, with a resolution which transformed the amiable friend into a stern master, to be ready for the journey the next day at sunset. His Nile boat would await them at the Agathodaemon harbour on Lake Mareotis, and his travelling chariot would convey them thither, with as much luggage and as many female slaves as they desired to take with them. Then softening his tone, he briefly reminded the ladies of the great annoyances to which a longer stay would expose them, excused his rigour on the plea of haste, pressed the hands of the mother and daughter, and retired without heeding Barine, who called after him, yet could desire nothing save to plead for a longer delay. The carriage bore him swiftly to the great harbour.

The waxing moon was mirrored like a silver column, now wavering and tremulous, now rent by the waves tossing under a strong southeast wind, and illumined the warm autumn night. The sea outside was evidently running high. This was apparent by the motion of the vessels lying at anchor in the angle which the shore in front of the superb Temple of Poseidon formed with the Choma. This was a tongue of land stretched like a finger into the sea, on whose point stood a little palace which Cleopatra, incited by a chance remark of Antony, had had built there to surprise him.

Another, of white marble, glimmered in the moonlight from the island of Antirrhodus; and farther still a blazing fire illumined the darkness. Its flames flared from the top of the famous lighthouse on the island of Pharos at the entrance of the harbour, and, swayed to and fro by the wind, steeped the horizon and the outer edge of the dark water in the harbour with moving masses of light which irradiated the gloomy distance, sometimes faintly, anon more brilliantly.

Spite of the late hour, the harbour was full of bustle, though the wind often blew the men's cloaks over their heads, and the women were obliged to gather their garments closely around them. True, at this hour commerce had ceased; but many had gone to the port in search of news, or even to greet before others the first ship returning from the victorious fleet; for that Antony had defeated Octavianus in a great battle was deemed certain.

Guards were watching the harbour, and a band of Syrian horsemen had just passed from the barracks in the southern part of the Lochias to the Temple of Poseidon.

Here the galleys lay at anchor, not in the harbour of Eunostus, which was separated from the other by the broad, bridge-like dam of the Heptastadium, that united the city and the island of Pharos. Near it were the royal palaces and the arsenal, and any tidings must first reach this spot. The other harbour was devoted to commerce, but, in order to prevent the spread of false reports, newly arrived ships were forbidden to enter.

True, even at the great harbour, news could scarcely be expected, for a chain stretching from the end of the Pharos to a cliff directly opposite in the Alveus Steganus, closed the narrow opening. But it could be raised if a state galley arrived with an important message, and this was expected by the throng on the shore.

Doubtless many came from banquets, cookshops, taverns, or the nocturnal

meeting-places of the sects that practised the magic arts, yet the weight of anxious expectation seemed to check the joyous activity, and wherever Archibius glanced he beheld eager, troubled faces. The wind forced many to bow their heads, and, wherever they turned their eyes, flags and clouds of dust were fluttering in the air, increasing the confusion.

As the galley put off from the shore, and the flutes summoned the oarsmen to their toil, its owner felt so disheartened that he did not even venture to hope that he was going in quest of good tidings.

Long-vanished days had, as it were, been called from the grave, and many a scene from the past rose before him as he lay among the cushions on the poop, gazing at the sky, across which dark, swiftly sailing clouds sometimes veiled the stars and again revealed them.

"How much we can conceal by words without being guilty of falsehood!" he murmured, while recalling what he had told the women.

Ay, he had been Cleopatra's confidant in his early youth, but how he had loved her, how, even as a boy, he had been subject to her, body and soul! He had allowed her to see it, displayed, confessed it; and she had accepted it as her rightful due. She had repelled with angry pride his only attempt to clasp her, in his overflowing affection, in his arms; but to show his love for her is a crime for which the loftiest woman pardons the humblest suitor, and a few hours later Cleopatra had met him with the old affectionate familiarity.

Again he recalled the torments which he had endured when compelled to witness how completely she yielded to the passion which drew her to Antony. At that time the Roman had merely swept through her life like a swiftly passing meteor, but many things betrayed that she did not forget him; and while Archibius had seen without pain her love for the great Caesar bud and grow, the torturing feeling of jealousy again stirred in his heart, though youth was past, when at Tarsus, on the river Cydnus, she renewed the bond which still united her to Antony.

