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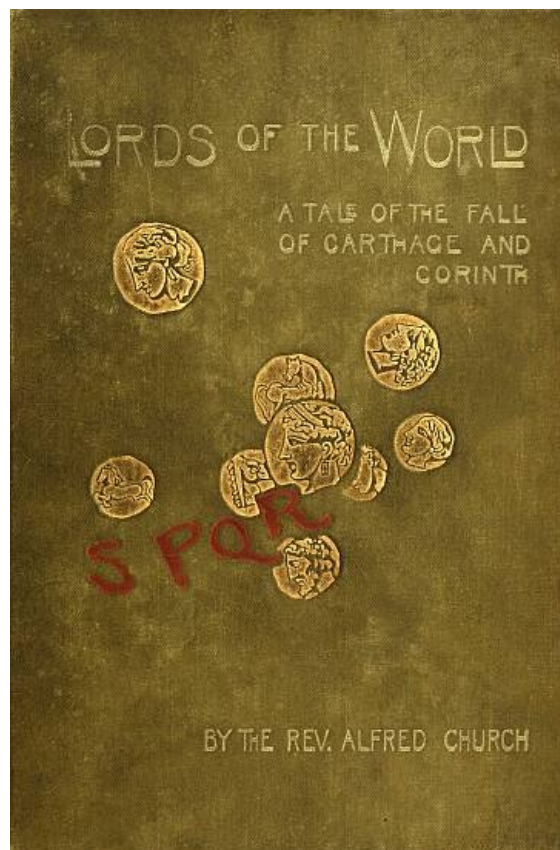
Illustrator: Ralph Peacock

Release date: November 23, 2012 [EBook #41464]

Language: English

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LORDS OF THE WORLD



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LORDS OF THE WORLD

A STORY OF

THE FALL OF CARTHAGE AND CORINTH

BY THE

REV. ALFRED J. CHURCH

Author of "Two Thousand Years Ago" "Stories from Homer", &c.

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS BY RALPH PEACOCK

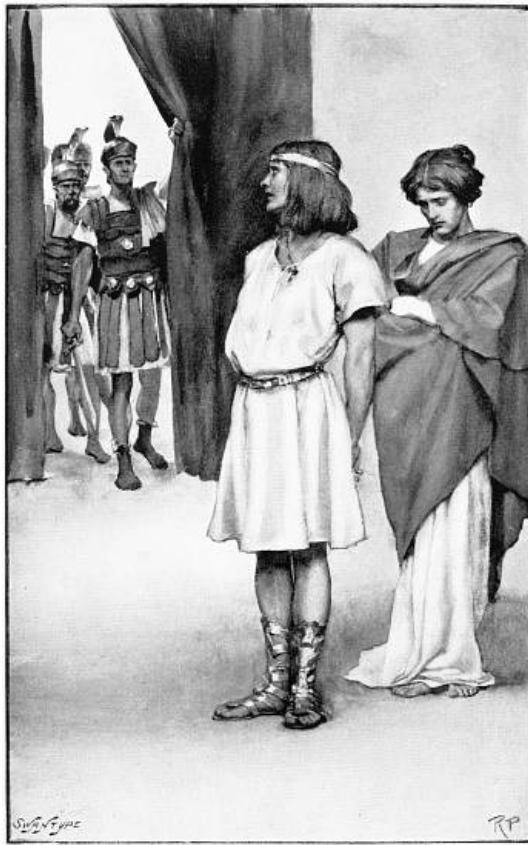


LONDON

BLACKIE & SON, LIMITED, 50 OLD BAILEY, E.C.

GLASGOW AND DUBLIN

1898



"FASTEN HIS HANDS, AND FIRMLY TOO; THAT YOUTH
MIGHT GIVE US TROUBLE."

PREFACE.

The year 146 B.C. was an *annus mirabilis* in the development of Roman dominion. Of course it had long been a foregone conclusion that Carthage and Corinth must fall before her, but the actual time of their overthrow was made all the more striking by the fact that both cities perished in the same year, and that both were visited by the same fate. I have attempted in this story to group some picturesque incidents round the person of a young Greek who struggles in vain to resist the destiny of the conquering race. The reader will also find some suggestion of the thought which the Roman historian had in his mind when he wrote: "Carthage, the rival of the Roman Empire, perished root and branch, sea and land everywhere lay open before us, when at last Fortune began to rage against us and throw everything into confusion". The day when Rome rid herself of her rivals seemed to some of her more thoughtful sons to be the first of her corruption and decline.

ASHLEY
April 22, 1897.

A. J. C.

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LORDS OF THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

THE FATE OF THE *MELCART*.

THE *Melcart*, the sacred ship of Carthage, was on its homeward voyage from Tyre, and had accomplished the greater part of its journey in safety; in fact, it was only a score or so of miles away from its destination. It had carried the mission sent, year by year, to the famous shrine of the god whose name it bore, the great temple which the Greeks called by the title of the Tyrian Hercules. This was too solemn and important a function to be dropped on any pretext whatsoever. Never, even in the time of her deepest distress, had Carthage failed to pay this dutiful tribute to the patron deity of her mother-city; and, indeed, she had never been in sorer straits than now. Rome, in the early days her ally, then her rival, and now her oppressor, was resolved to destroy her, forcing her into war by demanding impossible terms of submission. Her old command of the sea had long since departed. It was only by stealth and subtlety that one of her ships could hope to traverse unharmed the five hundred leagues of sea that lay between her harbour and the old capital of Phœnicia. The *Melcart* had hitherto been fortunate. She was a first-rate sailer, equally at home with the light breeze to which she could spread all her canvas and the gale which reduced her to a single sprit-sail. She had a picked crew, with not a slave on the rowing benches, for there were always freeborn Carthaginians ready to pull an oar in the *Melcart*. Hanno, her captain, namesake and descendant of the great discoverer who had sailed as far down the African coast as Sierra Leone itself, was famous for his seamanship from the Pillars of Hercules to the harbours of Syria. [12]

The old man—it was sixty years since he had made his first voyage—was watching intently a dark speck which had been visible for some time in the light of early dawn upon the north-western horizon. "Mago," he said at last, turning to his nephew and lieutenant, "does it seem to you to become bigger? your eyes are better than mine."

"Not that I can see," answered the young man.

"She hardly would gain upon us if she has no more wind than we have. Well, I shall go below, and have a bite and a sup." [13]

He wetted his finger and held it up. "It strikes me," he went on, "that the wind, if you can call it a wind, has shifted half a point. Tell the helmsman to put her head a trifle to the north. Perhaps I may have a short nap. But if anything happens, call me at once."

Something did happen before ten minutes had passed. When Mago had given his instructions to the helmsman, and had superintended a slight shifting of the canvas, he looked again at the distant ship. It had become sensibly larger. The wind had freshened out at sea, and was rapidly bringing the stranger nearer. Mago hurried below to rouse his uncle. The old man was soon up on deck.

"I wish we were ten miles nearer home," he muttered, after taking a long look into the distance. "Get the oars out. If she is an enemy, and wants to cut us off, half a mile may make all the difference."

The order was promptly obeyed, and the rowers bent to their work with a will. But all the will in the world could not make the *Melcart* move very fast through the water. She was stoutly built, as became a ship that had to carry a precious burden through all weather, and she was foul with the long sea-voyage. The goal of the race between her and the stranger, which could now be seen to be a Roman ship-of-war, was a headland behind which, as Hanno knew, was the harbour of Chelys. Let her reach that and she was safe. But it seemed as if this was not to be. The Roman ship had what wind there was right aft, and, notwithstanding all the efforts of the *Melcart's* crew, moved more rapidly through the water. She would manifestly cut off the *Melcart* before the headland was reached. But Hanno was not yet at the end of his resources. [14]

"Call Mutines," he said to his lieutenant.

Mutines was a half-caste Carthaginian, whose thick lips, flat nose, and woolly hair indicated a negro strain in his blood. "Mutines," said the old man, "you used to have as good an aim with the catapult as any man in Carthage. If your hand has not lost its cunning, now is the time to show

your skill. Knock that rascal's steering-gear to pieces, and there is a quarter-talent for you."

"I will do my best, sir," said Mutines; "but I am out of practice, and the machine, I take it, is somewhat stiff."

The catapult, which was of unusual size and power, had been built, so to speak, into the ship's fore-castle. It could throw a bolt weighing about 75 lbs., and its range was 300 yards. While Mutines was preparing the engine, word was passed to the rowers that they were to give six strokes and no more. That, as Mutines reckoned, would be enough to bring him well within range of the enemy. The calculation was sufficiently exact. When the rowers stopped, the two ships, having just rounded the headland, were divided by about 350 yards. The impetus of the *Melcart* carried her over about 100 more. When she was almost stationary Mutines let fly the bolt. He had never made a happier shot. The huge bullet carried away both the tillers by which the steering-paddles were worked. The ship fell away immediately, and the *Melcart*, for whose rowers the fugleman set the liveliest tune in his repertory, shot by, well out of range of the shower of arrows which the Roman archers discharged at her. In the course of a few minutes she had reached the harbour of Chelys. [15]

But her adventures were not over. The captain of the Roman ship was greatly enraged at the escape of his prey. To capture so famous a prize would mean certain promotion, and he was not prepared to resign his hopes without an effort to realize them. As soon as the steering-gear had been temporarily repaired, he called his sailing-master, and announced his intention of following the Carthaginian into the harbour.

The man ventured on a remonstrance. "It's not safe, sir," he said; "I don't know the place, but I have heard that the water is shallow everywhere except in the channel of the stream."

"You have heard my orders," returned the captain, who was a Claudius, and had all the haughtiness and obstinacy of that famous house. The sailing-master had no choice but to obey. [16]

Chelys, so called from the fancied resemblance of its site to the shape of a tortoise, was a small Greek settlement which lay within the region dominated by Carthage. It was a place of considerable antiquity—older, its inhabitants were fond of asserting, than Carthage itself. For some years it had maintained its independence, but as time went by this position became more and more impossible. Had Chelys possessed any neighbours of the same race, a league might have given her at least a chance of preserving her freedom. But she stood absolutely alone, surrounded by Phœnician settlements, and she had no alternative but to make her submission to her powerful neighbour. She obtained very favourable terms. She was free from tribute, no slight privilege, in view of the enormous sums which the ruling city was accustomed to exact from her dependencies.¹ She was allowed to elect her own magistrates, and generally to manage her own affairs. To contribute a small contingent to the army and navy of the suzerain state was all that was demanded of her. It was natural, therefore, that Chelys should be loyal to Carthage—far more loyal, in fact, than most of that city's dependencies. Rome, which had more than once exacted a heavy sum as the price of the little town's immunity from ravage, she had no reason to like. [17]

The incident described above had taken place within full view of the piers and quays of Chelys. The excited population which crowded them had hailed with an exulting shout the fortunate shot that had crippled the Roman vessel, and had warmly welcomed the *Melcart* as she glided into the shelter of the harbour. Their delight was turned into rage when it became evident that the enemy was intending to pursue her. The insolent audacity of the proceeding excited the spectators beyond all bounds. Stones and missiles of all kinds were showered upon the intruders. As the ship was within easy range of the quays on both sides of the harbour, which was indeed of very small area, the crew suffered heavily.

Claudius perceived that he had made a mistake, and gave orders to the rowers to back, there not being space enough to turn. It was too late, and when a huge pebble, aimed with a fatal accuracy, struck down the steersman from his place, the doom of the *Melicerta*—for this was the name of the Roman ship—was sealed. A few moments afterwards she grounded.

This was, of course, the signal for a determined attack. Hundreds of men waded through the shallow water and climbed over the bulwarks. The crew made a brave resistance, but they were hopelessly outnumbered and were cut down where they stood. The magistrates of the city happened to be in consultation in the town-hall. Disturbed in the midst of their deliberations by the sudden uproar they hurried down to the water-side, but were too late to save any but a very few lives. Claudius had stabbed himself when he saw how fatal a mistake he had made. [18]

Chelys was, of course, in a tumult of delight at its brilliant success in destroying a Roman ship-of-war. Its responsible rulers, however, were very far from sharing this feeling. A defenceless city, and Chelys was practically such, for its walls, never very formidable, had been suffered to fall into decay, must take no part in the hostilities of a campaign. So long as it observes this neutrality it is really better off than a fortified town, but to depart from this policy is sheer madness.

The magistrates did all they could. They sent back the few prisoners whom they had been able to rescue from the hands of the populace, to the commander of the squadron to which the *Melicerta* had belonged. They offered to pay an indemnity. They went so far as to promise that the ringleaders of the riot should be handed over for trial. The Roman admiral, a Flaminus², [19]

and so belonging to a family that had more than once made itself notorious for unusual brutality, would not hear of making any conditions. He determined upon a vengeance which was not the less pleasing because it would be as lucrative as it was cruel. Chelys was to be visited with the severest penalty known in warfare—all the male inhabitants of the military age and over were to be put to death, the women and children were to be sold as slaves. The slaves from Chelys, as Flamininus, a shrewd and unscrupulous man of business, well knew, would fetch a high price. They were Greeks, if not of the purest blood, and while barbarians in any number could be easily obtained, Greek slaves were a rare article in the market.

His resolve once taken, Flamininus took every precaution that its execution should be as complete as possible. The magistrates, who had come to intercede for their countrymen, were detained; no hint of what was intended was allowed to reach the doomed city. Landing the half legion of marines which the squadron carried he occupied in irresistible force Chelys and all the roads by which it could be approached or left. His next step was to make what may be called an inventory of the prey which had fallen into his hands. The census roll of citizens was seized, and information about their families was purchased from some prisoners who were willing thus to redeem their lives. A few wealthy men and women were allowed to ransom themselves at the highest prices that could be extorted from their fears; and then, when a few days had been allowed for the assembling of the slave-dealers, who, with other animals of prey, human and non-human, followed the armies and fleets of Rome, Flamininus allowed the deputation to return, and proceeded to execute his sentence.

[20]

CHAPTER II.

CLEANOR, SON OF LYSIS.

THE wealthiest, best-born, and generally most influential citizen in Chelys was Lysis, son of Cleanor, father himself of another Cleanor, so named, according to a custom common in Greek families, after his grandfather. He was descended in a direct line from the original founder of the settlement, an Ephesian Greek, and was also distinguished by the possession of the hereditary priesthood of Apollo. The family prided itself on the purity of its descent. The sons sought their brides among four or five of the noblest Ephesian families. The general population of Chelys, though still mainly Hellenic in speech and habits of life, had a large admixture of Phœnician blood, but the house of Lysis could not be reproached with a single barbarian *mésalliance*.

[21]

Lysis had been the leader and spokesman of the deputation which had vainly approached the Roman commander. His house, in common with all the principal dwellings in the town, had been occupied by the Roman marines. But a *douceur*, judiciously administered to the sub-officer in command, had procured for him the privilege of a brief period of privacy. He found that his wife and children were still in ignorance of the Roman admiral's decision. They did not, indeed, expect any very lenient terms—they looked for a fine, that would seriously cripple their means; but they were not prepared for the brutal reality. Lysis tasted for the first time the full bitterness of death when he had to dash to the ground the hope to which they had clung.

"Yes," he said in answer to a question from his wife, unable or unwilling to believe her ears; "yes, it is too true—death or slavery."

Dioné—this was the wife's name—grew pale for a moment, but she summoned to her aid the courage of her house—she claimed to be descended from the great Ion himself, the legendary head of the Ionic race—and recovered her calmness. Stepping forward, she threw her arms round her husband's neck. Her first thought was for him; her second, scarcely a moment later, for her children.

[22]

"And these?" she said.

Recovering himself with a stupendous effort of self-control, Lysis spoke.

"Listen; the time is short, and there are grave matters to be settled. It was hinted to me, and more than hinted, that I might purchase your life, Dioné, and my own. These Romans are almost as greedy for money as for blood. What say you?"

"And these?" said the woman, pointing to her children, while her cheek flushed and her eyes brightened with the glow of reviving hope. "Can they also be ransomed?"

"That is impossible," said Lysis.

"Then we will die."

"That is what I knew you would say, and I gave the fellow—it was the admiral's freedman who spoke to me about the matter—the answer, 'No', without waiting to ask you. Our way is clear enough. My father learnt from the great Hannibal the secret of his poison-ring,³ and he handed it on to me. You and I can easily escape from these greedy butchers, but our children—"

He struggled in vain to keep his self-command. Throwing himself on a couch hard by, he covered his face with his cloak.

[23]

The children were twins, very much alike, as indeed twins very commonly are, and yet curiously different. Apart, they might easily have been mistaken for each other, supposing, of course, that they were dressed alike; seen together, any one would have said that such a mistake would hardly be possible, so great was the difference in colour and complexion—a difference that impresses the eye much more than it impresses the memory. But whatever dissimilarity there was was accidental rather than natural. Cleanor had been seized at a critical period of his growth with a serious illness, the result of exposure in a hunting expedition. This had checked, or more probably, postponed his development. His frame had less of the vigour, his cheek less of the glow of health than could be seen in his sister's, of whom, indeed, he was a somewhat paler and feebler image.

"We will die with you," said the twins in one breath. They often spoke, as, indeed, they often thought, with a single impulse.

"Impossible again!" said Lysis. "The priesthood which, as you know, I inherited from my fathers, I am bound, under curses which I dare not incur, to hand on to my son. If the gods had made me childless—and, for the first time in my life, I wish that they had—I must have adopted a successor. This, indeed, I have done, to provide for the chances of human life; but you, Cleanor, must not abdicate your functions if it is in any way possible for you to perform them. And then there is vengeance; that is a second duty scarcely less sacred. If you can live, you must, and I see a way in which you can."

[24]

"And I see it too," cried the girl, with sparkling eyes. "Cleanor, you and I must change places. You have sometimes told me that I ought to have been the boy; now I am going to be."

"Cleonné!" cried the lad, looking with wide eyes of astonishment at his sister; "I do not know what you mean."

"Briefly," replied the girl, "what I mean is this. You masquerade as a girl, and are sold; I masquerade as a man, and am killed."

"Impossible!" cried the lad; "I cannot let you die for me."

"Die for you, indeed!" and there was a touch of scorn in her voice. "Which is better—to die, or be a slave? Which is better for a man? You do not doubt; no one of our blood could. Which is better for a woman? It does not want one of our blood to know that. The meanest free woman knows it. By Castor! Cleanor, this is the one thing you can do for me. Die for you, indeed! You will be doing more, ten thousand times more, than dying for me!"

