

The Emperor, Part 2, Volume 7.

Georg Ebers

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Title: The Emperor, Part 2, Volume 7.

Author: Georg Ebers

Release Date: April, 2004 [EBook #5489]
[Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule]
[This file was first posted on May 28, 2002]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE EMPEROR, BY GEORG EBERS, V7

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THE EMPEROR, Part 2.

By Georg Ebers

Volume 7.

CHAPTER V.

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

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

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

In former years the finest hangings had decorated his windows, which had been as gay with flowers and lamps as those of the other Israelites who dwelt in the Canopic way, and who were wont to keep the festival in common with their heathen fellow-citizens as jovially as though they were no less zealous to do homage to Dionysus. Apollodorus had his own reasons for keeping aloof on this occasion from all that was connected with the holiday doings of the heathen. Without dreaming that his withdrawal could involve him in any danger, he was quietly sitting in his house, which was so splendidly furnished as to seem fitted for some princely Greek rather than for a Hebrew. This was especially the case

with the men's living-room, in which Apollodorus sat, for the pictures on the walls and pavement of this beautiful hall--of which the roof, which was half open, was supported on columns of the finest porphyry--represented the loves of Eros and Psyche; while between the pillars stood busts of the greatest heathen philosophers, and in the background a fine statue of Plato was conspicuous. Among all the Greeks and Romans there was the portrait of only one Jew, and this was that of Philo, whose intellectual and delicate features greatly resembled those of the most illustrious of his Greek companions.

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

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

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

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

prohibition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"You and your nephew also speak Greek."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"We must live not merely in accordance with the spirit, but by the words of the Most High, for not a syllable proceeds from His lips in vain. The more exalted the spirit of a discourse is, the more important is every word and syllable. One single letter often changes the meaning of whole sentences.--What a noise the people outside are making! The wild tumult

penetrates even into this room which is so far from the street, and your sons take delight in the disorders of the heathen! You do not even withhold them by force from adding to the number of those mad devotees of pleasure!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"By Heracles!"

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

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

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

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

"Speak, I beg you, speak."

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

"Why should I deny it?--In the hour when my lost wife presented me with

my first-born son."

"And you called him?"

"You know his name is Benjamin."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"He is a hero--perhaps the Redeemer."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"They are attacking my house," shouted Apollodorus.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A thousand times had it occurred that a single word had proved sufficient to inflame the hot blood of the Alexandrians to prompt them to break the laws and seize the sword. Bloody frays between the heathen inhabitants and the Jews, who were equally numerous in the city, were quite the order of the day, and one party was as often to blame as the other for disturbing the peace and having recourse to the sword. Since the Israelites had risen in several provinces--particularly in Cyrenaica and Cyprus--and had fallen with cruel fury on their fellow-inhabitants who were their oppressors, the suspicion and aversion of the Alexandrians of

other beliefs had grown more intense than in former times. Besides this, the prosperous circumstances of many Jews, and the enormous riches of a few, had filled the less wealthy heathen with envy and roused the wish to snatch the possessions of those who, it cannot be denied, had not unfrequently treated their gods with open contumely.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Let us get into the house!"

"The mean churl shall remember this day!"

"Fetch him out!"

"Drag him into the street!"

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

"Drag him out!" again shrieked an Egyptian slavedriver, and a woman shrieked an echo of his words. She snatched the deer-skin from her

shoulders, flourished it round and round in the air above her tangled black hair, and bellowed furiously:

"Tear him in pieces!"

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

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

CHAPTER VI.