Now his hair had grown grey, and though nothing had clouded his friendship for the Queen, though he had always been ready to serve her, this foolish feeling had not been banished, and again and again mastered his whole being. He by no means undervalued Antony's attractions; but he saw his foibles no less clearly. All in all, whenever he thought of this pair, he felt like the lover of art who entrusts the finest gem in his collection to a rich man who knows not how to prize its real value, and puts it in the wrong place.

Yet he wished the Roman the most brilliant victory; for his defeat would have been Cleopatra's also, and would she endure the consequences of such a disaster?

The galley was approaching the flickering circle of light at the foot of the Pharos, and Archibius was just producing the token which was to secure the lifting of the chain, when his name echoed through the stillness of the night.

It was Dion hailing him from a boat tossing near the mouth of the harbour on the waves surging in from the turbulent sea. He had recognized Archibius's swift galley from the bust of Epicurus which was illumined by the light of the lantern in the prow. Cleopatra had had it placed upon the ship which, by her orders, had been built for her friend.

Dion now desired to join him, and was soon standing on the deck at his side. He had landed on the island of Pharos, and entered a sailors' tavern to learn what was passing. But no one could give him any definite information, for the wind was blowing from the land and allowed large vessels to approach the Egyptian coast only by the aid of oars. Shortly before the breeze had veered from south to southeast, and an experienced Rhodian would "never again lift cup of wine to his lips" if it did not blow from the north to-morrow or the day after. Then ships bearing news might reach Alexandria by the dozen--that is, the greybeard added with a defiant glance at the daintily clad city gentleman--if they were allowed to pass the Pharos or go through the Poseidon basin into the Eunostus. He had fancied that he saw sails on the horizon at sunset, but the swiftest galley became a hedgehog when the wind blew against its prow, and even checked the oars.

Others, too, had fancied that they had seen sails, and Dion would gladly have gone out to sea to investigate, but he was entirely alone in a frail hired boat, and this would not have been permitted to pass beyond the harbour. The expectation that every road would be open to Archibius had not deceived him, and the harbour chain was drawn aside for the Epicurus. With swelling sails, urged by the strong wind blowing from the southeast, its keel cut the rolling waves.

Soon a faint, tremulous light appeared in the north. It must be a ship; and though the helmsman in the tavern at Pharos, who looked as though he had not always steered peaceful trading-vessels, had spoken of some which did not let the ships they caught pass unscathed, the men on the well-equipped, stately Epicurus did not fear pirates, especially as morning was close at hand, and it had just shot by two clumsy men-of-war which had been sent out by the Regent.

The strong wind filled every sail, rowing would have been useless labour, and the light in front seemed to be coming nearer.

A wan glimmer was already beginning to brighten the distant east when the Epicurus approached the vessel with the light, but it seemed to wish to avoid the Alexandrian, and turned suddenly towards the northeast.

Archibius and Dion now discussed whether it would be worth while to pursue the fugitive. It was a small ship, which, as the dark masses of clouds became bordered with golden edges, grew more distinct and appeared to be a Cilician pirate of the smallest size.

As to its crew, the tried sailors on the Epicurus, a much larger vessel, which lacked no means of defence, showed no signs of alarm, the helmsman especially, who had served in the fleet of Sextus Pompey, and had sprung upon the deck of many a pirate ship.

Archibius deemed it foolish to commence a conflict unnecessarily. But Dion was in the mood to brave every peril.

If life and death were at stake, so much the better!

He had informed his friend of Iras's fears.

The fleet must be in a critical situation, and if the little Cilician had had nothing to conceal she would not have shunned the Epicurus.

It was worth while to learn what had induced her to turn back just before reaching the harbour. The warlike helmsman also desired to give chase, and Archibius yielded, for the uncertainty was becoming more and more unbearable. Dion's soul was deeply burdened too. He could not banish Barine's image; and since Archibius had told him that he had found her resolved to shut her house against guests, and how willingly she had accepted his invitation to the country, again and again he pondered over the question what should prevent his marrying the quiet daughter of a distinguished artist, whom he loved?

Archibius had remarked that Barine would be glad to greet her most intimate friends--among whom he was included--in her quiet country.

Dion did not doubt this, but he was equally sure that the greeting would bind him to her and rob him of his liberty, perhaps forever. But would the Alexandrian possess the lofty gift of freedom, if the Romans ruled his city as they governed Carthage or Corinth? If Cleopatra were defeated, and Egypt became a Roman province, a share in the business of the council, which was still addressed as "Macedonian men," and which was dear to Dion, could offer nothing but humiliation, and no longer afford satisfaction.