[25]

"She is right, my son," cried Lysis. "This was my very thought. Phœbus, the inspirer, must have put it into her heart. Cleanor, it must be so. This is your father's last command to you. The gods, if gods there are—and this day's work might make me doubt it—will reward you for it. But the time is short. Hasten, and make such change as you need."

The twins left the chamber. When they returned, no one could have known what had been done, so complete was the disguise which Cleonné's skilful fingers had effected. The girl's flowing locks, which had reached far below her waist, now fell over her shoulders, just at the length at which it was the fashion of the Greek youth to wear them, till he had crossed the threshold of manhood. His were rolled up, maiden-fashion, in a knot upon his head. She had dulled her brilliant complexion by some pigment skilfully applied. His face, pale with misery, needed no counterfeit of art.

Lysis and his wife had gone. By a supreme effort of self-sacrifice they had denied themselves the last miserable solace of a farewell, and were lying side by side, safe for ever from the conqueror's brutality. While Cleanor and his sister waited in the expectation of seeing them, a party of marines entered the room.

[26]

"Fasten his hands, Caius," said the sub-officer to one of his men, "and firmly too, for he looks as if he might give us trouble. By Jupiter! a handsome youth! What a gladiator he would make! Why do they kill him in this useless fashion? The girl is your business, Sextus. Be gentle with her, but still be on your guard, for they will sometimes turn. But she looks a poor, spiritless creature."

CHAPTER III.

THE LAST OF A VETERAN.

THE fate of Chelys caused wide-spread indignation and disgust even among the enemies of Carthage. No one was more indignant than Mastanabal, King Masinissa's second son. The prince had tastes and habits very uncommon in the nation of hunters and fighters to which he belonged.

He was a lover of books, and disposed to be a patron of learning, if he could only find learning to patronize. The Greek population of Chelys had always preserved some traces of culture, and the Numidian prince was on terms of friendship with the settlement. He was an occasional visitor at its festivals, had received the compliment of a crown of honour, voted to him in a public assembly, and had shown his appreciation of the distinction by building for the community a new town-hall.

[27]

His intercession had been implored by the magistrates when they found themselves repulsed by the Roman commander. Unfortunately he was absent from home when their messenger arrived. Immediately on his return he hurried to the spot. Too late, even if it had in any case been possible, to hinder the brutal vengeance of Flaminius, he was yet able to mitigate the lot of the survivors. By pledging his credit to the slave-dealers, themselves disposed to accommodate so powerful a personage, he was able to secure the freedom of all the captives.

He made special inquiries about the family of Lysis, whose hospitality he had always enjoyed during his visits to the town, and learnt enough to induce him to make a personal inspection of the captives. As the melancholy procession passed before him, his keen eyes discovered Cleanor under his disguise. He had, of course, too much delicacy and good taste to inflict upon him the pain of a public recognition. The young man was transported in a closed litter to a hunting-lodge that belonged to the prince. Here he found himself an honoured guest. His personal wants were amply supplied; a library of some extent was at his disposal; and the chief huntsman waited upon him every morning to learn his pleasure in case he should be disposed for an expedition.

[28]

In the course of a few days a letter from the prince was put into his hands. Beginning with a tactful and sympathetic reference to his misfortunes, it went on thus:

Use my home as if it were your own for as long as you will. You cannot please me better than by pleasing yourself. But if you are minded to find solace for your sorrows in action—and to this I would myself advise you—proceed to Cirta, and deliver the letter which I inclose herewith to the king, my father. My steward will provide you with a guide and an escort, and will also furnish such matters of dress and other equipment as you may need. Farewell!

Cleanor's resolution was taken at once. In the course of a few hours he was in the saddle. Two days of easy travel brought him to Cirta, and he lost no time in presenting himself at the palace of King Masinissa. His letter of introduction, bearing as it did the seal of Prince Mastanabal, procured for him instant admission. The major-domo of the palace conducted him to a guest-chamber, and shortly afterwards one of the king's body-guard brought him a message that Masinissa desired to see him as soon as he had refreshed himself after his journey.

[29]

The chamber into which the young Greek was ushered was curiously bare to be the audience-room of a powerful king. The walls were of mud roughly washed with yellow; it was lighted by two large openings in the walls, unglazed, but furnished with lattices which could be closed at will by cords suspended from them; the pavement was of stone, not too carefully smoothed; for furniture it had a sideboard, with some cups, flagons, and lamps upon it, a table, two or three chairs for the use of visitors who were accustomed to these comfortless refinements, and a divan piled up with bright-coloured mats and blankets. Near the divan was a brazier in which logs were smouldering.

Masinissa, king of Numidia⁴, was a man whose intellect and physical powers were alike remarkable. He had consolidated the wandering tribes of Northern Africa into a kingdom, which he had kept together and aggrandized with a politic firmness which never blundered or wavered. His stature, though now somewhat bowed with years, was exceptional. His face, seamed with a thousand wrinkles, and burnt to a dark red by unnumbered suns, the snowy whiteness of hair and beard, and the absolute emaciation of his form, on which not a trace of flesh seemed to be left, spoke of extreme old age. And indeed he had more than completed his ninetieth year, an age not phenomenally rare among us, where the climate and the habits of life are less exhausting, but almost unheard of in a race whose fervid temperament seems to match their burning sky.

[30]

The old man's strength was now failing him. Two years before, he had commanded an army in the field, and commanded it with brilliant success, routing the best troops and the most skilled generals that Carthage could send against him. He was not one of the veterans who content themselves with counsel, while they leave action to the young. That day he had remained in the saddle from sunrise to sunset, managing without difficulty a fiery steed, whose saddle was no seat of ease. He had showed that on occasion he could deal as shrewd a blow with the sword, and throw as straight a javelin, as many men of half his age. But at ninety years of age two or three years may make a great difference. Masinissa had fought his last battle. His senses were as keen as ever, the eyes flashed with their old fire, but his breathing was heavy and laboured, and his hands shook with the palsy of age.

"Welcome, Cleanor!" he said with a full resonant voice that years had not touched, "my son commends you to me. Can you be content to wait on an old man for a month or so? I shall hardly trouble you longer. I have never been a whole day within doors save once for a spear wound in the throat, and once when they tried to poison me; and those who have lived in such fashion don't take long about dying."

[31]

Cleanor found his task an easy one. The old king suffered little, except from the restlessness which comes with extreme exhaustion. Even over this he maintained a remarkable control. It was

not during his waking hours, but in his short periods of fitful slumber, that the uneasy movements of his limbs might be observed. His intelligence was as keen as ever, and his memory curiously exact, though it was on the far past that it chiefly dwelt. What a story the young Greek could have pieced together out of the old man's recollections! He had seen and known the heroes of the last fierce struggle between Carthage and Rome, had ridden by the side of the great Scipio at Zama, and had been within an ace of capturing the famous Hannibal himself as he fled from that fatal field. The young Greek, surprised to find himself in such a position, was naturally curious to know why the old man preferred the companionship of a stranger to that of his own kindred. When he ventured to hint something of the kind, the king smiled cynically.

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"You don't understand," he said, "the amiable ways of such a household as mine. What do you think would have been the result if I had chosen one of my three sons to be with me now? Why, furious jealousy and plots without end on the part of the other two. And if I had had the three of them together? Well, I certainly could not have expected to die in peace. Quarrel they certainly will, but I can't have them quarrelling here. Mind, I don't say that they are worse than other sons; on the contrary, they are better. I do hope they may live in peace when I am gone; at least, I have done my best to secure it."

As the days passed, the king grew weaker and weaker, but his faculties were never clouded, and his cheerfulness was unimpaired.

About ten days after the conversation recorded above, a Greek physician, whose reputation was widely spread in Northern Africa, arrived at the palace. The three princes had sent him. Masinissa, informed of his coming, made no difficulty about seeing him. "I am not afraid of being poisoned," he said with a smile; "I really do not think that my sons would do such a thing. It would not be worth while, and, anyhow, they could not agree about it. Yes, let him come in. Of course he can't do me any good; but it is one of the penalties that has to be paid for greatness, that one must die according to rule. No one of any repute is allowed to die in these parts without having Timæus to help him off. Yes, I will see him. And mind, Cleanor, when he has examined me have a talk with him, and make him tell you the absolute truth."

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That afternoon, soon after the physician had departed, the king summoned the young Greek to his chamber.

"Well, what does he say, Cleanor?" he asked.

The young man hesitated.

"Come," cried the old king, raising his voice, "I command you to speak. As for these physicians, it is quite impossible for a patient to get the truth out of them. It seems to be a point of honour not to tell it. But I suppose he told it to you. Speak out, man; you don't suppose that I am afraid of what I have faced pretty nearly every day for nearly fourscore years."

"He said," answered Cleanor in a low voice, "that your time, sire, was nearly come."

"And how many days, or, I should rather say, hours did he give me?"

"He said that you could hardly live more than two days."

"Well, I am ready. I have had my turn, a full share of the feast of life, and it would be a shameful thing if I was to grudge to go. But there is trouble ahead for those who are to come after me. I have done my best for my kingdom, yet nothing can save it long. You know, I had to choose, when I was about your age, between Rome and Carthage, and my choice was the right one. If I had taken sides with Carthage, Rome would have swallowed up this kingdom fifty years ago; as it is, she will swallow us up fifty years hence. Sooner or later we are bound to go. But it has lasted my time, and will last my sons' time too, if they are wise. And now, as to this matter. I have something to put in your charge. You have heard of Scipio?"

[34]

Cleanor nodded his assent.

"He came over here some two months ago, when I had had my first warning that my time was short, and that I had best set my affairs in order. No one had any notion but that he came on military business. The Romans had asked me for help, and I didn't choose to give it just then. They hadn't consulted me in what they had done, and it was time, I thought, that they should have a lesson. We did discuss these matters; but what he really came for was a more serious affair. I left it to him to divide my kingdom between my three sons. I had thought of dividing it in the usual way; this and that province to one, and this and that province to another. But he had quite another plan in his head, and it seemed to me wonderfully shrewd. 'Don't divide the kingdom,' he said; 'the three parts would be too weak to stand alone. Divide the offices of the kingdom. Let each prince have the part for which he is best fitted—one war and outside affairs, another justice, the third one civil affairs.' Well, I took his advice, and had his settlement put in writing. The chief priest of the temple of Zeus in Cirta here has the document in his keeping."

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After this the old man was silent for a time. Rousing himself again, for he had been inclined to doze, he said:

"Cleanor, are you here?"

"Yes, sire," replied the Greek.

"Don't leave me till all is over. And now give me a cup of wine."

"But, sire, the physician said—"

"Pooh! what does it matter if I die one hour or two or three hours before sunrise? And I want something that will give me a little strength."

Cleanor filled a cup and handed it to the king. "It hardly tastes as good as usual," said the old man, when he had drained it, "yet that, I can easily believe, is not the wine's fault, but mine. But tell me, do you think that I shall know anything about what is going on here when I am gone? What does Mastanabal say? I haven't had time to think about these things; but he reads, and you are something of a student too. What do the philosophers say?" [36]

"Aristotle thinks, sire, that the dead may very well know something about the fortunes of their descendants—it would be almost inhuman, he says, if they did not—but that it will not be enough to make them either happy or unhappy."

"Well, the less one knows the better, when one comes to think. To see things going wrong and not be able to interfere!... But enough of this.... And now, Cleanor, about yourself. You do not love the Romans, I think?"

The young Greek's face flushed at the question.

"I have no reason to love them, sire."

"Very likely not. Indeed, who does love them? Not I; if I could crush them I would, as readily as I stamp my foot on a viper's head. But that is not the question. Can you make use of them? You shake your head. It does not suit your honour to pretend a friendship which you do not feel. That has not been my rule, as you know, but there is something to be said for it. Well, it is a pity that you can't walk that way. Whether we love them or no, depend upon it, the future belongs to them. And I could have helped you with some of their great men. I have written a letter to Scipio, and two or three others to powerful people in Rome who would help you for my sake. You can deliver them or not as you please. But tell me, what are you going to do if the Romans are out of the question?" [37]

"I thought of going to Carthage," answered the young man in a hesitating voice.

"Carthage!" repeated the king in astonishment. "Why, the place is doomed. It can't hold out more than a year,—or two at the outside. And then the Romans won't leave so much as one stone standing upon another. They won't run the chance of having another Hannibal to deal with. Carthage! You might as well put a noose round your neck at once!"

"I hope not, sire," said the young man. "And in any case I have only Carthage and Rome to choose between."

"Well," replied the old king after a pause, "you must go your own way. But still I can help you, at least with some provision for the journey. Put your hand under my pillow and you will find a key."

The young man did as he was told.

"Now open that chest in yonder corner, and bring me a casket that you will find wrapped up in a crimson shawl."

Cleanor brought the casket and put it into the king's hands. Masinissa unlocked it and took out a rouleau of gold pieces, which he gave to Cleanor. "That will be useful for the present," he said; "but gold is a clumsy thing, and you can hardly carry about with you what would serve for a single year. This bit of parchment is an order for a thousand ounces of gold—five hundred thousand sesterces in Roman money—on Caius Rabirius, knight, of the Coelian Hill in Rome, who has kept some money for me for thirty years or more. You can sell the parchment to Bocchar the banker in Cirta here. He will charge you something for his commission, but it will save you trouble. And he will keep the money for you, or whatever part of it you please. It is a very handy way of carrying about money; but there is another that is more handy still." [38]

The old man took out a small leather bag full of precious stones. "These," he said, "you can always hide. It is true that the merchants will cheat you more or less when you want to sell them. Still, you will find these stones very useful."

The jewels were worth at least five times as much as the order on the parchment. "It is too much," murmured the Greek. "I did not expect—"

"It is true that you did not expect. I have seen that all along, and that is one of the reasons why I give it. And as for the 'too much', you must leave me to judge about that. My sons will find treasure enough when they come to divide my goods between them. I have been saving all my life, and this is but a trifle which they will not miss, and which you will find very useful. And now give me another cup of wine. After this I will sleep a while. You will stay,—and don't let that young villain Jugurtha come near me." [39]

Two or three hours afterwards Cleanor was startled to see the old man raise himself in bed, a thing which he had not been able to do without help for three or four days past. He hastened to the bedside, but the king, though his eyes were wide open, did not seem to see him. Yet something there was that he saw; his was no vacant stare, but a look full of tenderness. Then he began to speak, and his voice had a soft tone of which Cleanor could not have believed it capable.



"THE OLD KING, THOUGH HIS EYES WERE OPEN, DID NOT SEEM TO SEE CLEANOR."

"So, sweetest and fairest, you have not forgotten me; you, as all men know, no one can forget. Why am I in such haste? Nay, dearest, look in your mirror for an answer. And besides, when you are mine, the Romans can have nothing more to say. Till to-morrow, then—but stay, let me give you a little token. Nay,"—and his voice changed in an instant to a note of horror—"what, pray, has changed my love-gift into this? Faugh!"

And with a gesture as of one who dashed something to the ground, he sank down upon the bed, and in another moment was sleeping again.⁵

Early the next morning the king's three sons, who had heard the physician's report of their father's health, arrived at the palace. Their emotion, as they knelt by the dying king, was genuine, though probably not very deep. The old man was perfectly self-possessed and calm. [40]

"My sons," he said, "I have done my best for you. Probably you will not like it. What is there, indeed, that you would all like? But lay your hands on my head and swear that you will accept what I have done. What it is you had best not know till I am gone. But trust me that I have been just to all of you."

The princes took the oath.

"Cleanor here knows where I have put away my testament, but he is bound by me not to tell till I am buried. And now farewell! Don't wait for the end. You will have your hands full, I warrant, as soon as the tribes know that the old man is gone."

The princes left the room and the old man turned his face to the wall and seemed to sleep. All the rest of that day Cleanor watched, but noticed no change. Just before dawn he heard the sleeper draw two or three deep breaths. He bade the slave who was in waiting in the ante-chamber call the physician. [41]

But the man of science found no movement either of pulse or heart. When he held a mirror to the mouth, there was not the faintest sign of breath upon it. The world had seen the last of one of the most wonderful of its veterans.

CHAPTER IV.

SCIPIO.

THE old king's body was roughly embalmed, in order to give some time before the celebration of the funeral. This was a more splendid and impressive ceremony than had ever been witnessed in that region. The news of Masinissa's death had been carried far into the interior with that strange, almost incredible rapidity with which great tidings commonly travel in countries that have no regular means of communication. The old man had been one of the most prominent figures in Northern Africa for a space more than equal to an ordinary lifetime. Nor had he been one of the rulers who shut themselves up in their palaces, and are known, not in their persons, but by their acts. His long life had been spent, one might say, in the saddle. There was not a chief in the whole region that had not met him, either as friend or as foe. Many had heard from their fathers or grandfathers the traditions of his craft as a ruler and his prowess as a warrior, and now they came in throngs to pay him the last honours. From the slopes of the Atlas range far to the west, and from the south as far as the edge of what is now called the Algerian Sahara, came the desert chiefs, some of them men who had never been seen within the walls of a city. For that day, at least, were suspended all the feuds of the country, many and deadly as they were. It was the greatest, as it was the last honour that could be paid to the great chief who had done so much to join these warring atoms into a harmonious whole. [42]

The bier was carried by representatives of the states which had owned the late king's sway. Behind it walked his three sons; these again were followed by the splendid array of the war-elephants with their gorgeous trappings. The wise beasts, whom the degenerate successors of the old African races have never been able to tame,⁶ seemed to feel the nature of the occasion, and walked with slow step and downcast mien. Behind the elephants came rank after rank what seemed an almost interminable cavalcade of horsemen. The procession was finished by detachments of Roman troops, both infantry and cavalry, a striking contrast, with their regular equipment and discipline, to the wild riders from the plains and hills of the interior.

The funeral over, there was a great banquet, a scene of wild and uproarious festivity—a not unnatural reaction from the enforced gravity of the morning's proceedings. Cleanor, who had the sober habits which belonged to the best type of Greeks, took the first opportunity that courtesy allowed of withdrawing from the revel. [43]

He made his way to a secluded spot which he had discovered in the wild garden or park attached to the palace, and threw himself down on the turf, near a little waterfall. The fatigues of the day, for he had taken a great part in the ordering of the morning's ceremonial, and the exhausting heat of the banqueting hall had predisposed him to sleep, and the lulling murmur of the water completed the charm.