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

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

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

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

Hadrian stood in the midst of the crowd, and at the instant when Verus appeared on the scene had wrenched the torch out of the hand of the infuriated tailor. At the same time, in a thundering voice, he commanded the Alexandrians--who were not accustomed to the imperial tone--to desist from their mad project. Whistling, grunting, and words of scorn

overpowered the mandate of the sovereign, and when Verus and his slaves had reached the spot where he stood, a few drunken Egyptians had gone up to him and were about to lay hands on the unwelcome counsellor. The praetor stood in their way. He first whispered to Hadrian that Jupiter ought to be ruling the world, and might well leave it to smaller folks to rescue a houseful of Jews; and that in a few seconds the soldiers would arrive. Then he shouted to him in a loud voice:

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Listen, Listen."

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

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

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

All the crowd were shouting in wild confusion.

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

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

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

"Be quiet there!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The soldiers parted the throng as the wind chases the clouds, and the young Israelite pressed forward with his heavy thyrsus fought and pushed

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verus listened to Apollodorus with increasing attention, and fixed a keen gaze on the young man, who interrupted his host's eager encomium with many modest deprecations. The praetor had recollected the near approach of his birthday, and also that the position of stars in the night preceding it, would certainly be observed by Hadrian. What the Emperor

might learn from them would seal his fate for life. Was that momentous night destined to bring him nearer to the highest goal of his ambition or to debar him from it?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Perfectly."

"From whom?"

"From Aquila, my father's disciple."

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

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

"What should prevent your answering positively?"

"Unforeseen appearances in the heavens."

Are such signs common?"

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

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

"I will do so with pleasure."

"When can you have finished this work?"

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

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

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

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

"I will conceal nothing, absolutely nothing."

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER VII.

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

"It is well that you have come!" she exclaimed to the praetor.

"Lentulus insists that he has seen Mastor the slave, and Balbilla

declares--but it is impossible!"

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

"Did they tell you so too?"

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

"No useless speeches!"

"Just now I met, in his own person--"

"Who?"

"Hadrian."

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

"With these eyes."

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

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

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

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

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

She started up angrily, cut off his speech, and put him through as keen a cross-examination as if he were an accused person and she his judge. Ere long she had learnt that Verus also had encountered Mastor, that her husband was residing at Lochias, that he had taken part in the festival in disguise, and had exposed himself to grave danger outside the house of Apollodorus. She also made him tell her how the Israelite had been rescued, and whom her friend had met in his house, and she blamed Verus with bitter words for the heedless and foolhardy recklessness with which

he had risked his life for a miserable Jew, forgetting the high destinies that lay before him. The praetor had not interrupted her, but now bowing over her, he kissed her hand and said:

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

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

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

Sabina withdrew the hand he had taken, saying:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

curls.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

makes you my son, makes me your mother."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I am the daughter of the butchered man."

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

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

"Good-night, fair Muse!"

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

You are decking yourself in borrowed feathers, Poetess," replied he,

laughing. "It is not you but the ill-mannered Alexandrians who invented that name!"

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

"And you will celebrate it in your poems?"

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

"I tremble!"

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

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

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

"Did you venture into the streets?"

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

"May I be allowed to ask who?"

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

"He knows the town well."

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

"Happy Pontius!"

"Most happy Verus!"

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER VIII.

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

hand, and friendly shores in the distance.

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

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

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

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

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

Doris shared her son's breakfast but, contrary to her usual custom, she spoke very little, only she frequently passed her hand over her son's curly hair. Euphorion strode up and down the room, rummaging his brain for ideas for an ode in which he might address the Emperor and implore forgiveness for his son. Soon after breakfast Pollux went up to the rotunda where the Queens' busts stood, hoping to see Arsinoe again, and a loud snatch of song soon brought her out on to the balcony. They exchanged greetings, and Pollux signed to her to come down to him. She would have obeyed him more than gladly, but her father had also heard the sculptor's voice and drove her back into the room. Still the mere sight

of his beloved fair one had done the artist good. Hardly had he got back to his father's little house when Antinous came sauntering in--he represented in the artist's mind the hospitable shores on which he might gaze. Hope revived his soul, and Hope is the sun before which despair flies as the shades of night flee at the rising of the day-star.

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

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

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

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