If a pirate's spear put an end to bondage under the Roman yoke and to this unworthy yearning and wavering, so much the better!

On this autumn morning, under this grey sky, from which sank a damp, light fog, with these hopes and fears in his heart, he beheld in both the present and future naught save shadows.

The Epicurus overtook and captured the fugitive. The slight resistance the vessel might have offered was relinquished when Archibius's helmsman shouted that the Epicurus did not belong to the royal navy, and had come in search of news.

The Cilician took in his oars; Archibius and Dion entered the vessel and questioned the commander.

He was an old, weather-beaten seaman, who would give no information until after he had learned what his pursuers really desired.

At first he protested that he had witnessed on the Peloponnesian coast a great victory gained by the Egyptian galleys over those commanded by Octavianus; but the queries of the two friends involved him in contradictions, and he then pretended to know nothing, and to have spoken of a victory merely to please the Alexandrian gentlemen.

Dion, accompanied by a few men from the crew of the Epicurus, searched the ship, and found in the little cabin a man bound and gagged, guarded by one of the pirates.

It was a sailor from the Pontus, who spoke only his native language. Nothing intelligible could be obtained from him; but there were important suggestions in a letter, found in a chest in the cabin, among clothing, jewels, and other stolen articles.

The letter-Dion could scarcely believe his own eyes--was addressed to his friend, the architect Gorgias. The pirate, being ignorant of writing, had not opened it, but Dion tore the wax from the cord without delay. Aristocrates, the Greek rhetorician, who had accompanied Antony to the

war, had written from Taenarum, in the south of the Peloponnesus, requesting the architect, in the general's name, to set the little palace at the end of the Choma in order, and surround it on the land side with a high wall.

No door would be necessary. Communication with the dwelling could be had by water. He must do his utmost to complete the work speedily.

The friends gazed at each other in astonishment, as they read this commission.

What could induce Antony to give so strange an order? How did it fall into the hands of the pirates?

This must be understood.

When Archibius, whose gentle nature, so well adapted to inspire confidence, quickly won friends, burst into passionate excitement, the unexpected transition rarely failed to produce its effect, especially as his tall, strong figure and marked features made a still more threatening impression.

Even the captain gazed at him with fear, when the Alexandrian threatened to recall all his promises of consideration and mercy if the pirate withheld even the smallest trifle connected with this letter. The man speedily perceived that it would be useless to make false statements; for the captive from Pontus, though unable to speak Greek, understood the language, and either confirmed every remark of the other with vehement gestures, or branded it in the same manner as false.

Thus it was discovered that the pirate craft, in company with a much larger vessel, owned by a companion, had lurked behind the promontory of Crete for a prize. They had neither seen nor heard aught concerning the two fleets, when a dainty galley, "the finest and fleetest that ever sailed in the sea"--it was probably the "Swallow," Antony's despatch-boat--had run into the snare. To capture her was an easy task. The pirates had divided their booty, but the lion's share of goods and men had fallen to the larger ship.

A pouch containing letters and money had been taken from a gentleman of aristocratic appearance--probably Antony's messenger--who had received a severe wound, died, and had been flung into the sea. The former had been used to light the fire, and only the one addressed to the architect remained.

The captured sailors had said that the fleet of Octavianus had defeated Cleopatra's, and the Queen had fled, but that the land forces were still untouched, and might yet decide the conflict in Antony's favour. The pirate protested that he did not know the position of the army--it might be at Taenarum, whence the captured ship came. It was a sin and a shame, but his own crew had set it on fire, and it sank before his eyes.

This report seemed to be true, yet the Acharnanian coast, where the battle was said to have been fought, was so far from the southern point of the Peloponnesus, whence Antony's letter came, that it must have been written during the flight. One thing appeared to be certain--the fleet had been vanquished and dispersed on the 2d or 3d of September.

Where would the Queen go now? What had become of the magnificent galleys

which had accompanied her to the battle?

Even the contrary winds would not have detained them so long, for they were abundantly supplied with rowers.

Had Octavianus taken possession of them? Were they burned or sunk?

But in that case how had Antony reached Taenarum?

The pirate could give no answer to these questions, which stirred both heart and brain. Why should he conceal what had reached his ears?

At last Archibius ordered the property stolen from Antony's ship, and the liberated sailor to be brought on board the Epicurus, but the pirate was obliged to swear not to remain in the waters between Crete and Alexandria. Then he was suffered to pursue his way unmolested.