When he awoke, he found that he was no longer alone. A stranger in Roman dress was standing by, and looking down upon him with a kindly smile. When the young Greek had collected his thoughts, he remembered that he had already seen and been impressed by the newcomer's features and bearing. Then it dawned upon him that he was the officer in command of the detachment of Roman soldiers that had been present at the obsequies of the king. [44]

And, indeed, the man was not one to be hastily passed over, or lightly forgotten. In the full vigour of manhood—he was just about to complete his thirty-seventh year—he presented a rare combination of strength and refinement. His face had the regularity and fine chiselling of the Greek type, the nose, however, having something of the aquiline form, which is so often one of the outward characteristics of military genius. The beauty of the features was set off by the absence of moustache and beard, a fashion then making its way in Italy, but still uncommon elsewhere. To the Greek it at once suggested the familiar artistic conception of the beardless Apollo.

But the eyes were the most remarkable feature of the face. They expressed with a rare force, as the occasion demanded, kindness, a penetrating intelligence, or a righteous indignation against evil. But over and above these expressions, they had from time to time a look of inspiration. They seemed to see something that was outside and beyond mortal limits. In after years it was often said of Scipio—my readers will have guessed that I am speaking of Scipio—that he talked with the gods. Ordinary observers did not perceive, or did not understand it. To a keen and sensitive nature, such as Cleanor's, it appealed with a force that may almost be called irresistible. All this did not reveal itself immediately to the young man, but he felt at once, as no one ever failed to feel, the inexplicable charm of Scipio's personality. [45]

"So you too," said the Roman, "have escaped from the revellers?"

Cleanor made a movement as if to rise.

"Nay," said the other, "do not disturb yourself. Let me find a place by you;" and he seated himself on the grass. "What a home for a naiad is this charming little spring! But you will say that a Roman has no business to be talking of naiads. It is true, perhaps. Our hills, our streams, our oaks have no such presences in them. We have borrowed them from you. Our deities are practical. We have a goddess that makes the butter to come in the churn, curdles the milk for the cheese, and helps the cow to calve. There is not a function or an employment that has not got its patron or patroness. But we have not peopled the world of nature with the gracious and beautiful presences which your poets have imagined. Nor, I fancy," he added with a smile, "have your African friends done so."

Cleanor, who would in any case have been too courteous to show to a casual stranger the hostility which he cherished against the Roman nation, felt at once the charm of the speaker's [46]

manner. He was struck, too, by the purity of the Roman's Greek accent, and by the elegance of his language, with which no fault could have been found except, perhaps, that it was more literary than colloquial. He laughingly acknowledged the compliment which the Roman had paid to the poetical genius of his countrymen.

A brisk conversation on literary topics followed. Cleanor, who was of a studious turn, had spent a year at Athens, listening to the philosophical teachers who were the successors of Plato at the Academy, and another year at Rhodes, then the most famous rhetorical school in the world. Scipio, on the other hand, was one of the best-read men of his age. He was a soldier and a politician, and had distinguished himself in both capacities, but his heart was given to letters. In private life he surrounded himself with the best representatives of Greek and Roman culture. He now found in the young Greek, with whose melancholy history he was acquainted, a congenial spirit. Cleanor, on the other hand, who had something of the Greek's readiness to look down upon all outsiders as barbarians, was astonished to see how wide and how deep were the attainments of his new acquaintance.

The two thus brought together had many opportunities of improving the acquaintance thus begun. Scipio had to carry out the details of the division of royal functions mentioned in my last chapter. This was not a thing to be done in a day. The three brothers accepted the principle readily enough, though they felt that the one to whom the army had been allotted had the lion's share of power. But when the principles came to be applied there were endless jealousies and differences of opinion. It required all Scipio's tact and personal influence to keep the peace unbroken. [47]

When this complicated business was finished, or at least put in a fair way of being finished, an untoward event cut short Scipio's sojourn in Africa. Two new commanders came out to take charge of the Roman army before Carthage. Scipio knew them to be rash and incompetent, and was unwilling to incur the responsibility of serving under them. Accordingly he asked for permission to resign his command—he held the rank of tribune.⁷ The consuls, on the other hand, were not a little jealous of their subordinate's reputation and, above all, of his name. A Scipio at Carthage had a prestige which no one else could hope to rival, and they were glad to get rid of him.

This interruption of an acquaintance which was rapidly ripening into friendship had an important bearing on Cleanor's life. If anyone could have reconciled him to Rome, Scipio was the man. Scipio gone, the old feelings, only too well justified as they were, revived in full force. Hostility to Rome became, indeed, the absorbing passion of his life. It was a passion, however, which he concealed with the finesse natural to his race. For the present his purpose could, he conceived, be better served outside the walls of Carthage than within them. Accordingly he accepted an offer from Mastanabal that he should undertake the duties of a private secretary. [48]

CHAPTER V.

A GREAT SCHEME.

SCIPIO'S forebodings as to the incapacity of the new generals were rapidly justified. The siege operations had not been uniformly successful before they took over the command. There had been losses as well as gains. Still, on the whole, the besiegers had the balance of advantage. The defence had been broken down at more points than one. Carthage was distinctly in a worse position than it had been three months after the breaking out of the war. The besieged had done some damage to the Roman fleet, had burnt a considerable extent of siege-works, and had suffered a distinctly smaller loss in killed and wounded than they had been able to inflict on their assailants. [49]

But if the damage that they suffered was less than that which they did, still it was less capable of being repaired, often indeed could not be repaired at all. If a ship was burnt, they could not build another; the losses of the garrison could not be filled up; the general waste of strength could not be repaired. Carthage, in short, had only itself to draw upon as a reserve; Rome had all the countries that bordered on the Mediterranean, from Greece westward. These were advantages which were certain to tell in the long run, but meanwhile much might occur to delay the final victory.

The first thing to happen in the Roman camp was that supplies began to fall short. The country round Carthage was, of course, so much wasted by this time that practically nothing could be drawn from it. Further off, indeed, there was plenty of food and forage, but the natives showed no readiness in bringing it into camp. The fact was that there was no market; buyers there were in plenty, but not buyers with money in hand, for the military chest was empty, and the pay of the soldiers months in arrear.

The consequence of this was that the Roman generals practically raised the siege of [50]

Carthage, and devoted their time and strength to reducing the Carthaginian towns, hoping thus to supply their wants. But in this attempt they made very little progress. They began by attacking the town of Clypea. Here they failed. The fleet could not make its way into the harbour, which the townspeople had effectually protected by sinking a couple of ships in the entrance, and the Roman engineers could not reach the walls of the town.

They had better fortune with another small town in the neighbourhood, though their success was gained in a not very creditable way. The townspeople were disposed to come to terms, and a conference between their representatives and the Roman generals was accordingly held. Terms were agreed upon, and the agreement had been actually signed, when some soldiers made their way into the town. The Romans at once broke up the meeting, and treated the place as if it had been taken by storm. This conduct was, of course, as unwise as it was wicked. Next to nothing was gained by the falsehood, while every Carthaginian dependency resolved to resist to the uttermost.

Hippo was the next place to be attacked. After Carthage and Utica—the Roman head-quarters were at Utica—Hippo was the largest and most important town in Northern Africa. Its docks, its harbour, its walls were on a grand scale. Two hundred years before, Agathocles, tyrant of Syracuse, in his desperate struggle with Carthage had made it the base of his operations. A lavish expenditure, directed by the best engineers of the time, had made it almost impregnable. [51]

The Roman generals had, indeed, excellent reasons for attacking it. Till it was in their power, they could hardly hope to capture Carthage, for it stood almost between their own head-quarters and that city, and commanded the route by which stores had to be carried to the besieging army. But the Roman forces were quite unequal to the undertaking. Twice did the people of Hippo, helped by a sally from Carthage, destroy the siege-works, and when the time for retiring to winter quarters arrived, nothing had been accomplished by the besiegers.

All this did vast damage to the prestige of the Romans. Far-seeing persons were convinced, as I have said, that the future belonged to them; but ordinary observers began to think, and not without some excuse, that their decline had begun. Among these were two out of three sons of King Masinissa. Possibly dissatisfaction had something to do with their state of mind. Each had expected to get more than Scipio's award had given him; both grudged to Gulussa the command of the troops, suspecting that this meant in the end their own subjection to him. Gulussa himself seemed to be still loyal to Rome, but the general discontent had not failed to reach some of the high-placed officers in his army. [52]

Cleanor was still with Mastanabal, and, of course, watched the progress of affairs with intense interest. His hopes rose high when tidings reached the palace that the Romans had abandoned the siege of Hippo. At the evening meal that day the subject was discussed, but in a very guarded way, for the prince was still, at least in name, an ally of Rome, and his young secretary, for this was the office which Cleanor now filled, was too discreet to ignore the fact. The hour for retiring had almost come when the confidential slave who waited on the prince hurriedly entered the chamber and placed a letter in his hands. It was a double tablet closely bound together with cords of crimson silk, these again being secured by seals. Hastily cutting the cords with the dagger which he carried at his waist, the prince read the communication with that impassive and inscrutable look which it is one of the necessities of a despotic ruler to acquire. Rising shortly after from table he bade the young Greek good-night, but added, as if by an after-thought, "But stay, I have a book, a new acquisition, to show you. Come into the library."

The library was a small inner room, of a semicircular shape, which opened out of the dining-hall. It had this great advantage, contemplated, no doubt, by the builder who designed it, that conversations held in it could not by any possibility be overheard. It had an outer wall everywhere except on the side which adjoined the dining-hall. It was built on columns, so that no one could listen beneath, and there was no storey over it. As long as the outer chamber was empty, absolute secrecy was ensured. Only a bird of the air could carry the matters discussed in it. [53]

"Listen, Cleanor," said the prince, and proceeded to read the following letter:—

Hasdrubal, son of Gisco, to King Mastanabal greeting. Know that if you would save Africa, now, and now only, you have the opportunity. The Romans have fled from Hippo fewer by a third than when they first attacked it. Bithyas, commander of Gulussa's cavalry, has come over to us with seven hundred of his best troopers. Strike then along with us such a blow as shall rid us of this devouring Beast now and for ever. Else you shall yourself surely be devoured. Think not that when Carthage is destroyed, there shall be any hope left for Numidia. Farewell!

"What think you of this, Cleanor?" the king asked after a pause. "I know well enough that you have no liking for the Romans. Indeed, why should you? But you can judge of how things stand, judge, doubtless, better in some ways than I can, for there are many things that we kings never see. Speak frankly. No one can overhear us." [54]

"Sire," replied the young Greek, "it wants, I fear, more wisdom than I possess to give you any profitable counsel. I hate Rome, but I fear her. She makes blunders without number, but always manages to succeed in the end. She chooses mere fools and braggarts for her generals, but always finds the right man at last. So I read her history. There was a time when everyone believed that Hannibal would make an end of her, and yet she survived. She lost army after army,

yet conquered in the end. After a Flaminius and a Varro⁸ she found a Scipio. And she has a Scipio now. I saw him, sire, the other day, and felt that he was a great man."

"But he is too young," interrupted the king. "He wants some five years yet of the age when he can be put in chief command."

"True, sire; but when a man is absolutely necessary they will have him, be he young or old."

"Then there is their unending civil strife. What of that?"

[55]

"It makes for us, no doubt. But even that they can drop on occasion."

After a pause of some minutes Mastanabal spoke again.

"Then, what do you advise?"

"Sire," replied the young Greek, "I would advise you for the present to do nothing. Let me answer this letter in person, and answer it as I think best, if you can trust me so far. I have a plan, for I have been thinking of these matters night and day. But don't ask me what it is. It is better that you should know nothing about it. I will start at once. It might look well if you were to send some troopers in pursuit. Of course they must not catch me. Put Juba in command, and we may rely on their not being too active."

"Will you carry any token from me?" asked the king.

"No, sire, it is better not. Let me have the letter; that will be enough. Will you forgive me if I steal Whitefoot from her stable?"

"Take her or any other horse that you want. Have you money enough?"

"Ample, sire; your good father provided me with that."

"Then, farewell! You make me curious, but I suppose that I may not ask any questions. In any case, and whatever happens, count me as a sure friend."

[56]

Before midnight Cleanor was well on his way to Carthage. At the first signs of dawn he drew rein, and halted for the day at a small cluster of palms, where there was abundance of herbage for his horse. Starting again at nightfall he reached the camp of Hasdrubal just as the light was showing itself in the east. The camp, it should be explained, was pitched outside the city. The larger half of the Carthaginian army occupied it. The remainder of the troops were stationed within the walls under the command of another Hasdrubal.

Cleanor, who had contrived to learn something about the arrangements of the camp, gave himself up into the hands of the officer commanding an outlying picket. Hasdrubal's letter proved, as he had anticipated, a sufficient passport, and he was conducted, after taking a few hours' rest, into the general's presence.

The personality of Hasdrubal was not by any means attractive, and Cleanor could not help comparing his puny physique and sinister expression with the commanding figure and noble countenance of Scipio. The Carthaginian may be best described by saying that he resembled the more ignoble type of Jew. It is often forgotten that the Phœnician race, of which the Carthaginian people was the principal offshoot, was closely akin to the Hebrew in blood and language.⁹ Hasdrubal showed the relationship plainly enough. His black, ringlety hair, prominent nose, thick, sensual lips, and keen but shifty eyes, were just such as might have been seen at that day in the meaner quarters of Jerusalem or Alexandria (then become the second capital of the Jews), and at the present time in the London Whitechapel or the Roman Ghetto.

[57]

On the present occasion, however, Hasdrubal wore his most pleasing expression. He was genuinely delighted to see Cleanor, as much delighted as he was astonished, for he had taken it for granted that the young man had perished in the destruction of Chelys.

"Hail, Cleanor!" he cried with a heartiness that was not in the least affected. "What good fortune has restored you to us? we had long given you up as dead."

Cleanor gave him in the fewest possible words a sketch of what had happened.

"And what can I do for you?" continued Hasdrubal. "If, as I hope, you are come to join us, I can find plenty of work for you. Things are looking more bright for Carthage than they have done for years past. We shall soon have all Africa with us. When that happens the Romans will have nothing left them but the ground that they stand on, and even that, I hope, not very long. You have heard of Bithyas with his squadron coming over to us? We shall soon have the rest of Gulussa's army following him, and then there will be Gulussa himself and his brothers. You have been in Mastanabal's household; tell me how he stands."

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Cleanor produced in answer Hasdrubal's own letter. "The king's position," he went on, "is a very difficult one, and he must act with the greatest caution in your interests as well as in his own. If he declares himself too soon, his brothers will most certainly take the other side. What is wanted is a combination so strong as to compel all the three to declare themselves together. He wishes well to you; that I can say positively."

"That is good as far as it goes, though I should have liked something more definite."

"May I put before you," said Cleanor, "an idea which has been working for some time in my head? I am afraid that it is somewhat presumptuous in a youth such as I am to discuss such things; still, if you are willing to hear—"

"Say on, my young friend," cried the Carthaginian; "a son of your house is not likely to say anything but what is worth hearing."

"I spoke of a combination which would enable Mastanabal to declare himself. Don't you think such a combination might be made among all those who hate Rome or fear her? First there is my own nation. The League¹⁰ is, I have heard, little satisfied with its powerful friends, and it needs only a little blowing to set that fire a-blazing. Then there are the Macedonians, who haven't forgotten that they were masters of the world not so very long ago. There is Syria, there is Egypt, both of them afraid of being swallowed up before long. There are the Jews, kinsmen of your own, I believe. Is it not so?"

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"Yes," said the Carthaginian, "kinsmen, but not friends. I fear that we shall not get much help there."

"Then there is Spain. What do you know, sir, of Spain? Is there any chance of a rising?"

"The northern tribes¹¹ still hold their own, but they will hardly go outside their own borders. They are quite content to be free themselves without thinking of others. Still, there is something that might be done in Spain. Only, unluckily, the Spaniards don't love us any more than they love the Romans. Perhaps they love us rather less. However, this is a promising scheme of yours, my young friend. Ah! if it had not been for you Greeks we should have had all the shores of the Sea¹² long ago. We never could get you out of Sicily. It would be strange if you were now to make amends to us for all the mischief that you have done."

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Cleanor, who had read history to some purpose, could not help thinking to himself that mankind would hardly have been better off than it was if Carthage had been mistress of the west. But he put away the thought. His lot was cast, and he could not, would not change it. The memory of the inexpiable wrong that he had suffered swept over his mind, and he set himself resolutely to carry out his purpose.

"And what do you suggest?" continued Hasdrubal.

"To go myself and see what can be done," replied the Greek.

"Good! And let no time be lost. I don't mean that you are one to lose time; that you certainly are not; I mean that we had better not say anything about this to the authorities inside the walls. There will be questions, debates, delays, nothing settled, I feel sure, till it is too late. You must go unofficially, but I will give you letters of commendation which you will find useful. Succeed, and there is nothing that you may not ask, and get, from Carthage and from me. When shall you be ready to start?"

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"To-day."

"And whither do you propose to go first?"

"First, of course, to Greece; then to Macedonia. I hear that there is someone there who calls himself the son of King Philip, and that the Macedonians are flocking to his standard."

"So be it. Farewell; and Hercules be with you!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE MISSION.

CLEANOR'S interview with Hasdrubal was followed by a long conversation with one of his staff, Gisco by name, in which were discussed the best and safest means of crossing from Africa to Greece. The Greek might have had at his command the best and fleetest war-galley in the docks of Carthage, but the idea did not at all commend itself to him. The harbour was not actually blockaded—Roman seamanship was hardly equal to maintaining a blockade, which often means the imminent peril of lying off a lee-shore—but it was pretty closely watched; the sea in the neighbourhood was patrolled by Roman ships, and the chances were at least equal that a Carthaginian galley would be challenged and brought to bay before it could reach Europe, and more than likely that if so challenged it would be captured. Some kind of disguise seemed to be far more promising of safety, and the more obscure the disguise the better the promise.

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A little fleet of vessels was about to sail from one of the coast villages for the autumn tunny-fishing, and Cleanor resolved to embark on one of them. It had been one of his boyish delights to spend a few days from time to time at sea, and he had a long-standing acquaintance, which might

almost have been called a friendship, with the veteran master of one of these craft. The tunny-fishing had always been too long an affair for the lad, who had his duties at home to attend to. The boats were about a month or more from home if the shoals had to be followed far, for the tunny is a fish that lives mostly in deep water. But there was a standing engagement that some day or other, when he happened to have leisure sufficient, the thing was to be done. Syphax—this was the old fisherman's name—knew nothing about his visitor except that he was a merry, companionable lad who had a sufficient command of gold pieces. To politics he paid no attention whatever. If there was war, it made no difference to him except, possibly, to increase the market for his tunnies, and raise the price. Romans and Carthaginians agreed in liking his wares; if they paid honestly for them, it did not matter to the fisherman what they did in other matters.

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When, therefore, two or three days after his visit to Hasdrubal's camp, the Greek knocked at the door of Syphax's little house by the sea, he received a hearty welcome, and was asked no inconvenient questions.

"You're just in time, young sir," cried the old man, "if you are come for the tunnies. We start at sunset, and, if we have luck, we shall be among them by dawn to-morrow. Just now the shoals are pretty near, and we may catch a boat-load before the new moon—it is just full to-day. But you are not in a hurry, I hope, if we should have to go further afield."

"All right, Syphax!" replied Cleanor. "I shall be able to see it through this time."

The old man, who had, indeed, the experience of sixty years to draw from, was quite right in his prediction that they would find themselves among the tunnies at dawn. They had been able to get over a considerable distance during the night. At first their progress had been slow, for it was a dead calm, and the sweeps had to be used. About midnight, when they were well out of the shelter of the land, a light breeze from the south sprang up. The broad lateen sail was gladly hoisted, and the little craft sped gaily along, making, with the wind due aft, some six or seven miles an hour. Cleanor, who had fallen asleep shortly after midnight, not a little fatigued by the share which he had insisted on taking in the rowing, was awakened, after what seemed to him five minutes of slumber, by the captain.

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"See," cried the old man, "there they are yonder. Thanks to Dagon, we have got among them quite as soon as I hoped."

And sure enough, about three hundred yards off, just in a line with the sun, which was beginning to lift a crimson disk out of the sea, the water seemed positively alive with fish, little and big. The tunnies had got among a shoal of sardines, and were busy with the chase. Every now and then some score of small fry would throw themselves wildly out of the water to escape their pursuer; behind them the water swirled with the rush of some monster fish, whose great black fin might be discerned, by a keen eye, just showing above the surface. Elsewhere, one of the tunnies would leap bodily into the air, his silvery side gleaming in the almost level rays of the rising sun. The sail had already been lowered, and the sweeps, after some dozen strokes to give a little way to the vessel in the right direction, had been shipped again. In another minute the little craft had quietly glided into the middle of the shoal.

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Cleanor, in spite of all the grave preoccupation of his mind, was still young enough to enjoy the brisk scene which followed. There were two ways of securing the fish: the harpoon was one; the hand-line was the other, the hook being baited with a small fish or with a bit of brilliant red cloth. Syphax and two of his sailors used the former. Cleanor and the third sailor, a young man of about the same age, as being not sufficiently expert with the harpoon, were furnished with hand-lines.

The fun was fast and furious. At his very first shot the captain drove his harpoon into the side of a huge tunny. So strong was the creature that it positively towed the boat after it for a few minutes. This gave to Cleanor's baited hook exactly the motion that was wanted. It was soon seized with a force which jerked the line out of his hand, and would infallibly have carried it away altogether, had it not been wound round his leg, more, it must be confessed, by accident than by design.

A sharp struggle followed. For some time the fisherman seemed to get no nearer to securing his fish. It would suffer itself to be drawn up a few yards, and would then by a fierce rush recover and even increase its distance. But the line was of a thickness and strength which allowed any strain to be put upon it, and the hook was firmly fastened into the leathery substance of the fish's mouth. The creature's only chance of escape was that the tremendous jerks it gave might flatten the barb of the hook. This did not happen, for Syphax took good care that all his tackle should be of the very best quality, and, after a conflict of half an hour, Cleanor had the satisfaction of seeing his prey turn helpless and exhausted on to its side. He drew it up close to the vessel, glad enough to give a little rest to his fingers, which were actually bleeding with the friction of the line. A sailor put his fingers into the animal's gills, and lifted it by a great effort over the gunwale. It weighed a little more than a hundred pounds.

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The sport continued till noon, only interrupted by a few short intervals when the shoal moved away and had to be followed. By noon so many fish had been secured that it became necessary to take measures for preserving them. They were split open and cleaned. The choicest portions were immersed in casks which held a liquid used for pickling; other parts were salted lightly or thoroughly, according as they were intended for speedy consumption or otherwise.

"You have brought us good luck," said Syphax to his guest, as they shared the last meal after

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a day's hard work. "In all my experience—and it goes back sixty years at least—I don't remember getting such sport so soon. Another day or two of this and we shall have a full cargo, and may go home again."

He had hardly spoken when his eye was caught by a strange appearance in the water,—strange, that is, to Cleanor, but only too familiar and intelligible to the old man.

"Ah!" he cried, "I thought that it was too good to last. Do you see that eddy yonder? And look, there is the brute's back-fin."

"What is it?" asked Cleanor.

"A shark, of course," replied the old man. "They never bode any good to anyone. Dagon only knows where we shall find the tunnies again. They will be leagues away from here by sunrise tomorrow, and there is no telling what way they will go. However, we have done pretty well, even if we don't see them again this moon. To-night we will lie-to; it will be time enough in the morning to decide what is to be done."

Cleanor had begun to fear that his experiment might turn out to be a failure. Nothing, he knew, would induce the old man to sail another league away from home when once his cargo had been completed. Accordingly he had hailed the shark's appearance with delight as soon as he comprehended what it meant, and now he turned to sleep with a lighter heart. [68]

Again did the old fisherman show himself a true prophet. The next morning, and for many mornings afterwards, not a tunny was to be seen. The weather, however, continued fine, and the little craft made its way in a leisurely fashion towards the north-east, a sharp look-out being kept by day, and, as far as was possible, by night, for the object of pursuit.

Two days had passed in this way when masses of floating sea-weed and flocks of gulls began to warn the captain that he was drawing near the land.

"We have been on the wrong tack," he said to Cleanor, "and must put her head about. We are more likely to find the fish in deep water than here."

"Where are we, then?" asked the Greek.

"Almost within sight of Lilybaeum, as far as I can guess."

Cleanor felt that it was time to act. "Will you do me a favour?" he said.

"Certainly," replied the old man, "if I possibly can."

"Well, then, put me ashore."

"That is easy enough, if I am not wrong in my guess as to our whereabouts. How long do you want to stay? I should not like to lose this fine weather. As for landing, I should have had to do that in any case, for we are getting short of water." [69]

"I don't want you to wait for me. Only land me and leave me."

"What! Tired of the business, I suppose. Well, we have been a long time doing nothing, but we must come across the tunnies soon."

Cleanor, who was anxious above all things not to be thought to have any serious object in view, allowed that the time did seem a little long. He had friends and kinsfolk, too, in Sicily, he said, and it would be a pity to lose the opportunity of paying them a visit. It was arranged, accordingly, that he should be landed, and that the crew should replenish their water-casks at the same time. He parted with his friends on the best of terms. Two gold pieces to the captain and one to each of the crew sent them away in great glee, singing his praises as the most open-handed young sportsman that they had ever had to do with.

It is needless to relate in detail our hero's journey through Sicily. He bought a stout young horse, one of the famous breed of Sicilian cobs, at Agrigentum, near which place he had been landed, and reached Syracuse without further adventure. At Syracuse he found a merchant vessel about to start for Corinth, secured a berth in her, and reached that city after a rapid and prosperous voyage. [70]

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAST OF THE GREEKS.

MOST of Cleanor's fellow-passengers on board the *Nereid*—for this was the name of the singularly un-nymphlike trading vessel that carried him to Corinth—were a curious medley of races and occupations. Corinth was the mart of the western world, and was frequented, for business or for pleasure, by all its races. There were soothsayers from Egypt, who found their

customers all the more credulous because they boasted that they believed in nothing; Syrian conjurers; Hebrew slave-dealers; a mixed troop of commercial travellers; and a couple of grave-looking, long-bearded men who, in spite of their philosophers' cloaks, were perhaps the greediest, the most venal of all.

One passenger, however, was of a very different class. He was a Syracusan noble, erect and vigorous notwithstanding his seventy years, whose dignified bearing and refined features spoke plainly enough of high breeding and culture. He was a descendant of Archias, the Corinthian emigrant, who, some six centuries before, had founded the colony of Syracuse, and he was coming, as he told Cleanor, in whom he had discovered a congenial companion, on a religious mission. The tie that bound a Greek colony to the mother city had a certain sanctity about it. Sentiment there was, and the bond of mutual advantage; but there was more, a feeling of filial reverence and duty, which was expressed by appropriate solemnities. [71]

"I am bringing," said Archias—he bore the same name as his far-away ancestor—"the yearly offering from Syracuse the daughter to Corinth the mother. I have done it now more than thirty times. But I feel a certain foreboding that I shall not come on the same errand again. If that means only that my own time is near, it is nothing. I have had my share of life. The gods have dealt bountifully with me, and if they call me I shall go without grumbling. But I can't help feeling that it is something more than the trifle of my own life that is concerned, that some evil is impending either over Syracuse or over Corinth. As for my own city, I don't see where the trouble is to come from. We have long since bowed our necks to the yoke, and we bear it without wincing. For bearable it is, though it is heavy. But for Corinth I own that I have many fears. She is restless, she is vain; she has ambitions to which she is not equal. The gods help her and save her, or take me away before my eyes see her ruin!" [72]

As they were drawing near their journey's end Archias warmly invited his young friend to make his home with him during his stay in Corinth.

"I have an apartment," he said, "reserved for me in the home of the guest-friend of Syracuse. The city rents it for me, and makes me an allowance for the expenses of my journey. I feel bound to accept it, though, without at all wishing to boast of my wealth, I may say that I don't need it. You must not think that you are burdening a poor man—that is all. I can introduce you to everybody that is worth knowing in Corinth, and, if you have any business on hand, shall doubtless be able to help you. And it will be a pleasure, I assure you, to have a companion who is not wearied with an old man's complaints of the new times."

Cleanor thankfully accepted the invitation. When the *Nereid* reached the port of Corinth he found that the Syracusan's arrival had been expected. A chariot was in waiting at the quay to convey them to the city. At the apartment all preparations for the comfort of the guests were complete—it was a standing order that a provision sufficient for two should be made. First there was the bath,—more than usually welcome after the somewhat squalid conditions of life on board the merchantman,—and after the bath a meal, excellently cooked and elegantly served. [73]

The meal ended, Cleanor felt moved to become more confidential with his new friend than he had hitherto been. Naturally he had been very reserved, giving no reason for Archias to suppose that he had other objects in his travels than amusement or instruction. But he felt that it would be somewhat ungracious to maintain this attitude while he was enjoying so kind and generous an hospitality. In a conversation that was prolonged far into the night he opened up his mind with considerable freedom. His precise schemes he did not mention; they were scarcely his own secret; and he said nothing about Hasdrubal, feeling—for he had studied history with intelligence and sympathy—that a Syracusan noble would scarcely look with favour on anything that came from Carthage, the oldest and bitterest enemy of his country. But he gave a general description of his hope and aim, a common union of the world under the leadership of the Greek race against the domination with which Rome was threatening it.

The Syracusan listened with profound attention. "It has done me good," he said, "to hear you. I did not know that such enthusiasm was to be found nowadays. The very word has gone out of fashion, I may say fallen into disrepute. It used to mean inspiration, now it means madness. Our young men care for nothing but sport, and even their sport has to be done for them by others. They have chariots, but they hire men to drive them; the cestus¹³ and the wrestling ring are left to professional athletes. The only game which they are not too languid to practise with their own hands is the *kottabos*, and the *kottabos*¹⁴ is not exactly that for which our fathers valued all these things, a preparation for war. I hate to discourage you, but I should be sorry to see you ruining your life in some hopeless cause." [74]

"But, if I may say so much with all respect, isn't this exactly what has been said time after time? May there not be something better than you think, than anybody would think, in these frivolous young fellows? Who would have thought Alcibiades anything but a foolish fop, and yet what a soldier he was when the time came!"

"Well, I hope that you are right," replied the old man; "only your Alcibiades must make haste to show himself, or else it will be too late. But it is not only this, the folly and frivolity of the youth, that discourages me; it is the hopeless meanness and jealousy of the various states. If I could raise from the dead the very best leader a Greek city ever had, I should still despair. Now listen to the story that I have to tell you. Don't think that I am a mere grumbler, who does his best to discourage thoughts that are too high for him to understand; I speak from a bitter [75]

experience. But you shall hear.

"I am just old enough to remember the storm and sack of my native city by the Romans. I was but five years old, but even a child of five does not forget when he sees, as I saw, his father and his elder brother killed before his eyes. I should have been killed myself—for the soldiers, who had suffered terribly in the siege, spared no one—but for Marcellus himself.¹⁵ He let the slave who waited on me carry me off to his own hut. That worthy slave and his good wife kept me for five years out of their scanty wages—he was a workman in the stone-quarries, and she sold cakes to schoolboys in the streets—till I was ten years old. Then interest was made with the Senate at Rome, and part of the family property was given back to me. You will understand that I was very restless at Syracuse, but I could not move till I was twenty-five, for my father's will had fixed this age for my becoming my own master. It is a custom in our family, and I was too dutiful to think of breaking it. But the moment I became my own master I made haste to carry out a plan which I had been long thinking of. The famous soldier of the time was Philopœmen, the Arcadian. It was a privilege to serve under him as a volunteer, and there were always ten times more applications than there were places to fill. However, by great good luck, and partly, I may say, through my having had the good fortune to win the foot-race at Olympia, I was chosen. I landed here—it is more than forty-five years ago—and made my way to his home in Arcadia. He had himself just come back from Sparta, which he had brought over to the cause of Greece. Sparta, as I dare say you know, has always cared much for herself, and very little for anything or anybody else. I shall never forget what happened a few days after my arrival. The Spartans, or, I should rather say, the reforming party among the Spartans—for there never was a Greek city yet but had two parties in it at the very least—felt greatly obliged to him for what he had done, and determined to make him a present. Well, they sent three of their chief citizens to offer it to him. They came, and Philopœmen entertained them. Of course he knew nothing about the object of their coming, and they said nothing about it. They seemed ill at ease—that I could not help observing—though their host was all that was courteous and agreeable; but speak they couldn't. There was something about the man which positively forbade their mentioning such a matter. The next day they went away, leaving their offer unspoken. But as they could hardly go back to Sparta with this story, they put the matter into the hands of an old friend to carry out.

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"It seems an easy thing to get rid of a pocketful of gold, but this man didn't find it so. Everything about Philopœmen was so simple, so frugal, he seemed so absolutely above things of the kind, that it was impossible to offer him money. The man went away without saying anything. He came a second time, and it was the same thing all over again. I don't say but what Philopœmen had now some inkling of what was on hand. There was a twinkle in his eye, as if he was enjoying some joke greatly. As for me, I was completely mystified. Then the three Spartans came back again, and this time they forced themselves to speak, and, of course, did it in the clumsiest, most brutal fashion. It was a large sum, too, a hundred and twenty talents,¹⁶ if I remember right.

"Philopœmen smiled. 'My friends,' he said, 'you would have laid out this money very badly if I were to take it. Don't buy your friends; you have them already. Buy your enemies.'

"And a good friend he showed himself. He wasn't in office then, and the President of the League, having a difference with the Spartans in some matter of no great importance, was all for using force.

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"'Pray,' said Philopœmen to him, 'don't do anything of the kind. It is sheer madness to quarrel with a great Greek state, when the Romans are on the watch to take advantage of our divisions.'

"And when he found that speaking was of no use, he mounted his horse and rode straight to Sparta—I was with him—to warn them of what was going to be done. Sure enough, in the course of ten days or so, the President comes with some five thousand men of his own and half a Roman legion; but Sparta was ready. They had to go back again without doing any harm. Some two months afterwards he was chosen President—for the eighth time it was—very much against his will, for he had passed his seventieth year, and was hoping to spend the rest of his days in peace. But it was not to be. There was a revolution in Messene, one of the endless changes which tempt one to think, against one's own conscience, that the steady, fixed rule of an able, honest tyrant is the best kind of government that a state can have. The Messenians, accordingly, renounced the League. This might have been endured; but it was another matter when they proceeded to seize a strong place outside their own borders. Philopœmen was lying sick with fever at the time in Argos, but he left his bed immediately, and was on horseback in less than an hour. I was with him; indeed, I never left him of my own free will. Before nightfall we had reached his home in Arcadia, four hundred furlongs was the distance, and the roads about as rough and steep as you will find anywhere in Greece. The next day he sent round the city calling for volunteers. Some three hundred joined him—gentlemen, all of them, who furnished their own arms, and rode their own horses. We had a smart brush with the enemy, and got the better of them. But they were strongly reinforced, and as we were now heavily overmatched, Philopœmen gave the signal to fall back. His one thought now was to save the volunteers.

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"'They are the heart's blood of the city,' he said to me, 'and they must not be wasted.'

"He placed himself with a few troopers, who formed his body-guard, in the rear, and protected their retreat. He was a famous swordsman, you must know, and old as he was, there were very few who cared to come to close quarters with him. But of course they had their darts, and he was soon wounded in several places, as, indeed, we all were. And then on some very

rough ground his horse stumbled and threw him. He was an old man, you see, and he had had two days of hard riding, and the fever fit—which was of the ague kind, caught some years before when he was campaigning in Crete—was coming upon him.

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"'Save yourselves,' he said to us; 'your country will want you for many years yet, but I am an old man.'

"However, he gave me leave to stay; the others he commanded on their obedience to go. When the enemy came up he had fainted. They thought he was dead, and began to strip him of his arms, but before they had finished he came to himself. My blood boils to this day when I think how they treated him. They bound his hands behind his back, and drove him before them on foot as he was, half-dead with fatigue and sickness.

"That night we bivouacked in the open. Some of the troopers had a feeling of pity or shame. One lent him his cloak to keep the cold off, though he had to go without one himself; another shared his ration of bread, dried meat, and rough wine with him. On the evening of the next day we came to Messene town, and I must do the townsfolk the justice to say that the sight was not at all to their liking. I heard many of them cursing the man—Deinocrates was his name, and he was as ill-conditioned a scoundrel as there was in Greece—who had given the orders for it to be done. Still, no one had the courage to interfere, and Deinocrates determined to finish matters before he was hindered; for he knew perfectly well that the League would spare nothing to get back their president.