This adventure had occupied many hours, and the return against the wind was slow; for, during the chase the Epicurus had been carried by the strong breeze far out to sea. Yet, when still several miles from the mouth of the harbour at the Pharos, it was evident that the Rhodian helmsman in the island tavern had predicted truly; for the weather changed with unusual speed, and the wind now blew from the north. The sea fairly swarmed with ships, some belonging to the royal fleet, some to curious Alexandrians, who had sailed out to take a survey. Archibius and Dion had spent a sleepless night and day. The heavy air, pervaded by a fine mist, had grown cool. After refreshing themselves by a repast, they paced up and down the deck of the Epicurus.

Few words were exchanged, and they wrapped their cloaks closer around them. Both had quaffed large draughts of the fiery wine with which the Epicurus was well supplied, but it would not warm them. Even the fire, blazing brightly in the richly furnished cabin, could scarcely do so.

Archibius's thoughts lingered with his beloved Queen, and his vivid power of imagination conjured before his mind everything which could distress her. No possible chance, not even the most terrible, was forgotten, and when he saw her sinking in the ship, stretching her beautiful arms imploringly towards him, to whom she had so long turned in every perilous position, when he beheld her a captive in the presence of the hostile, cold-hearted Octavianus, the blood seemed to freeze in his veins. At last he dropped his felt mantle and, groaning aloud, struck his brow with his clenched hand. He had fancied her walking with gold chains on her slender wrists before the victor's four-horse chariot, and heard the exulting shouts of the Roman populace.

That would have been the most terrible of all. To pursue this train of thought was beyond the endurance of the faithful friend, and Dion turned in surprise as he heard him sob and saw the tears which bedewed his face.

His own heart was heavy enough, but he knew his companion's warm devotion to the Queen; so, passing his arm around his shoulder, he entreated him to maintain that peace of soul and mind which he had so often admired. In the most critical situations he had seen him stand high above them, as yonder man who fed the flames on the summit of the Pharos stood above the wild surges of the sea. If he would reflect over what had happened as dispassionately as usual, he could not fail to see that Antony must be free and in a position to guide his own future, since he directed the palace in the Choma to be put in order. He did not understand about the

wall, but perhaps he was bringing home some distinguished captive whom he wished to debar from all communication with the city. It might prove that everything was far better than they feared, and they would yet smile at these grievous anxieties. His heart, too, was heavy, for he wished the Queen the best fortune, not only for her own sake, but because with her and her successful resistance to the greed of Rome was connected the liberty of Alexandria.

"My love and anxiety, like yours," he concluded, "have ever been given to her, the sovereign of this country. The world will be desolate, life will no longer be worth living, if the iron foot of Rome crushes our independence and freedom." The words had sounded cordial and sincere, and Archibius followed Dion's counsel. Calm thought convinced him that nothing had yet happened which compelled belief in the worst result; and, as one who needs consolation often finds relief in comforting another, Archibius cheered his own heart by representing to his younger friend that, even if Octavianus were the victor and should deprive Egypt of her independence, he would scarcely venture to take from the citizens of Alexandria the free control of their own affairs. Then he explained to Dion that, as a young, resolute, independent man, he might render himself doubly useful if it were necessary to guard the endangered liberty of the city, and told him how many beautiful things life still held in store.

His voice expressed anxious tenderness for his young friend. No one had spoken thus to Dion since his father's death.

The Epicurus would soon reach the mouth of the harbour, and after landing he must again leave Archibius.

The decisive hour which often unites earnest men more firmly than many previous years had come to both. They had opened their hearts to each other. Dion had withheld only the one thing which, at the first sight of the houses in the city, filled his soul with fresh uneasiness.

It was long since he had sought counsel from others. Many who had asked his, had left him with thanks, to do exactly the opposite of what he had advised, though it would have been to their advantage. More than once he, too, had done the same, but now a powerful impulse urged him to confide in Archibius. He knew Barine, and wished her the greatest happiness. Perhaps it would be wise to let another person, who was kindly disposed, consider what his own heart so eagerly demanded and prudence forbade.

Hastily forming his resolution, he again turned to his friend, saying:

"You have shown yourself a father to me. Imagine that I am indeed your son, and, as such wished to confess that a woman had become dear to my heart, and to ask whether you would be glad to greet her as a daughter."