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He thrust him, therefore, into a dungeon that was called the Treasury, a dreadful hole without a window or door, but having the entrance to it blocked by a huge stone. "Deinocrates then held a hurried council with some of his own party. They voted with one accord for death. What followed I heard from the executioner himself, who was one of Deinocrates' slaves. His story was this:

"'My master said to me, 'Take this cup'—I guessed from the look and the smell that it was hemlock—to the prisoner, and don't leave him till he drinks it.' I went in—it wanted but a little time to midnight—and found Philopœmen awake. 'Ah!' he said, when he saw me, 'your master is a generous man, and sends me, I doubt not, a draught of one of his richest vintages. But before I drink it, answer me, if you can, one question. Have any prisoners been brought in?' I said that I had not heard of any. 'None of the young horsemen that were with me?' I said that I had not seen them. He smiled and said, 'You bring good tidings. Things have not gone altogether ill with me.' Then he took the cup and drank it up without another word. This done he lay down again. I watched by him, but though I heard him breathing heavily he never moved. Just before cock-crow I judged that he died, for it was then that breathing ceased, and when I put my hand on his heart I could feel nothing.'

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"That was the end of Philopœmen, 'the last of the Greeks', as I heard an enemy, a Roman, call him. And what, my dear young friend, can Greece do without Greeks?"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CORINTHIAN ASSEMBLY.

CLEANOR was of far too sanguine a temperament to allow himself to be daunted by the gloomy reminiscences of his friend. "Things", he said to himself, "are altered since then. Rome is more manifestly formidable, for she has rid herself of more than one rival. The mere instinct of self-preservation must make those that are left unite."

Still, he could not hide from himself various discouraging facts that forced themselves upon his notice. In the first place Corinth, or, rather, the Corinthian people, disappointed him. The place itself was intensely interesting; he did not know whether to admire more the splendid remains of the past that it had to show, or the evidences of a prosperous present with which it abounded.

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At one time he would make his way to the highest point of the citadel, the Acro-Corinthus, and look down upon the city, crowded as it was with temples, public halls, mansions, on which the wealth of centuries had been lavished. At another he would spend long hours in wandering about the docks, that one which brought to the "City of the Two Seas" the commerce of the West, or that other which was filled with the merchandise of the East.

There were vessels of all sizes and of every kind of rig, manned with seamen of every nationality, and bringing the merchandise of every country, from the Atlantic shores on the west to remote regions of the east of which no European knew except by repute. Blocks of tin and strings of amber from far-off islands of the north, ivory and precious stones from the African coasts far to the south of the Pillars of Hercules, iron from Elba, cattle and fruit from the Balearic Isles, wines from Sicily and the shores of the Adriatic, were among the most common articles in

the western harbour; to the eastern harbour came silks from China, metal work from India,—then as now famous for the skill of its handicraftsmen,—dried fruits from Lesser Asia, salt and pickled fish from the Black Sea, wheat from Egypt, and wines, some of them the finest vintages in the world, from the islands of the Ægean. Corinth, then, was interesting enough, making the impression upon a stranger of being one of the busiest and wealthiest places in the world.

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But what of the Corinthians? A more mixed, I may say mongrel, multitude could not be seen anywhere. Cleanor's first impression was that the population contained specimens of every nation upon earth—except Greeks. There were swarms of Asiatics from the Lesser Asia and from Syria, yellow-skinned Egyptians, Arabs and Moors showing every variety of brown, and negroes with their glossy black. In effective contrast to these might be seen a few Gauls, blue-eyed and yellow-haired, whose imposing stature seemed to dwarf to pigmies the crowds through which they shouldered their way. Now and then a Roman, conspicuous in his white toga edged with a narrow purple stripe,¹⁷ moved along with slow, dignified step, which seemed to speak of a man born to rule. It was curious to note the expression of fear and hatred with which he was regarded. Again and again, as he watched this motley crowd thronging the streets with an endless variety of costume, colour, and dress, Cleanor felt disposed to say, "Here is Corinth, but where are the Corinthians?" And when he did see specimens of the genuine Corinthian, he had to own to himself that they did not greatly impress him. The city had its gilded youth, most of them belonging to the second or third generations of families enriched by trade, but some claiming to be Bacchiadæ,¹⁸ or even descendants of the mythical Sisyphus who had founded the city some fourteen centuries before. A more debauched, spendthrift, and generally useless set he had never seen. They made no pretence to culture; they shuddered at the idea of a campaign; even the sports of the arena were too much for their effeminate frames. Cleanor felt his spirits sink and his hopes diminish day by day, for Corinth was now the capital of Greece. Archias, his host, watched him meanwhile with a compassionate interest. He had had something of the same enthusiasm himself in bygone days, and had known the inexpressible pain of having to own that it was a delusion.

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"Do you know," he said to his young guest some ten days after their arrival, "that there is to be an important meeting of the Assembly to-morrow?"

"I heard Polemon say something about it to-day. He asked one of the young fellows who were playing at *kottabos* with him whether he thought of going, and seemed to surprise him very much by the question. Polemon, you see, has not been living in Corinth for much more than a year, and has not quite caught the high-toned Corinthian manner. He actually imagines it possible for a man to have some interest in public affairs. You should have heard the astonishment in his friend's voice when he answered him, 'Going to the Assembly, did you say? Why, my dear fellow, I have never been to the Assembly, and certainly never shall, till they make me Eparch or whatever they call it, when I shall have to, I suppose. And to-morrow of all days in the year! Why, don't you know that Pintocles of Megara is coming over with his champion team of quails, and that I am going to meet them with mine? We have a wager of a hundred gold pieces on the event. If one side kills *all* the birds on the other side, the loser is to pay double stakes. In any case the winner is to give a dinner to the loser and his friends. Going to the Assembly, indeed!' That is all that I have heard about it."

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"Then I had better enlighten you," replied Archias. "You know that the Assembly has been called to hear the envoys from Rome state the terms which the Senate is willing to agree to. You ought to be there. *You* will find it very interesting, whatever these young gentlemen with their teams of fighting quails may think about it."

"Certainly I should like to go; but how am I to get in? At Athens they were very particular not to admit any one that was not a citizen."

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"Don't trouble yourself on that score. Here they are not particular at all. Simply follow the crowd. There will be no one to stop you."

And so it turned out. There were door-keepers at the entrances to the vast amphitheatre in which the meeting of the Assembly was held, but they did not attempt to exclude anyone. Cleanor found himself, when he was seated, in the midst of a crowd almost as variegated and as polyglot as that at which he was accustomed to gaze in the streets. No one could suppose that any large proportion of them were genuine Corinthian citizens. The fourth hour¹⁹ was the time appointed for the commencement of business, and the multitude spent the interval much in the same way that a waiting crowd would do nowadays. They cheered or hissed any well-known citizen as he took his place, yelled out witticisms which seemed to please the more the coarser and more personal they were, sang songs with noisy choruses, and kept up generally an incessant uproar. Men carrying baskets of cakes and sweetmeats, or jars of wine, passed up and down the spaces between the blocks of seats, and did a brisk business in their respective wares.

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A brief hush fell upon the noisy crowd when, after the signal had been given by the blast of a trumpet, the doors leading into what may be called the magistrates' box were thrown open, and the officials, who were to conduct the business of the day filed in. There was nothing noteworthy about their reception, but when the figures of the two Roman envoys became visible, a storm of groans and hisses broke out ten times louder and fiercer than the noisiest manifestation that had greeted the most unpopular Corinthian. The two Romans bore themselves with characteristic indifference, took their seats in the places allotted to them, and watched the furious multitude with the utmost unconcern.

After the howling and stamping had gone on for some quarter of an hour, the demonstration began to die away. One of the magistrates dropped a few grains of incense into a fire that was burning in front of him, and poured out a little wine, muttering at the same time an invocation to Zeus, the patron deity of Corinth. This was equivalent to our "opening the proceedings with prayer". This ceremony completed, a herald proclaimed that the Assembly was constituted, and the presiding magistrate stepped forward to open the proceedings.

His speech was of the briefest. "Citizens of Corinth," he said, "you are called together to-day to hear the terms on which the Senate and People of Rome are willing to make a treaty of perpetual friendship with you. They have sent two distinguished citizens, both members of the Senate, who will set the matter before you, and whom you will receive with that courtesy which it is the custom of Corinth to show to the ambassadors of other nations."

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The Romans stepped to the front of the platform. They were met for a few moments with a renewal of the uproar which had greeted their first appearance. But the Assembly was genuinely anxious to hear what they had to say, and the disturbing element was hushed into silence.

Rome had paid the Greek people the compliment of sending them envoys who could address them in their own language. Titus Manlius—this was the name of the senior envoy—was one of the most cultured men of the time, one of the Scipio circle, and feeling a genuine admiration for Greece, for the Greece, *i.e.*, of the past, for he had no little contempt for the Greece of the present. On the present occasion, however, he had every wish to please and conciliate.

When it was seen that he was going to address the Assembly without the aid of an interpreter, he was greeted with applause, which was renewed after he had uttered a few sentences with a fluency and purity of accent which much impressed his hearers, few of whom, indeed, could in these respects have rivalled him. When he went on, in a few well-turned phrases, to compliment his hearers on the dignity and antiquity of their city, and on the services which they had rendered to Greece in repelling the barbarians from without, and checking undue ambition from within, he was met with loud applause.

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But after compliments came business, after sweets bitter. The first statement was that the Senate and People of Rome desired that every Greek city should enjoy complete freedom, electing its own magistrates, and being governed by its own laws.

This was received with some applause, though the Assembly was acute enough to be aware that a generality of this kind might not mean very much.

The speaker went on: "Every city may form such alliances as may seem expedient, provided only that they be not to the injury of the public peace. No city shall be compelled to enter into or to give up any alliance against its will."

At this there were loud expressions of disapproval. It was a cardinal point with the League, of which Corinth was the ruling member, that every city in Greece must join it. At this very time Sparta was insisting on her right to stand alone, and the other states, headed by Corinth, were insisting that she must join them. And now Rome had pronounced in favour of Sparta.

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The third item in the programme pleased the audience still less, for it touched their pride at a very tender point. "A Roman garrison will occupy the citadel until affairs shall have been finally arranged. The occupation is for a time only, and will cease as soon as this may be done without injury to the public good."

But when the last condition was announced it was met with a perfect storm of rage. "Anxious to promote the general welfare of Greece, the Senate and People of Rome decree that the island of Delos shall be a free port."

This was a thing that everybody could understand. Freedom, after all, was not much more than a sentiment, and alliances were a matter for rulers to settle. Even a garrison in the citadel might be endured, for it meant the spending of a good deal of money. But Delos a free port! That was beyond all bearing. There was not a man in the whole of the Assembly but would be distinctly the poorer for it.

The Roman had scarcely sat down when Critolaüs, the president of the League, sprang to his feet, and poured out a furious oration, in which he denounced the hypocrisy, the arrogance, and the greed of Rome. As he spoke, the temper of his audience rose higher and higher. The whole multitude sprang to their feet, howling, and shaking their fists at the Romans as they sat calm and indifferent in their place. Still the crisis, dangerous as it looked, might have passed off but for the mischievous act of some half-witted fellow who had found his way into the Assembly.

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"As for these men who have come hither to insult us," cried the orator in the peroration of his speech, "let them carry back to their employers at home the message of our unanimous contempt and defiance." "And this too," shouted the man, "as a little token of our affection," throwing at the same time a rotten fig. It struck one of the envoys on the shoulder, making a disfiguring stain on the white toga. "Good! good!" shouted the crowd, and followed it up with a shower of similar missiles. Some stones followed, and then came a leaden bullet propelled from a sling, which struck the wall behind the chairs of the Romans, and only a few inches above their heads.

The magistrates awoke to the gravity of the situation. They were responsible for good order, were unwilling, in any case, to be themselves compromised, and had an uneasy feeling that the excitement of such proceedings would have to be dearly paid for. They caught the two Romans by

the arms, and literally forced them out of the building by the door which served as a private entrance for official persons. The usual escort was in waiting outside. Under this protection the envoys were able to reach the citadel in safety. They had received a few blows, but had not sustained any serious injury.

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THE ROMAN ENVOYS TO CORINTH ARE COMPELLED TO LEAVE THE AMPHITHEATRE.

"What think you of this?" asked the Syracusan of his young friend as they walked back to their lodging.

"A grievous business indeed, and of the very worst augury for the future," replied Cleanor.

"Yes," said Archias. "Who can help thinking of Tarentum, and how the robe of Postumius²⁰ was soiled and washed white again."

CHAPTER IX. AT THERMOPYLÆ.

SO far Cleanor's experiences had been distinctly disappointing. But he still clung to his hopes, trying to comfort himself with the thought that Greece meant much more than the little tract of country which bore the name. It was to be found in Egypt, in Syria, in the finest regions of Lesser Asia; and the country from which the most powerful Greek influence had come forth was not Athens or Sparta, or any one of the ancient states, but half-barbarous Macedonia. The next thing was to see what promise Macedonia held forth.

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The season was now growing late for travel by sea, and Cleanor gladly joined a party which was about to make its way overland to Pella, the old capital of Macedonia. The route lay through a number of famous places. His study of history had long since made him familiar with their names and associations. They were now seen for the first time with the most vivid interest, an interest which reached its climax in the famous Pass of Thermopylæ. The place, which has now been altered by the action of nature and time almost beyond recognition, was then but little changed. The wall behind which the Greek army took up its position, though almost in ruins, was still to be seen; the mound upon which the immortal Three Hundred made their last stand could easily be recognized. So could the tomb of the heroes, with the epitaph, so appropriate in its simplicity and modesty,²¹ which Simonides the poet had written for it. Close by was the separate

sepulchre of the valiant king Leonidas, with an epitaph of its own not less happy.²² Cleanor saw with regret that there was not enough of local patriotism to keep these memorials of a splendid past in decent repair. The letters of the inscriptions were so grown over with moss that it was very difficult to decipher them. Some of the stones of the tomb of the Three Hundred were out of place; and it would not be long, unless some repairs were done to it, before the whole must fall into ruin. The lion, too, had a weather-beaten, almost dilapidated look. Some mischievous hand, possibly that of a collector of relics,—a class which was as unscrupulous in its greed for specimens then as now,—had chipped off a portion from one of the ears. The pedestal was covered with rudely carved initials, for this foolish practice was as great a favourite with idle hands in the ancient world as it is now.

The young man was meditating sadly on the want of public spirit that suffered so scandalous a neglect of national glories, when he received another rude shock to his feelings. Something had been said in the course of the morning's march—it was about noon when they halted in the Pass—about the tribesmen near Thermopylæ not having the best of characters, but it had been in a half-jesting way, and Cleanor had paid little attention to the remark. Nor had he noticed that the party, which, indeed, had soon exhausted its slender interest in the place, had gone some distance further to make their halt for the noonday meal in the open country beyond the Gates.²³ He was roused from a fit of musing by feeling a hand laid roughly on his shoulder. In a moment the chance words of the morning came back to him. He swung himself violently aside, and so released himself from the grasp of the intruder. Instantly facing about he dealt the man a heavy blow straight from the shoulder, which tumbled him to the ground. But he was unarmed, except for a short dagger which he carried in his belt, and which was meant to serve for a feast rather than for a fray. And he was overmatched. For the moment, indeed, he was free; his assailant had been alone. But looking up and down the Pass he saw small parties of armed men advancing in both directions. Flight, too, was impossible, for the rocks rose sheer on either side of him. There was nothing to be done but to submit to his fate, which manifestly was to be captured by bandits. Throwing his dagger to the ground, he held up his hands in token of surrender.

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A man somewhat better clad and better armed than his companions—they were a ragged, ill-equipped set—advanced from one of the approaching parties and accosted our hero. Nothing could be more polite than his manner of address.

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"You will excuse us, sir," he said, "for detaining you for a short time. Nothing but the exigencies of business could have induced us to put you to any inconvenience."

The fellow whom Cleanor had knocked down had regained his feet, and was coming up with a threatening air.

"Be quiet, Laches," said the leader. "My friend did nothing but what was quite right and natural. You took a great liberty. To put your hand upon a gentleman's shoulder indeed! And your blow, sir, was well delivered," he went on, turning to Cleanor. "It was not the first time, I fancy, that you have used your fists. A very pretty stroke indeed! I am quite delighted to offer such poor hospitality as I have at command to so accomplished a guest. I have your promise, I suppose, not to attempt to leave us till we have improved our acquaintance somewhat. I have been obliged now and then to handcuff a friend who was so modest as to wish to withdraw. But you, sir, I know, will accept my friendship as frankly as it is offered."

Cleanor was not sure whether this elaborate civility was an improvement on the more brutal manners of the average bandit, but thought it best to accept the situation with as much show of good-humour as he could manage. "I shall be delighted," he said, "to improve my acquaintance with this most interesting country of yours. But I have important business on hand at Pella, and to business even the most attractive pleasures must be postponed."

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"I shall be delighted to fall in with your views," replied the brigand chief, with an elaborate bow, "though I cannot but regret that anything should shorten your visit."

After proceeding down the Pass for some two hundred yards, the party turned into a path on the right-hand side, and began to climb a somewhat steep ascent.

"This is the very path, sir," said the chief, "by which Ephialtes brought the Persians to take King Leonidas and his army in the rear. That villainous traitor was, I regret to say, a native of Malia, the only dishonest man that the place has ever produced. I myself have the honour of having been born there."

An hour's smart walking brought the party to a small grassy plateau. Here they left the path, and, making their way through a clump of ilex, reached the entrance to a cavern in the mountain side. The entrance was narrow, and so low that a man of even moderate stature had to stoop before he could pass under it; but the cavern was spacious and lofty.

"My men's quarters," said the chief, with a wave of the hand; "rather dark, as you see, but dry, and fairly warm. My own apartment is a little further this way."

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Another doorway, not unlike that by which they had entered, led from the larger into a smaller cavern. This, as Cleanor observed, could be shut off by a thick door solidly backed with iron.

"I like to be by myself now and then," explained the chief. "Our friends, too, are sometimes a little boisterous in their mirth, and the noise interferes with my studies."

The arrangement, it occurred to Cleanor, served for protection as well as retirement. The smaller cave had also, he concluded from a ray of light which made its way through the wall, a separate exit.

It had been furnished with some attempt at comfort. There was a couch in one of the corners; in the middle, round a hearth on which a few sticks were smouldering, coverlets and skins were piled. A couple of hunting-spears, a bow, and a quiver hung on the walls, and a curtain could be drawn over the door that led into the outer cave.

"Welcome to my home!" said the chief; "a poor place; but better men have been worse lodged. If you have any money, you had better let me take care of it. My men are not bad fellows on the whole, but you must not trust them too far. They are common Phocians, you must know, not men of Malia." [100]

Cleanor had again to make a virtue of necessity. He had taken the precaution of sending a remittance on to Pella, to await his arrival at that place, and carried about with him little more than what would be wanted on the journey. This—some twenty gold pieces—he had in a purse-girdle round his waist,²⁴ which he now produced and handed to the chief. The man examined it, not without first making an apology, and counted the coins. Cleanor fancied that his face fell somewhat at finding that they were so few. His manner, however, continued to be as gay and friendly as before, and the talk, which he poured forth in an unceasing stream, as intelligent as it was amusing.

"The sun must be nearly setting," he said, looking upwards at the aperture in the roof—long practice had enabled him to guess the time of day very accurately by the variation in the light—"and you must be ready by this time for dinner. 'Tis but a humble repast I can offer you, but you can understand that we have to rough it up here. My neighbours, however, are very kind, and we always have enough, though the quality now and then leaves something to be desired." [101]

Opening the door that communicated between the two caves, he called to Laches—the same, it will be remembered, with whom Cleanor had had a collision earlier in the day.

"Tell Persis," he said, "to let us have something to eat as soon as possible. You will join us, Laches," he added, "when it is ready, if by chance you have any appetite left.

"I thought it as well," he explained, "to do away with any little soreness there may be in the man's mind. He will be ready to swear eternal friendship over a flask of wine."

Before long a wrinkled old woman, who looked quite the ideal cook of a robbers' cave, brought in a smoking dish of roast kid, garnished with onions. Flat cakes of what we should call "damper" served as bread, for the latter, as the chief explained, could seldom be made for want of yeast. A jug of red wine of the country was drawn from a cask which stood in a corner of the cave, to be succeeded at the proper time by a flask of stately dimensions, which contained a rich vintage from Lesbos.

"This," said the chief, "my good friend Clarilaus, eparch of Larissa, was kind enough to supply me with."

Cleanor opened his eyes. Farmers and shepherds might find it worth while to buy the brigand's forbearance by a toll from their flocks, but was such a dignitary as an eparch content to pay blackmail? The chief smiled. [102]

"Perhaps I might explain," he said, "that we came across the eparch's wagon as it was on its way to Larissa from the coast. As there was clearly more wine than he could use—it is the one fault of Lesbian wine that it does not keep very well—I took it for granted that some must have been meant for me. He is famous for his taste in wine, and I think you will own that this does him credit."

It was soon evident that the Lesbian wine had strength as well as flavour, for the two brigands became very communicative as the flask grew lighter.

"Tell us your story, Laches," said the chief. "It always puts me in better conceit with myself to hear it. This life of ours here is not exactly the ideal. My old master at the Academy, Philippus, would scarcely have approved of it. Yes, my young friend, I too have been in Arcadia, or rather, I should say, in Athens, though I may not look like it; but I always console myself by thinking that there are worse thieves than I am. Go on, Laches."

The man's tale ran thus:—

"I was a shepherd by occupation. My father was a shepherd; so had his father before him been, and his father too, for many generations. Yes, for many hundred years, but not always. There was a tradition in the family that we had been princes once, owning all the land over which the flocks we cared for grazed, and a great deal more. We believed that we were descended from the great Thessalus²⁵ himself. Well, we were fairly content. Our master was a gay young fellow, a little thoughtless, and too ready with his hands if things did not go quite as he wished, but kind and generous. Poor fellow! he was killed by a wild-boar. To tell the truth, he had taken a cup too much. It was his habit, and a bad habit too—a very bad habit." [103]

Laches was quite sincere, though his own utterance had grown a little thick.

"We had found a boar in the morning, and lost him. After the mid-day meal—he would finish the flask of heady Chian—we found the brute again. My master threw one of his two hunting-spears, and wounded him in the shoulder. He was a little flurried, and he threw it too soon, and with a bad aim. The boar charged, and my master knelt on one knee to receive it. Flurried again, and the spear not quite straight. I was running as hard as I could, but it was too late. When I came up, he was lying on the ground, with as bad a wound in the thigh as ever I saw. He was dead before you could count twenty.

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"Then our troubles began. The master was not married, and all the property went to an uncle, the meanest old skinflint in Thessaly. He had been a spendthrift, they said, in his young days; such men always make the worst kind of misers, I have heard. Anyhow, he was as bad as he could be. He hadn't been in possession for a week when he began to cut us short in everything. We used to be allowed half a drachma²⁶ for every lamb that we reared. This was taken away. Not only that, but we had to make good all that died. 'Your fault,' he would say; 'your fault; a quite healthy lamb.' All the lambs, according to him, were quite healthy. It was the same if one was killed by a wolf, and there are a terrible lot of wolves in that part of the country. What used to be our best time, the lambing season, came to be the worst. There was very little of our wages left by the time that we had made good all the losses. Then he charged us for every stick of wood that we picked up. We were not allowed to catch a fish or snare a bird. We had to buy our flour at his mill; damp, chalky stuff it was, more like bird-lime than flour. Sour wine, rotten cloth, stinking salt-fish—we had to buy them all of him. At every turn the villain made a profit out of us. As for our wages, it was the rarest thing for us to see an obol²⁷ of them. Most months he made out the balance to be on the wrong side."

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"Well, to cut the story short, we got pretty deeply into his debt, my poor father and I. What does the scoundrel do but take my sister—as good and as pretty a girl as there was in the whole country—to be sold as a slave, in payment of the debt, he said. He took care to do this villainy when we—I mean the girl's husband that was to be and I—were with the sheep on the summer pastures in the hills. A nice home-coming we had; my old father dead—he had a stroke the day when his daughter was carried away, dying in an hour,—and my sister gone. She wrenched herself out of the hands of the slave-dealer as they were crossing the Peneus, threw herself into the river, and was drowned—the best thing that could happen to her, poor girl!

"You can guess the end, I dare say. The villain, my master, was found dead in his bed—his throat cut from ear to ear—three days afterwards. They caught Agathon—that was the lover, you understand—and crucified him. And I am here."

"But," cried Cleanor, "are there no laws?"

"Laws!" answered the chief; "laws in plenty. But the question is—who administers them?"

"The Romans, I suppose," replied Cleanor.

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"I only wish they did," was the unexpected answer. "We might get some sort of justice then. No; they leave the matter in the hands of the rich, and there is only one in a hundred who has a spark of conscience or pity in him. Mark this, young sir. I have twelve men in my band, and there is not one of them but has a story to tell as bad as what Laches here has told us. And in every one of them the oppressor has been one of our own people. And now, doubtless, you will be ready for sleep."

Sleep was long in coming that night to the young man, and his thoughts were full of gloom. He could not but feel some fears for himself. His captors, it is true, were civil and even friendly; but he knew that such people conducted their affairs on strict business principles, and that one invariable principle was to get rid of a prisoner whose ransom was not forthcoming in good time. He had funds, indeed, in the hands of a merchant at Pella, but how was he to identify himself? And his experiences hitherto had been very dispiriting. Whatever he might find elsewhere, so far he had not met with the vigorous, united, patriotic Greece of which he had dreamed.

It was late before he fell asleep, and then his slumber was light and troubled. Just as the day was showing he was roused by the chief.

"Get up," said the man, "there is no time to be lost, if you don't want to be choked like a rat in a hole."

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Cleanor started to his feet. Thin coils of smoke were finding their way through the crevices of the doorway between the two caves and through various fissures in the wall. Dazed by the suddenness of his rousing he looked to the chief for an explanation.

"Don't you understand? They have tracked us, and now they are smoking us out. I am not going to leave my men. They're a rough lot, but they have stuck faithfully to me, and I will stick to them. But that is nothing to you. You have got time to escape; don't waste it. You will find some steps cut in the far side of the cave. Follow them; they will take you to a hole near the roof just big enough for you to creep through. That is the entrance to a narrow passage which leads to the top of the hill. No one knows it but myself; it was well to have my own way of getting out. But I am not going to use it now. Take care how you go; the passage is pitch dark, and has some dangerous places in it. And here is your purse. I am sorry to have hindered you in your journey. We took you for something quite different from what you are. Still you have learnt something. If you can, think kindly of us. Even a set of rascally robbers may have something to say for themselves."

There was no time to be lost in talking. Cleanor scrambled with little difficulty to the entrance of the passage. But the passage itself was an awful experience. As the chief had said, it was pitch dark, and the Greek had to feel his way as he crept along on hands and knees. Twice he found the path come to what seemed an abrupt end in what he supposed to be a chasm, for he heard far below him the sound of falling water. But exploring the wall on the left hand he found a ledge just broad enough to allow him to creep along. At last, after what seemed hours of anxious toil—he found afterwards that the time was much less than it seemed—he saw a faint speck of light in the distance. Before long he reached the open air on the hillside, at the height of some four hundred feet above the plain.

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It was not long before Cleanor fell in with a peasant. The man was aware of what had happened. He had seen the Thessalian troops on their march, and seeing the smoke rising from the hillside had guessed the tactics which they had employed. It was plain from the man's talk that the robbers were not unpopular in the district. As a rule they had paid, and paid liberally, for supplies. In short, they had been regarded, as such people often have been before and since, as friends of the poor. The man took Cleanor by a short cut into the highroad, and so enabled him to overtake his party, which reached Pella without further adventure. The banditti, as he heard during his stay in Macedonia, had fallen to a man in a desperate sally which they had made against the attacking party.

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CHAPTER X.

A PINCHBECK ALEXANDER.

ON arriving at the Macedonian capital, Cleanor made it his first business to call on the merchant to whom his remittance had been made. He had expected from the name, Hosius, to find in him a countryman of his own, and was not a little surprised to discover that he was a Jew. The old man, who bore his fourscore years very lightly, and was as shrewd and keen in business as he had ever been in his prime, was very cordial and hospitable. His house presented a very mean exterior to the observer—the Jews had already begun to adopt this almost universal method of concealing their wealth—but it was really a large and splendid mansion. Of this, however, Cleanor caught during his stay only rare and casual glimpses. His own quarters were in an annexe intended for the use of guests not of the Hebrew race. This was entirely distinct from the main building, and the service was performed by a separate establishment of slaves.

Hosius—this was the form into which the merchant's real name, *Hoshea*, had been changed—had much that was interesting to say to his guest. He was very frank about his own ways of thinking.

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"I am not very strict," he said; "I am content to be as one of those among whom I live. I call myself Hosius. It is a name that is easier for their mouths to pronounce than my own. And Greek fashions and ways suit me well enough. But the younger generation is not content. My son David is all for strictness, and I am obliged to humour him for peace' sake at home. You see he was one of the 'Righteous,'²⁸ as they called themselves. He served under Judas the Hammer for three years and more; was with him when he fell at Elaim, and was left for dead on the field. It was he who made me build the guest-chamber where you are now. Before that I used to entertain my visitors in my own house. But he does not allow it; he would sooner starve than eat a meal with a Gentile, as he calls all who are not of the People. I don't hold with all this myself. But he is a good young man, a great deal better than his worldly old father, and I don't like crossing him."

It so happened that David was absent from home at the time, having gone to Jerusalem to be present at the Feast of Dedication, and to look after some family affairs for his father; his zeal did not in the least hinder him from being an excellent man of business. Old Hosius took advantage of his absence to see more of his guest than it would have been possible otherwise. The young man's frankness and intelligence greatly attracted him; and he, on the other hand, had much to say about matters in which Cleanor was profoundly interested. The conversation often turned on the deeds of those Jewish heroes the Maccabees. The old merchant, for all his show of cynicism and worldliness, was really proud of his countrymen. And he had wonderful stories to tell of endurance and courage, of tenderly nurtured women bearing unheard-of agonies, mothers who saw all their children tortured to death before their eyes sooner than break the law, and men who went calmly to certain death if they could work thereby any deliverance for their country.

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These stories he would always introduce with something like an apology. He had heard them from his son. He was too old to be enthusiastic about anything, but still his young friend might like to hear them. Then, as he told them, his eyes would kindle, and his voice thrill almost in spite of himself.

"Listen to this;" this was one of his narratives; "we are forbidden to eat the flesh of swine. I daresay it seems very ridiculous to you, though, by the way, your own Pythagoras would not let his disciples eat beans. Still a law is a law, and, whether it be wise or foolish, the man or woman

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who will die sooner than break it is a noble soul. King Antiochus swore that he would not be mocked by a set of slaves—so the hound dared to speak of our people. What was good enough for him was good enough for them. If he chose to give them good food, they should eat it, law or no law.

"He had a Jewish mother and her seven sons brought up before him, and tried to bend them to his will. The eldest of the seven stood up and spoke for his brothers. 'What you ask, O king, is against our law, and we will die rather than do it.' Antiochus cried in his rage, 'Does he speak thus to his master? Cut out the fellow's tongue.' Why should I tell you all the horrid story. They mangled him and burnt him cruelly till he died. They brought the second. 'Wilt thou eat?' shouted the king. 'I will not,' said he. And they dealt with him as they had dealt with the first. So they did with them one after the other. And all the while those that were left, and the woman herself, exhorted each one to bear himself bravely, and to die sooner than yield. So it went on till there was but one left, the youngest of the seven. 'Hear, young man,' said the king to him. 'These six have died in their folly. Do you be wise. Eat of this food, which is surely one of the good things that the gods have given us, and I will promote you to honour.' And when the lad, for he was of but tender years, refused, the king turned to the mother seeking to persuade her that she might in turn persuade her son. After a while she pretended to be convinced. 'I will persuade him, O king,' she said. But her persuasion was this: 'Have pity on me, my son; remember that I bare thee and nourished thee: endure therefore whatsoever this butcher may do, so that I may receive in the world to come all the seven of you, and lose not one.' So he too endured and died. And after the seven had been slain before her eyes, the mother also was slain. Tell me," cried the old man, "did any Spartan mother of them all equal this?"

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"Then, again, hear the tale of Eleazar, who was surnamed the Beast-slayer, what he did when Judas the Hammer fought the army of King Antiochus at the House of Zachariah. The king had brought a score of elephants with him. You know the beast if you come from Africa, and that he is not so terrible as he looks, and is scarcely more apt to hurt his foes than his friends. But let me tell you that he who sees him for the first time without trembling is braver than most men. So it happened that our soldiers were not a little terrified at the sight. Then this Eleazar, who was brother to Judas, seeing that one of the beasts was bigger than the rest, and more splendidly equipped, as if he carried the king himself, ran furiously into the company in which it was—for each beast had a company of soldiers round it—slaying right and left as he ran till he came to the beast. The creature's breast and shoulders were protected with plates of brass, but his belly, as being out of reach, was left unguarded, and here it was that Eleazar dealt him a great blow with his sword, and continued to strike him till the beast fell dead and crushed this brave Jew in his fall."

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As for the young Greek, he was astonished to find that this fanatical and superstitious people—for so he had always been accustomed to think of the Jews—could boast of warriors and statesmen quite equal to any that his own nation had produced. Leonidas himself and his Three Hundred had not shown a more desperate courage at Thermopylæ than Judas Maccabæus and his scanty band of followers had displayed at Elaim; Themistocles had not exhibited a more subtle and skilful statecraft than Jonathan. And while his admiration was extorted for the Jew, he was equally constrained to despise the Greek. Antiochus the Splendid, as he called himself, the Crazy as every one outside the circle of court sycophants and flatterers called him,²⁹ made but a very poor figure by the side of Judas the Hammer.

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Another highly disturbing fact for the young man was this. Where did these patriots find allies? Not in any Greek kingdom—these were all banded together against them,—but in Rome. It was to Rome that Judas had turned in his extremity, and in Rome that he found help. The old man's son had acted as secretary to the embassy which Judas had sent on this occasion, and had given his impressions of what he saw and heard in a letter to his father, which the old man now showed to his guest. It ran thus:

I am not persuaded that our chief has done well in seeking alliance with this heathen people, for has not the Lord our God commanded us to have no dealings with idolaters? How can we keep ourselves separate from them if they become our friends, and fight by our side in the battle? But this I will confess, that if it be lawful to have any nation from among the heathen for our friends, that nation is Rome. I had heard much of the things that these Romans have done, and how that there is not a nation in the world that has been able to stand up against them. The greatness of their achievements seemed to be beyond all belief; but after what I have seen in Rome, there is nothing in them any longer incredible. They make kings and unmake them, but none of them puts a crown upon his own head, or clothes himself with purple. There is no royal palace in their city, but a Senate-house, in which three hundred and twenty men, every one of them fit to be a king, sit day by day taking counsel for the welfare of the people. Every year they choose two men to whom they commit the ordering of the state and the command of their armies. All obey these two without question, and there is neither envy nor emulation among them.

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But when Cleanor came to speak of the special purpose of his mission he found the old man very reserved. "You want to see the Prince Andriscus, for that is the name by which some of us knew him, or Perseus, as we are to call him now, I understand. Well, I can give you an introduction to the court, but that is all that I can do. And I would advise you not to build your hopes too much upon what you may see or hear now."

The introduction was given, but it seemed impossible to get any further. The king, as he called himself, was always too busy to give an audience. But for all his being so busy, Cleanor never could make out that anything was being done. There was no drilling of troops; there was no gathering of stores. But there was a great deal of feasting, and there were some fine performances at the theatres, not plays, for which the Macedonians did not care, but spectacles, on which, so gorgeous were they, a vast amount of money must have been spent. The king found time to see them, and though he was carried in a closed chariot, a method of conveyance which Cleanor had always been taught to consider effeminate, no one could deny that his escort were magnificent men, and wore very splendid armour.