Here Archibius interrupted him with the exclamation: "A ray of light amid all this gloom? Grasp what you have too long neglected as soon as possible! It befits a good citizen to marry. The Greek does not attain full manhood till he becomes husband and father. If I have remained unwedded, there was a special reason for it, and how often I have envied the cobbler whom I saw standing before his shop in the evening, holding his child in his arms, or the pilot, to whom large and small hands were stretched in greeting when he returned home! When I enter my dwelling only my dogs rejoice. But you, whose beautiful palace stands empty, to whose proud family it is due that you should provide for its continuance--"

"That is just what brings me into a state of indecision, which is usually foreign to my nature," interrupted Dion. "You know me and my position in the world, and you have also known from her earliest childhood the woman to whom I allude."

"Iras?" asked his companion, hesitatingly. His sister, Charmian, had told him of the love felt by the Queen's younger waiting-woman.

But Dion eagerly denied this, adding I am speaking of Barine, the daughter of your dead friend Leonax. "I love her, yet my pride is sensitive, and I know that it will extend to my future wife. The contemptuous glances which others might cast at her I should scorn, for I know her worth. Surely you remember my mother: she was a very different woman. Her house, her child, the slaves, her loom, were everything to her. She rigidly exacted from other women the chaste reserve which was a marked trait in her own character. Yet she was gentle, and loved me, her only son, beyond aught else. I think she would have opened her arms to Barine, had she believed that she was necessary to my happiness. But would the young beauty, accustomed to gay intercourse with distinguished men, have been able to submit to her demands? When I consider that she cannot help taking into her married life the habit of being surrounded and courted; when I think that the imprudence of a woman accustomed to perfect freedom might set idle tongues in motion, and cast a shadow upon the radiant purity of my name; when I even--" and he raised his clenched right hand. But Archibius answered soothingly:

"That anxiety is groundless if Barine warmly and joyfully gives you her whole heart. It is a sunny, lovable, true woman's heart, and therefore capable of a great love. If she bestows it on you--and I believe she will--go and offer sacrifices in your gratitude; for the immortals desired your happiness when they guided your choice to her and not to Iras, my own sister's child. If you were really my son, I would now exclaim, 'You could not bring me a dearer daughter, if--I repeat it--if you are sure of her love.'"

Dion gazed into vacancy a short time, and then cried firmly: "I am!"

CHAPTER VIII.

The Epicurus anchored before the Temple of Poseidon. The crew had been ordered to keep silence, though they knew nothing, except that a letter from Antony, commanding the erection of a wall, had been found on board the pirate. This might be regarded as a good omen, for people do not think of building unless they anticipate a time of peace.

The light rain had ceased, but the wind blew more strongly from the north, and the air had grown cool. A dense throng still covered the quay from the southern end of the Heptastadium to the promontory of Lochias. The strongest pressure was between the peninsula of the Choma and the Sebasteum; for this afforded a view of the sea, and the first tidings must reach the residence of the Regent, which was connected with the palace.

A hundred contradictory rumours had been in circulation that morning; and when, at the third hour in the afternoon, the Epicurus arrived, it was

surrounded by a dense multitude eager to hear what news the ship had brought from without.

Other vessels shared the same fate, but none could give reliable tidings.

Two swift galleys from the royal fleet reported meeting a Samian trireme, which had given news of a great victory gained by Antony on the land and Cleopatra on the sea, and, as men are most ready to believe what they desire, throngs of exulting men and women moved to and fro along the shore, strengthening by their confidence many a timorous spirit. Prudent people, who had regarded the long delay of the first ships of the fleet with anxiety, had opened their ears to the tales of evil, and looked forward to the future with uneasiness. But they avoided giving expression to their fears, for the overseer of an establishment for gold embroidery, who had ventured to warn the people against premature rejoicing, had limped home badly beaten, and two other pessimists who had been flung in the sea had just been dragged out dripping wet.

Nor could the multitude be blamed for this confidence; for at the Serapeum, the theatre of Dionysus, the lofty pylons of the Sebasteum, the main door of the museum, in front of the entrance of the palace in the Bruchium, and before the fortress-like palaces in the Lochias, triumphal arches had been erected, adorned with gods of victory and trophies hastily constructed of plaster, inscriptions of congratulations and thanks to the deities, garlands of foliage and flowers. The wreathing of the Egyptian pylons and obelisks, the principal temple, and the favourite statues in the city had been commenced during the night. The last touches were now being given to the work.

Gorgias, like his friend Dion, had not closed his eyes since the night before; for he had had charge of all the decorations of the Bruchium, where one superb building adjoined another.

Sleep had also fled from the couches of the occupants of the Sebasteum, the royal palace where Iras lived during the absence of the Queen, and the practorium, facing its southern front, which contained the official residence of the Regent.

When Archibius was conducted to the Queen's waiting-woman, her appearance fairly startled him. She had been his guest in Kanopus only the day before yesterday, and how great was the alteration within this brief time! Her oval face seemed to have lengthened, the features to have grown sharper; and this woman of seven-and-twenty years, who had hitherto retained all the charms of youth, appeared suddenly to have aged a decade. There was a feverish excitement in her manner, as, holding out her hand to her uncle, in greeting, she exclaimed hastily, "You, too, bring no good tidings?"

"Nor any evil ones," he answered quietly. "But, child, I do not like your appearance--the dark circles under your keen eyes. You have had news which rouses your anxiety?"

"Worse than that," she answered in a low tone.

"Well?"

"Read!" gasped Iras, her lips and nostrils quivering as she handed Archibius a small tablet. With a gesture of haste very unusual in him, he snatched it from her hand and, as his eyes ran over the words traced upon

it, every vestige of colour vanished from his cheeks and lips.

They were written by Cleopatra's own hand, and contained the following lines:

"The naval battle was lost--and by my fault. The land forces might still save us, but not under his command. He is with me, uninjured, but apparently exhausted; like a different being, bereft of courage, listless as if utterly crushed. I foresee the beginning of the end. As soon as this reaches you, arrange to have some unpretending litters ready for us every evening at sunset. Make the people believe that we have conquered until trustworthy intelligence arrives concerning the fate of Canidius and the army. When you kiss the children in my name, be very tender with them. Who knows how soon they may be orphaned? They already have an unhappy mother; may they be spared the memory of a cowardly one! Trust no one except those whom I left in authority, and Archibius, not even Caesarion or Antyllus. Provide for having every one whose aid may be valuable to me within reach when I come. I cannot close with the familiar 'Rejoice'--the 'Fresh Courage' placed on many a tombstone seems more appropriate. You who did not envy me in my happiness will help me to bear misfortune. Epicurus, who believes that the gods merely watch the destiny of men inactively from their blissful heights, is right. Were it otherwise, how could the love and loyalty which cleave to the hapless, defeated woman, be repaid with anguish of heart and tears? Yet continue to love her."

Archibius, pale and silent, let the tablet fall. It was long ere he gasped hoarsely: "I foresaw it; yet now that it is here--" His voice failed, and violent, tearless sobs shook his powerful frame.

Sinking on a couch he buried his face amid the cushions.

Iras gazed at the strong man and shook her head. She, too, loved the Queen; the news had brought tears to her eyes also; but even while she wept, a host of plans coping with this disaster had darted through her restless brain. A few minutes after the arrival of the message of misfortune she had consulted with the members of Cleopatra's council, and adopted measures for sustaining the people's belief in the naval victory.

What was she, the delicate, by no means courageous girl, compared to this man of iron strength who, she was well aware, had braved the greatest perils in the service of the Queen? Yet there he lay with his face hidden in the pillows as if utterly overwhelmed.

Did a woman's soul rebound more quickly after being crushed beneath the burdens of the heaviest suffering, or was hers of a special character, and her slender body the casket of a hero's nature?

She had reason to believe so when she recalled how the Regent and the Keeper of the Seal had received the terrible news. They had rushed frantically up and down the vast hall as if desperate; but Mardion the eunuch had little manhood, and Zeno was a characterless old author who had won the Queen's esteem, and the high office which he occupied solely by the vivid power of imagination, that enabled him constantly to devise new exhibitions, amusements, and entertainments, and present them with magical splendour.

But Archibius, the brave, circumspect counsellor and helper?

His shoulders again quivered as if they had received a blow, and Iras suddenly remembered what she had long known, but never fully realized--that yonder grey-haired man loved Cleopatra, loved her as she herself loved Dion; and she wondered whether she would have been strong enough to maintain her composure if she had learned that a cruel fate threatened to rob him of life, liberty, and honour.

Hour after hour she had vainly awaited the young Alexandrian, yet he had witnessed her anxiety the day before. Had she offended him? Was he detained by the spell of Didymus's granddaughter?