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At last the Greek got his long-promised interview. The first sight of the prince or pretender, whatever we may call him, distinctly impressed him. He had the advantage of one of those extraordinary personal resemblances that have often stood pretenders in good stead. His face and figure recalled the image, made so familiar by statues, pictures, and coins, of the great Alexander, just as Alexander himself had seemed an impersonation of Achilles, so closely had he resembled the traditional representations of the famous hero. A second and longer view of the face did much to dispel the illusion. The chin was receding and weak; the full, sensual lips were parted in the way that commonly denotes a want of resolution; the eyes were dull and shifty; habitual intemperance had already suffused the skin with a colour which a few more years would make disfiguring. When he spoke, his voice—and there is no greater tell-tale than the voice—was rough and uncultured.

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Cleanor presented to the prince the letter of commendation with which Hasdrubal had furnished him. He glanced at it for a few moments, and then tossed it to a secretary. The Greek had afterwards reason to believe that the Prince could not read, and that his sole literary accomplishment was a laboriously-executed signature. He asked a few commonplace questions about the progress of the siege of Carthage, and the prospects of the future, but did not seem to listen to the answers. Then, seeming to weary of serious subjects, he turned to the more congenial topics of amusement and sport. Some chance brought up Cleanor's experiences in tunny-fishing, and the Prince was really roused.

"I shall go," he said in a more determined manner than he had yet shown, "and have a try for them myself. See," he went on, turning to one of the chief officials of the court, "that you have everything ready for an expedition on the day after to-morrow." The man bowed; he was accustomed to see these whims appear and disappear. "You shall come with me," he said to Cleanor. "Dine with me to-day, and we will talk it over."

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THE MACEDONIAN PRETENDER PERFORMS THE PYRRHIC DANCE.

But by dinner-time the whim was forgotten. The martial mood now had its turn, a frequent incident in the Pretender's convivial hours. A rhapsodist, made up with no little skill to resemble the blind minstrel of the Odyssey, recited from the Iliad the valiant deeds of Achilles; and, later on in the evening, the Pretender himself performed, as well as somewhat unsteady legs permitted

him, the Pyrrhic dance. Cleanor left the hall in disgust, under cover of the thunders of applause with which this display was greeted. It enraged him to think how much time and trouble he had wasted on this miserable mountebank. It was not from such as he that any help could be gained to check the growing power of Rome. His disappointment was made all the keener by the tidings which awaited him on his return to his lodgings. His host put into his hands a missive which had just been brought for him. It was a despatch from Hasdrubal, and ran thus:

Hasdrubal to Cleanor, greeting.

I have heard this day from friends in Rome that it is already settled among the chief men of the tribes that Scipio is to be chosen Consul for the year to come. Some will object, but more for form's sake than in earnest, that he is below the proper age for the consul's office. But the people are wearied of incompetent men, and are determined to choose him who has, they say, the fate of Carthage for his inheritance. May Hercules avert the omen! Yet be sure both that this will be done, and that being done it will mean much. Return therefore with all possible speed. If you have found any friends for our country urge them to do what they can without delay. Never did we need help more, or are more ready to reward it. But, in any case, come back yourself. There is great work to be done, and great honour to be gained; nor is there anything which, if the gods favour our country, you may not hope for, or rather, demand. Farewell!

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Cleanor had done nothing, though he might fairly say that he had found nothing to do; and it was a relief to him to find that his course of action at last lay plainly before him. The two sides in the great struggle were closing in; he knew where his own place was, and that he could not take it too soon. But it was no easy matter to discover how he was to get there. Hasdrubal's despatch had taken nearly two months to reach him, for it had been sent off very soon after his own departure from Africa. It was now close upon the end of the year, and with the New Year would come the election of consuls at Rome. Scipio, once put into power, would not, he was sure, let the grass grow under his feet; he himself, too, must lose no time if he was to serve Carthage to any purpose. Fortunately, he had ample funds at his disposal. By the help of Hosius he found a fast-sailing pinnace, whose owner was willing for the handsome consideration of ten minæ³⁰ to risk the perils of a winter voyage. A brisk north-easter carried them to Corinth in three days. It was easy to get from Corinth to Patræ, for traffic went on, winter and summer alike, in the landlocked Corinthian Gulf. There he was upon the regular route between the East and Italy, a route by which so much indispensable business was done that it was never quite closed. At Patræ he found a Roman official, just appointed to the commissariat of the army at Carthage, who was on his way to Rome. He was expecting the arrival of a ship which was to touch for him, on its way from Ambracia to Brundisium.

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On its arrival, which took place next day, Cleanor went on board with his new acquaintance, and arranged to travel with him to Italy. He assumed the character of a student at Athens, leaving that city for a time on account of the troubles that seemed imminent in Greece. He knew enough of the place from his former residence to play the part with success, and he had ascertained that there was no genuine student on board.

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At Brundisium the party was met with the news that the prediction of Hasdrubal's Roman correspondent had been fulfilled—Scipio had been elected consul for the year, with Africa for his province. Their informant described the scene as one of indescribable enthusiasm. The tribes had simply refused to hear any other name. Candidates of credit and even of high reputation had been proposed, but it had been only in dumb-show, the voices of their proposers being drowned in the continuous roar of "Scipio! Scipio!"

A hasty meeting of the Senate had been called, and a resolution passed suspending the law which fixed the qualifying age at forty-two. So engrossed was the people with the election of their favourite that it was not easy to induce them to give him a colleague. The assembly dismissed, Rome had given itself up to a frenzy of rejoicing, which could not have been greater if Carthage had already fallen. It was an absolute faith with every one that he was "born for the destruction of Carthage", and such a faith has a way of working out its own fulfilment.

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Cleanor was now in a very difficult position. The audacious thought presented itself that he might engage himself in some capacity with the forces about to proceed from Italy, and, once arrived in Africa, take an opportunity of deserting. But the plan was not only perilous, for there was a great risk of detection,—Scipio seemed to be one of those men whose eyes are everywhere,—but it had a dishonourable look. But some stratagem would be necessary, and Cleanor's conscience did not forbid him to employ it.

A fortunate chance cleared his way. His fellow-passenger, the commissariat officer, happened to remember that he had spoken of his being on his way to Sicily, and asked him whether by chance he knew anything of the corn-market in that island. The Italian supply, on which considerable demands were being made, would certainly fall short, and nothing could be got from Africa, exhausted as it was by the war. Cleanor, though hating to say the thing that was not, declared that he had an uncle at Agrigentum who was engaged in the business, that he was on his way to his home, and would deliver any message which it would be a convenience to send.

The Roman caught eagerly at the suggestion. He jotted down the number of bushels of wheat which he should probably want, and the price which he would be willing to give. The details of the business, methods of transport, terms of payment, and other matters might be settled with

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the agent who represented Rome at Agrigentum. He also gave our hero what was known as a *diploma*, a word which we may represent in a way by "passport", but which really meant a great deal more. The bearer of it could requisition horses and carriages, in short, any of the instruments of travel that belonged to the state. Without this it would hardly have been possible to proceed. A great campaign was about to begin, and every kind of conveyance was practically engaged.

With this document in his hand Cleanor found everything open before him; he called on a merchant with whom, though not a kinsman, he had some acquaintance, and handed him the Roman's order. This done he made his way as quickly as possible to the coast, where he was lucky enough to find a small vessel in the coasting-trade that was just starting for Africa. There is a humble commerce that, luckily for those that conduct it, goes on through all the stress of war. This vessel was engaged in it; and by its opportune help Cleanor, two days later, found himself in Africa, and in two more had reached Carthage.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE TWO HASDRUBALS.

CLEANOR found the streets of Carthage in a state of the wildest confusion. The news that had brought him back thither in such hot haste had made a profound impression upon the city itself. The name of Scipio was no less powerful a charm at Carthage than it was at Rome. Only it spelt defeat and ruin in Africa, while in Italy it seemed a sure augury of success. Still, the spirit of the nation was not broken. It was one of the characteristics of the great family of mankind to which the people of Carthage belonged to fight desperately when driven to stand at bay. The longest, the most stubbornly defended sieges in history have been when some Semitic people has been reduced to its last stronghold.

The Punic race was now prepared to show the same fierce, unyielding fury of resistance with which, some two centuries later, their Jewish kinsmen were to meet the overpowering assault of the same enemy. One step, not taken without reluctance, but absolutely demanded by the necessities of the situation, was to bring within the walls the army that up to this time had been encamped outside. This force was largely, indeed almost wholly, composed of mercenaries, and Carthage never trusted her mercenaries more than she could help. She had had frequent difficulties with them; once she had been brought by their rebellion almost to ruin. It was a law, accordingly, that they should never be admitted in any great number within the walls. This law had now, perforce, to be repealed. It would be rash to risk a battle in the field, when defeat would mean so much; on the other hand, the defences of the city needed all the men that could be found, if they were to be adequately garrisoned.

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Cleanor on his arrival found that the process of moving the outside army into the city was in full swing. The roads that led to the gates were thronged with a motley multitude, for Carthage drew her hired soldiers from a very wide area indeed. There was every variety of hue, from the fair-haired son of Celt or Teuton of Northern Europe, to the thick-lipped, woolly-haired, ebony-coloured negroes, who had been drawn by the report of Carthaginian wealth from remote regions even beyond the Desert. The languages which they spoke were as various as their complexions. It had been said by a writer who told the story of the great revolt of the mercenaries a hundred years before,³¹ that the only word which they had in common was some equivalent of to "kill". They were still as polyglot, and, so at least it seemed to Cleanor, almost as savage. Much of the talk that he overheard as he made his way along the crowded roads was unintelligible to him, but he understood enough to make him sure that anger and suspicion were rife among them.

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He had intended to propose himself as a guest of the Hasdrubal who commanded the forces within the walls. Hasdrubal was a grandson of King Masinissa, and would be certain to give him a friendly reception. But it was so late in the evening before he could disentangle himself from the throng that blocked all the approaches to the city, that he decided to postpone till the morrow the delivery of his credentials. Under these circumstances he was glad to accept the invitation of Gisco, whom my readers may remember as a staff-officer of the other Hasdrubal, to share his quarters. These were in the guest-hall attached to the palace of the high-priest of Melcart.

A large company of officers was present at the evening meal, and when the wine, which for flavour and strength was fully worthy of priestly cellars, had passed round, there was little reserve in the conversation. Cleanor's presence was unnoticed, or, possibly, as the guest and friend of Gisco, he was supposed to be in sympathy with the views held by the rest of the company. It soon became abundantly clear to the listener that feeling was running very high against the Hasdrubal who commanded the city army.

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"I don't like the breed," said one of Cleanor's neighbours. "He has got more than enough of Masinissa's blood in him, and Masinissa, I take it, was about the worst enemy that Carthage ever had."

For anything more definite Cleanor listened in vain. It seemed to be taken for granted that a man with this parentage could not be faithful to his country. That he had betrayed Carthage no one ventured to assert. No one could even bring up against him any instance of mistake or negligence. It was not even denied that he had managed the defence of the city with distinguished success. Certainly no such disaster could be laid to his charge as the crushing defeat which the other Hasdrubal had received some four years before at the hands of King Masinissa. The young Greek had forcibly to repress a strong inclination to speak up for the accused; but he saw that his interference would be useless. The best, in fact the only service that he could do to the unfortunate man was to warn him of his danger.

The question was how the warning was to be given. It was hardly possible to leave the guest-house that night. Sentinels had been placed at the doors, and these could not be passed without the watchword, and this he did not happen to know. All that he could do was to take care that no time should be lost in the morning. Fortunately Gisco, whose chamber he shared,—the guest-house being crowded with company to its fullest capacity,—was the officer on guard for the next day. Just before dawn an orderly roused him from his sleep, and, giving him the watchword for the day, communicated to himself overnight, left him, to relieve the sentries. [129]

Half an hour afterwards, Cleanor, having satisfied the challenge of the sentinel, passed out by the gate, and, hastening through the deserted streets, made the best of his way to the mansion of Hasdrubal. So little did that general suspect any danger that he had not even taken the precaution of placing a sentinel at his gate. The sleepy porter admitted Cleanor without asking a question, though not without a grumble at the unseasonableness of so early a visit.

The huge negro who slept outside the general's door did not let him pass so readily. As the man did not understand a word of either Carthaginian, Latin, or Greek,—no bad qualification for an official who had to refuse troublesome visitors,—argument was useless. Cleanor, who felt that not a moment must be lost in rousing the general, raised his voice to its loudest, with the result that in another minute Hasdrubal opened the door of his chamber.

He had a slight acquaintance with the Greek, knew his story, and had a general idea of the mission from which he had just returned. [130]

"Come in," he said, "you are welcome. And you"—turning to the negro attendant—"fetch two cups of *mulsum*³²."

Cleanor briefly stated the cause of his visit, and Hasdrubal heard him with undisturbed calm.

"I hardly know," he said, when the story was finished, "whether I am surprised or not. I must own that I did not expect this particular form of attack, but I did expect that my namesake would do his best to oust me from my place as soon as he had orders to bring his troops within the walls. I quite see that now, when all our army is brought together into one, there must be one general, and I should have been ready to resign. But after what you have told me I must face it out; to resign would be almost to acknowledge that there is something in what these knaves, and the fools that follow them, say. There is to be a meeting of the Senate at noon to-day, and the question of the Command is down for debate. Of course I shall be there. So much for that; but you must understand that I am immensely obliged to you. I had intended to offer you a post on my staff, but, as things are at present, the less you have to do with a suspected man the better for you. If things turn out more favourably than I fear they may—we will certainly talk of this again." [131]

"But, sir," broke in the Greek with some heat, "it is surely impossible that the Senate should listen to such palpable absurdities as this. Why, there is not a general in Carthage who has such a record of successes as yours."

"My dear young friend," replied the general, "you don't know us. The Carthaginians always suspect their generals. We always fight with a rope, so to speak, round our necks. If we are victorious they fear that we shall become too powerful, and protect themselves by the stroke of a dagger or a pinch of poison in our wine. If we are defeated, there is the usual penalty. They crucify us by way of an encouragement to our successors. It is not revenge, it is suspicion that moves them. They cannot imagine that they can be beaten except by treachery. It is a terrible mistake, and Carthage suffers for it by being far worse served than Rome. Rome has a plan that looks like the merest folly. She takes a man because he is popular with the shopmen and artisans of the city and the farmers from the country, and puts him to command her armies. Yet it works well, because the Romans trust each other. What a splendid thing it was that they did when their Consul Varro as nearly as possible brought them to ruin by losing their army at Cannæ! The Senate and the people went out to meet him, and thanked him for not despairing of the Republic. And indeed a Republic where such things are possible need never be despaired of. But it is useless to talk. And now for yourself. Get away from this house as soon as you can, and go by the private door which the negro will show you. No; not another word. Carthage will not let me serve her any more, but she need not lose you also. Farewell!" [132]

Hasdrubal touched a small gong which stood by his bed, and when the negro appeared in answer to the summons gave him the brief instruction:

"The postern-gate for this gentleman."

Cleanor followed his guide, and in a short time was shown out into an unfrequented lane which ran at the back of Hasdrubal's house. He reached his quarters before the other guests had commenced their morning meal.

The prudent course for him to follow was, obviously, to stand aside and watch the progress of events. Yet such prudence was alien to his temper. Hasdrubal was the hereditary friend of his family, and he was related to the old king from whom Cleanor had received such unexpected kindness. There was but the faintest chance that he should be able to give him any help; but to Cleanor it seemed ungrateful, and even inhuman, to stand aloof. But what was he to do? To begin with, he was met with what seemed an insuperable difficulty—the meetings of the Senate were of course private. How was he to gain admission? This obstacle, however, was soon removed. Gisco brought him a message from his chief that he had been summoned to attend a meeting of the Senate, and desired his attendance as one of his body-guard.

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The meeting of the Senate, held as usual in the temple of Baal-Hammon, otherwise known as Moloch, was an imposing scene. On two thrones in the eastern semicircular recess of the building—corresponding to the sanctuary in the Hebrew temple or the chancel or apse in a Christian church—sat the two kings or Shophetim, wearing robes of the richest Tyrian purple, with richly-jewelled diadems on their heads. Facing them were semicircular benches, crowded with the members of the Inner Senate, as it may be called. Scarcely one of the Hundred—this was the number to which it was limited—was absent from his post. Further removed were other benches similarly arranged, and set apart for the Four Hundred or Outer Senate. It was evident at once that, whatever might be the usual custom, this meeting at least was not private. The body of the temple was filled with a vast crowd, separated from the assembly itself by nothing more than a slight barrier of wood. Hasdrubal of the Camp, as we may call him by way of distinction, was seated just within this; his body-guard were ranged close behind him, but on the outer side of the barrier. The other Hasdrubal occupied his usual place as one of the Inner Senate.

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The proceedings of the day having been opened with the customary ceremonies, the senior king called upon Mago, son of Hamilcar, to bring forward the motion of which he had given notice. Mago, an elderly man, whose countenance greatly belied him if he was not an incarnation of the Punic bad faith which had passed into a proverb, rose in his place and made a speech of studied moderation.

"Rumours," he said, "have for some days been current in the city that Carthage is not faithfully served by some of those to whom she has committed offices of great dignity and importance. One man has been specially pointed to. For my part I refuse to believe that a soldier who has often distinguished himself in the field can be unfaithful to the country which he has served so well. But the best service that can be rendered to a man accused—may I not say calumniated?—is to give him the opportunity of defence. I accordingly move that Hasdrubal, son of Mago—for why should I refrain from mentioning a name which is on the lips of everyone?—be called upon to give to the Senate any explanations that he may think proper to make."

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An approving murmur ran through the crowd when the speaker sat down. The accused man rose in his place,—but before he could speak another senator had intervened.

"I do not see," said this senator, "that Hasdrubal, son of Mago, has anything to explain. No evidence has been brought against him. I have not even heard any charge, except it be that there are rumours against him. What man is there against whom there are not rumours? And the better the man the more malignant the rumours. I move that the Senate proceed to the next business."

A murmur, not by any means of approval, rose from the crowd. Hasdrubal, who had resumed his seat while the last speaker was addressing the Senate, rose again.

"I have nothing to explain," he said. "You know me, who I am, and what I have done."

"Yes, we know you!" cried a voice from the crowd. "The grandson of that accursed brigand, Masinissa."

The name was met with a howl of fury from the multitude, followed by deafening cries of "Brigand!" "Traitor!" Hasdrubal faced the uproar without flinching. But it was an hour of such madness as makes men blind and deaf to all that might appeal to their better feelings. Something might be said, not in excuse, but in explanation of the frenzy. An imperial race, reared in traditions of greatness, felt itself to be approaching the hour of servitude or extinction, and it raged like a wild beast in a net. Nothing that came within reach of its fury was likely to be spared. The multitude surged forward, the wooden barrier gave way, and the inclosed space assigned to the senators was crowded in an instant with a raging crowd.