It seemed a great wrong that, amid the unspeakably terrible misfortune which had overtaken her mistress, she could not refrain from thinking continually of Dion. Even as his image filled her heart, Cleopatra's ruled her uncle's mind and soul, and she said to herself that it was not alone among women that love paid no heed to years, or whether the locks were brown or tinged with grey.

But Archibius now raised himself, left the couch, passed his hand across his brow, and in the deep, calm tones natural to his voice, began with a sorrowful smile: "A man stricken by an arrow leaves the fray to have his wound bandaged. The surgeon has now finished his task. I ought to have spared you this pitiable spectacle, child. But I am again ready for the battle. Cleopatra's account of Antony's condition renders a piece of news which we have just received somewhat more intelligible."

"We?" replied Iras. "Who was your companion?"

"Dion," answered Archibius; but when he was about to describe the incidents of the preceding night, she interrupted him with the question whether Barine had consented to leave the city. He assented with a curt "Yes," but Iras assumed the manner of having expected nothing different, and requested him to continue his story.

Archibius now related everything which they had experienced, and their discovery in the pirate ship. Dion was even now on the way to carry Antony's order to his friend Gorgias.

"Any slave might have attended to that matter equally well," Iras remarked in an irritated tone. "I should think he would have more reason to expect trustworthy tidings here. But that's the way with men!"

Here she hesitated but, meeting an inquiring glance from her uncle, she went on eagerly; "Nothing, I believe, binds them more firmly to one another than mutual pleasure. But that must now be over. They will seek other amusements, whether with Heliodora or Thais I care not. If the woman had only gone before! When she caught young Caesarion--"

"Stay, child," her uncle interrupted reprovingly. "I know how much she would rejoice if Antyllus had never brought the boy to her house."

"Now--because the poor deluded lad's infatuation alarms her."

"No, from his first visit. Immature boys do not suit the distinguished men whom she receives."

"If the door is always kept open, thieves will enter the house."

"She received only old acquaintances, and the friends whom they

presented. Her house was closed to all others. So there was no trouble with thieves. But who in Alexandria could venture to refuse admittance to a son of the Queen?"

"There is a wide difference between quiet admittance and fanning a passion to madness. Wherever a fire is burning, there has certainly been a spark to kindle it. You men do not detect such women's work. A glance, a pressure of the hand, even the light touch of a garment, and the flame blazes, where such inflammable material lies ready."

"We lament the violence of the conflagration. You are not well disposed towards Barine."

"I care no more for her than this couch here cares for the statue of Mercury in the street!" exclaimed Iras, with repellent arrogance. "There could be no two things in the world more utterly alien than we. Between the woman whose door stands open, and me, there is nothing in common save our sex."

"And," replied Archibius reprovingly, "many a beautiful gift which the gods bestowed upon her as well as upon you. As for the open door, it was closed yesterday. The thieves of whom you spoke spoiled her pleasure in granting hospitality. Antyllus forced himself with noisy impetuosity into her house. This made her dread still more unprecedented conduct in the future. In a few hours she will be on the way to Irenia. I am glad for Caesarion's sake, and still more for his mother's, whom we have wronged by forgetting so long for another."

"To think that we should be forced to do so!" cried Iras excitedly--"now, at this hour, when every drop of blood, every thought of this poor brain should belong to the Queen! Yet it could not be avoided. Cleopatra is returning to us with a heart bleeding from a hundred wounds, and it is terrible to think that a new arrow must strike her as soon as she steps upon her native soil. You know how she loves the boy, who is the living image of the great man with whom she shared the highest joys of love. When she learns that he, the son of Caesar, has given his young heart to the cast-off wife of a street orator, a woman whose home attracted men as ripe dates lure birds, it will be--I know--like rubbing salt into her fresh wounds. Alas! and the one sorrow will not be all. Antony, her husband, also found the way to Barine. He sought her more than once. You cannot know it as I do; but Charmian will tell you how sensitive she has become since the flower of her youthful charms--you don't perceive it--is losing one leaf after another. Jealousy will torture her, and--I know her well--perhaps no one will ever render the siren a greater service than I did when I compelled her to leave the city."

The eyes of Archibius's clever niece had glittered with such hostile feeling as she spoke that he thought with just anxiety of his dead friend's daughter. What did not yet threaten Barine as serious danger Iras had the power to transform into grave peril.

Dion had begged him to maintain strict secrecy; but even had he been permitted to speak, he would not have done so now. From his knowledge of Iras's character she might be expected, if she learned that some one had come between her and the friend of her youth, to shrink from no means of spoiling her game. He remembered the noble Macedonian maiden whom the Queen had begun to favour, and who was hunted to death by Iras's hostile intrigues. Few were more clever, and--if she once loved--more loyal and devoted, more yielding, pliant, and in happy hours more bewitching, yet

even in childhood she had preferred a winding path to a straight one. It seemed as if her shrewdness scorned to attain the end desired by the simple method lying close at hand. How willingly his mother and his younger sister Charmian had cared for the slaves and nursed them when they were ill; nay, Charmian had gained in her Nubian maid Aniukis a friend who would have gone to death for her sake! Cleopatra, too, when a child, had found sincere delight in taking a bouquet to his parents' sick old housekeeper and sitting by her bedside to shorten the time for her with merry talk. She had gone to her unasked, while Iras had often been punished because she had made the lives of numerous slaves in her parents' household still harder by unreasonable harshness. This trait in her character had roused her uncle's anxiety and, in after-years, her treatment of her inferiors had been such that he could not number her among the excellent of her sex. Therefore he was the more joyfully surprised by the loyal, unselfish love with which she devoted herself to the service of the Queen. Cleopatra had gratified Charmian's wish to have her niece for an assistant; and Iras, who had never been a loving daughter to her own faithful mother, had served her royal mistress with the utmost tenderness.

Archibius valued this loyalty highly, but he knew what awaited any one who became the object of her hatred, and the fear that it would involve Barine in urgent peril was added to his still greater anxiety for Cleopatra.

When about to depart, burdened by the sorrowful conviction that he was powerless against his niece's malevolent purpose, he was detained by the representation that every fresh piece of intelligence would first reach the Sebasteum and her. Some question might easily arise which his calm, prudent mind could decide far better than hers, whose troubled condition resembled a shallow pool disturbed by stones flung into the waves.

The apartments of his sister Charmian, which were connected with his by a corridor, were empty, and Iras begged him to remain there a short time. The anxiety and dread that oppressed her heart would kill her. To know that he was near would be the greatest comfort.

When Archibius hesitated because he deemed it his duty to urge Caesarion, over whom he possessed some influence, to give up his foolish wishes for his mother's sake, Iras assured him that he would not find the youth. He had gone hunting with Antyllus and some other friends. She had approved the plan, because it removed him from the city and Barine's dangerous house.

"As the Queen does not wish him to know the terrible news yet," she concluded, "his presence would only have caused us embarrassment. So stay, and when it grows dark go with us to the Lochias. I think it will please the sorrowing woman, when she lands, to see your familiar face, which will remind her of happier days. Do me the favour to stay." She held out both hands beseechingly as she spoke, and Archibius consented.

A repast was served, and he shared it with his niece; but Iras did not touch the carefully chosen viands, and Archibius barely tasted them. Then, without waiting for dessert, he rose to go to his sister's apartments. But Iras urged him to rest on the divan in the adjoining room, and he yielded. Yet, spite of the softness of the pillows and his great need of sleep, he could not find it; anxiety kept him awake, and through the curtain which divided the room in which Iras remained from

the one he occupied he sometimes heard her light footsteps pacing restlessly to and fro, sometimes the coming and going of messengers in quest of news.

All his former life passed before his mind. Cleopatra had been his sun, and now black clouds were rising which would dim its light, perchance forever. He, the disciple of Epicurus, who had not followed the doctrines of other masters until later in life, held the same view of the gods as his first master. To him also they had seemed immortal beings sufficient unto themselves, dwelling free from anxiety in blissful peace, to whom mortals must look upward on account of their supreme grandeur, but who neither troubled themselves about the guidance of the world, which was fixed by eternal laws, nor the fate of individuals. Had he been convinced of the contrary, he would have sacrificed everything he possessed in order, by lavish offerings, to propitiate the immortals in behalf of her to whom he had devoted his life and every faculty of his being.

Like Iras, he, too, could find no rest upon his couch, and when she heard his step she called to him and asked why he did not recover the sleep which he had lost. No one knew the demands the next night might make upon him.

"You will find me awake," he answered quietly.

Then he went to the window which, above the pylons that rose before the main front of the Sebasteum, afforded a view of the Bruchium and the sea. The harbour was now swarming with vessels of every size, garlanded with flowers and adorned with gay flags and streamers. The report of the successful issue of the first naval

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