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Cleanor caught one glimpse of the doomed man's face, pale but still resolute. The next moment it had disappeared.

He sprang forward, crying, "Save him!" though, unarmed as he was, for no weapon was allowed within the building, he felt miserably helpless. In fact, he could have done nothing, and, fortunately for himself, he was not even permitted to try. His arms were seized from behind, and a cloak was thrown over his head. The next moment he felt himself lifted from the ground, and carried, he knew not whither. He could not even struggle, for both arms and legs had been deftly secured, while his voice was choked by the covering that enveloped his head.

When, half an hour afterwards, the cloak was removed, he found himself in a small chamber, with no companion but a slave, who was apparently a deaf-mute, as lie replied to all questions with the single gesture of putting his finger on his lips.

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In the course of another half-hour Gisco appeared.

"My dear fellow," he said, "pardon this violence, which would, indeed, be inexcusable, if it had not been the only way of saving your life. Believe me, you have friends who will soon, I hope, find more agreeable ways of showing their good-will than they were forced to this morning. You have been watched ever since you came into Carthage, though you have not known it. The council have spies everywhere, and they know their business. They knew that you were a friend of Hasdrubal, and felt sure that you would do your best to help him. They followed you to his house, they heard what you said to him and he to you, and they brought the report to the chief. He has a great liking for you, and gave me *carte blanche* to do what I pleased, if only I could keep you out of danger. So, if there has been anything rude in the method of saving you, it is I whom you must blame. Believe me, you would have sacrificed yourself for nothing. It was impossible to save Hasdrubal. The fact is, he ought to have taken warning long ago, for warning he has had in plenty. Again and again he has been told that a grandson of Masinissa could never be safe in Carthage, and he ought to have gone long ago. Mind, I say nothing against him. He was obstinate, but it was a noble obstinacy. He knew himself to be blameless, and he wanted to save Carthage."

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"And what has happened to him?" asked Cleanor.

"The worst, I fear," answered Gisco; "but more I really do not know. I was busy with your affair, and saw nothing."

Cleanor heard the shocking story afterwards from an eye-witness. The crowd, led by some of the senators—his informant was positive on the point that some of the senators had a hand in the deed—had torn up the benches from their fastenings, broken them into fragments, and beaten the unfortunate man to death. The victim had made no resistance—had not even uttered a cry.

CHAPTER XII.

SCIPIO SETS TO WORK.

CLEANOR, though he had no proofs of Hasdrubal's complicity in the crime just committed, could not rid himself of the suspicion that he had had something to do with it. No one profited by it more; he had been present when the deed was done, and had not spoken a word or lifted a finger to hinder it. Such a suspicion was enough in itself to make any post which brought him into close contact with the general distasteful to the young man. And Hasdrubal's personal habits were revolting to his taste. The man was given over to gluttony. He had a sufficiently clear intelligence and some military skill, but the enormous meals in which he indulged produced a condition of torpor which disabled him during a great part of the day.

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Cleanor, therefore, was not a little pleased when, through the good offices of Gisco, he was attached to the staff of one of Hasdrubal's lieutenants, Himilco by name. Himilco had charge of a portion of the wall looking towards the sea, about four stadia in length. Cleanor had the duty, which he shared with another officer, of seeing that the sentinels were properly vigilant during the night. Each was responsible for two of the four watches, their practice being for one to take the first and fourth, the other the second and third.

At this time the chief interest of the siege was centred at this point, where it seemed not improbable that the Romans would have to suffer a very serious check. The second-in-command of the besieging force, who had a special charge of the fleet, an officer of more enterprise than judgment, had seen, as he thought, a chance of greatly distinguishing himself. Having taken advantage of a long spell of settled weather to stand-in more closely than usual to the shore, he had observed, or rather, it had been pointed out to him by a sharp-sighted young officer, a portion of the ramparts which appeared to be insufficiently guarded. The wall here ran along the top of a precipice, so steep and inaccessible that it might almost seem unnecessary to supplement by art the provision of nature. Such spots, however, while they seem to be the strongest, are often in fact the weakest part of a fortification.³³ A fortunate chance put Mancinus—this was the Roman admiral's name—in possession of the fact that the cliffs were not by any means so difficult of access as they seemed. One of the fishermen who plied their trade along the coast had come on board the admiral's ship with a cargo of fish for sale. He was asked whether there was any way of scaling the cliffs, and replied that there was, and promised, in consideration of a couple of gold pieces, to act as guide. Mancinus accordingly, having waited for a dull night, landed a force of about a thousand men. The guide fulfilled his promise and showed them the path, which, thanks to the negligence of the besieged, they found entirely unguarded.

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For a time everything went well. The sentinels had come to regard this beat as one which might be neglected without risk. When they chanced to be told off to this duty they were accustomed to sleep as unconcernedly as if they had been in their beds at home. About fifty or sixty of the assailants had mounted the walls by help of scaling-ladders when the alarm was given. The besieged had organized a flying detachment of five hundred men, whose business it was to be ready for any emergency, and to hurry at once to any spot where they might be

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wanted.

This force now came up at full speed, and the few who had mounted the wall were promptly dislodged. This done, the officer in command ordered the nearest gate to be opened, and sallied out at the head of his men. But he had not expected to find so formidable a force opposed to him. His division was completely overmatched, and was driven back within the walls, the Romans making their way through the gate—which there had been no time to shut—along with the retreating enemy.

Both sides were now reinforced, the Carthaginians by fresh detachments from the garrison, the Romans by Mancinus himself with another contingent from the fleet. The result of the fighting, which was continued throughout the night, was that the Romans retired from within the walls, but occupied a fairly strong position outside.

In earlier days, when the idea that Carthaginian territory could be successfully invaded had not occurred to anyone, a wealthy merchant of the city had built himself a mansion on a space of level ground between the wall and the cliff. The mansion was surrounded with spacious gardens and orchards, and these again were protected from trespassers by a deep ditch and a wall of unusual height. Here Mancinus intrenched himself. He still cherished the hope that he might make good his footing, and use the position as a starting-point for successful operations against the city. What a splendid achievement it would be if he could falsify what had come to be a commonly accepted belief, if it was to turn out that a Mancinus, not a Scipio, was the conqueror of Carthage! And indeed he was so far right that he always had the credit of having been the first to effect a lodgment within the boundaries of Carthage itself.³⁴

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For the present, however, his position was precarious. He had no stock of provisions with him, except that the men had been ordered to carry rations for three days. Supplies could, of course, be obtained from the ships, but only so long as the weather continued fine. A week of strong wind from the sea would reduce him to absolute starvation. Of water there was already a scarcity. The builder of the mansion had provided an ample supply for a large household, but there was nothing like enough for between two and three thousand men. And, apart from the difficulties about food and drink, the position was not one which could be permanently held. The wall round the mansion, for instance, was not a military fortification. It was meant to keep out trespassers, not to resist battering-rams.

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This, then, was the state of affairs when Cleanor took up his command. Two days had passed since Mancinus had occupied the position outside the walls, and he was already in distress. The contingency for which he had made no provision had occurred. The wind was blowing strongly from the sea, and the captains of the fleet had thought it prudent to stand off from the shore. The Carthaginians were perfectly well aware of the condition of affairs. They had intercepted a messenger carrying an urgent appeal for help to head-quarters, and knew that, unless there was a change of weather, the Romans must be reduced to extremities. Their policy was, of course, to sit still and wait. There was, indeed, a good chance that if the battering-rams were vigorously applied to the walls, a breach might be made, and an assault successfully made. But an assault, whatever the result, would cost many lives. And of all men no one is more bound to be economical of life than he who commands the garrison of a besieged town; and this for the simple reason that he cannot hope to get recruits. In the course of two or three days more the Romans would have to capitulate, or fight at a terrible disadvantage. Scipio, it was true, was now daily expected, and, if he arrived in time, would be sure to make a vigorous effort to save his countrymen. But that he should arrive in time seemed almost impossible.

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But the Carthaginians did not know Scipio. Cleanor himself—who, as has been seen, had had opportunities of estimating the remarkable qualities of the man—was taken by surprise, such were the energy and the promptitude with which the Roman acted. With that remarkable foresight which he did not scruple himself to attribute to divine prompting, and which we may anyhow describe as genius, he had made special preparation for such a contingency as had actually occurred. He had selected the ten swiftest ships out of the fleet which accompanied him from Italy, and had put on board them a picked force of five hundred men. With this squadron he had outstripped the slower sailers by not less than forty-eight hours, an invaluable saving of time as it turned out.

He reached Utica, which was about twenty-seven miles west of Carthage, at sunset on the day on which Mancinus had sent his appeal for help. Two of the three messengers who had been despatched on this errand had been captured, but one had contrived to elude the Carthaginian watchmen, and had reached Utica at midnight. Scipio did not lose a moment. His own men were ready for instant action, but they were scarcely numerous enough for the work which they might have to do.

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He found abundance of help in Utica. At an earlier period of the war he had spent seven months in this town in command of a detachment quartered there. The influence of his extraordinary personality had made itself felt in Utica as it did everywhere else. Old and young in the city were devoted to him. What we should now call a battalion of volunteers had been raised, of which he had consented to be the honorary tribune. Late as it was, he sent a herald through the streets with notice that this force was to muster immediately at the harbour. In the course of little more than an hour the battalion had assembled at the place indicated for a *rendezvous* in full strength, not a single member, except some half-dozen incapacitated by sickness, being absent. A requisition also was made for lads and elderly men, and of these there was such a

throng that the task for which they were wanted, carrying provisions and stores on board the squadron, might have been done five times over. All worked with such a will that before sunrise everything was actually ready, and the squadron was able to make a start.

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Scipio's arrival had been observed at Carthage, the harbour of Utica being distinctly visible, notwithstanding the distance, through the clear atmosphere of the north African coast. He had himself taken pains to assure its being known, for he was not above utilizing to the utmost the impression made, as he was well aware, by his name. He had no sooner reached Utica than he ordered that some seamen, who were among the Carthaginian prisoners, should be set free, supplied with a fast-sailing pinnace, and commissioned to deliver at Carthage the message, "*Scipio is come*".

That he would hasten to the relief of Mancinus everyone in Carthage knew, and orders were issued accordingly that the position of that general should be attacked as soon as possible after dawn. This was prompt, but it was not prompt enough.

The night, indeed, was not lost. Battering-rams were brought to bear upon the wall surrounding the mansion, and several breaches were made, ready for the storming parties to enter as soon as it was light. Before morning, indeed, the wall was so shattered that it became practically indefensible, and Mancinus abandoned the idea of holding it against the assailants. He formed his men into a square, with the heavy-armed, who numbered about five hundred, outside, and the light troops, who had no protection beyond a steel cap and small target, within.

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Himilco, who personally directed the attack, ordered a charge on a corner of the square, where the lines had been made up with Numidian auxiliaries. He hoped to find them less sturdy in resistance than the regular legionaries, who were all Italians. Cleanor, who was having his first experience of serious fighting, was in the front rank of the charge, and had the satisfaction of seeing the Roman line waver. But it wavered without breaking.

The Numidians were under the command of a deputy centurion, a Picenian mountaineer of huge stature and herculean strength. Springing to the front he killed a heavily-armed Carthaginian outright with one thrust of his pike. Then he struck Cleanor full in the breast. The finely-wrought cuirass of steel, a gift from the old king, withstood the blow, but the wearer was hurled backward with irresistible force and came to the ground with a shock which partially stunned him. When Himilco ordered a retreat he had to be supported by his companions.

But though the charge had been repulsed, the position of the Roman force was full of peril. The heavily-armed men in the front ranks were no protection to their less fully equipped comrades against the incessant showers of missiles which the archers, javelin-throwers, and slingers rained upon the helpless men inside the square. Their own armour was not always proof against them, still less against the stones which the catapults, now put in position on the city walls, discharged into their ranks. The whole body continued to edge away out of range of the walls, heedless of the fact that every step brought them nearer to the cliffs.

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A catastrophe was imminent when Scipio's squadron came in sight. The decks were crowded, every available man putting himself as much in evidence as possible. This was Scipio's command, given in order to create an impression of greater numbers than he really possessed. The effect on the contending forces was instantaneous and great. The Carthaginian leaders felt themselves to be in the presence of a formidable antagonist, and stood on the defensive. The forces of Mancinus recovered the confidence which they had lost. Scipio's arrival was soon followed by the appearance of Mancinus' own ships. For it was one of the many instances of the extraordinary good fortune which seemed to attend on Scipio throughout his career, that no sooner had he appeared on the scene than the weather changed. The wind veered round, and now blew with moderate strength from the shore. It was still a couple of hours from noon when the whole force under Mancinus had re-embarked.

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"We must never lose a moment," said Gisco to our hero, when they were talking over the events of the day, "if we are to keep up with this wonderful man. As to being beforehand with him that seems impossible. Who would have thought that, after coming all the way from Italy, he would have started again almost without giving himself time to sup! This is a very different thing from Piso's way of doing business."

CHAPTER XIII. IN THE ROMAN CAMP.

THERE had been, as has been seen, not a few fluctuations of fortune in the conflicts which had followed after the landing of Mancinus. One result of this had been that a considerable number of prisoners had been taken on both sides. Both sides, also, were anxious for an exchange. The Carthaginians did not care to have any more useless men to feed than could be helped; the Romans feared, and not without reason, that their friends and comrades would be barbarously

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treated. Carthage had always had an evil reputation in this respect, and was only too likely to justify it, if ever she should be driven to extremities.

The envoy who conducted the negotiations on behalf of the city was a member of the Senate named Maharbal. He had made himself conspicuous as a leader of the peace, otherwise the pro-Roman party, and was supposed, therefore, to be acceptable to Scipio. Cleanor accompanied him in the capacity of interpreter. The interviews would be conducted in Greek, a language which Scipio spoke fluently. As for Latin, there was no one in Carthage who was able to speak more than a few words of it; nor was there in the Roman camp any more knowledge of the Punic tongue. There could not be a greater proof of the irreconcilable hostility of the two nations than this mutual ignorance.

Cleanor's visit was paid at a very interesting time, for the Roman camp was undergoing, at the hands of the new commander, a very thorough process of cleansing. It had fallen, under the management of his incompetent predecessors, into a most deplorable condition. In the first place it swarmed with disreputable camp-followers. There was a crowd of sutlers, traders who sold to the soldiers various luxuries at the most extravagant prices, and bought from them their plunder for ridiculously small sums of ready money. There was a still greater multitude of soldiers' servants. Even a private trooper must have a slave to groom his horse; and an infantry soldier thought it a hardship if he had to clean and polish his own arms. As some of the officers had a whole establishment of attendants, there was a second army of servants actually more numerous than the first army of fighting men. [151]

Scipio made short work with these useless and mischievous encumbrances. No sutler or dealer was allowed to remain in the camp, or even in the neighbourhood, unless he held the general's license. Even then he was not allowed to sell any articles but such as were contained in a very brief list authorized by the general, and at prices which had received his sanction. The purchase of articles from the soldiers was absolutely forbidden. Indeed, the trade ceased of itself, for plunder was rigidly prohibited. Any soldier who went further from the camp than the bugle could be heard made himself liable to be treated as a deserter. The reform in the matter of the soldiers' servants was no less radical. Two were allowed to a tribune, one to a centurion, and four, who were to be owned and employed in common, to a century or company of infantry and a troop of cavalry. All these were to be able-bodied men, who had learnt military drill; and they were liable on occasion to serve in the ranks.

Scipio, still acting on the principle which had made him announce his arrival to the Carthaginians, kept nothing secret from the envoy and his escort; he took pains, on the contrary, that they should see and learn everything that was to be seen or learnt. He invited them to be present at a general assembly of the army, which was summoned during their stay in the camp to hear an address from himself. Maharbal knew, as has been said, next to nothing of Latin, and Cleanor did not know enough to enable him to follow Scipio throughout. Nevertheless, they could see that the effect of the speech was remarkable. The orator held his audience, so to speak, in the hollow of his hand. He was not speaking smooth things to his army; on the contrary, he told them that they were robbers rather than soldiers. He laid down for them for the future a most rigid discipline; he gave them no hope of indulgence. But he was heard with profound attention and without a murmur of dissent or complaint. [152]

The next morning Cleanor saw the banished multitude embark. A stranger spectacle, a more motley crowd, and a more curious miscellany of property was never beheld. One man was disconsolately watching while a score of wine casks, full of some poisonous liquid which he had hoped an African sun would sell for him, was hoisted on board; another had with him a troop of performing dogs; a third was conducting a troop of singing and dancing girls, whose rouged cheeks and tawdry finery looked melancholy enough in the merciless light. The exiles were not by any means silent; they cursed and quarrelled in a perfect Babel of languages; but they did not dare to linger. A *cordon* of soldiers kept them rigidly within the boundaries of the place of embarkation. Vessel after vessel took on board its cargo with a marvellous regularity and speed. Before evening the camp had been brought back to a primitive severity and simplicity which were worthy of the best times of the Republic. [153]

In the matter of the exchange Maharbal found the Roman general liberal to the point of generosity. He was not careful to exact a very close correspondence in the dignity or the number of the prisoners to be given up and received. When every Roman had been accounted for, a considerable balance of Carthaginians still remained in Scipio's hands. The envoy offered to redeem them at the price which had been customary in former wars, two pounds and a half of silver per man. Scipio smilingly refused to receive it. "Your Hannibal," he said, "used to empty our treasury, for it was seldom but he had more prisoners to give than to receive. You must let me have the satisfaction of feeling that for once I am able to be generous."

It was easy to transact business on such terms. When all was settled the general invited the Carthaginian and his interpreter, whom he had greeted in a most friendly fashion, to share his evening meal. He had thoughtfully arranged that the two young officers who were his *aides-de-camp*, and as such were commonly guests at his table, should not be present. He felt that their company would not be agreeable to Maharbal and still less to the young Greek. The only other guest was a person whom Cleanor especially was delighted to meet. This was the historian Polybius, who had already acquired a considerable reputation as a soldier, a statesman, and a man of letters. Cleanor, during his sojourn at Athens, had heard his character as a politician hotly debated; that he was an honest man no one doubted. Personally he was prejudiced against him as [154]

a partisan of Rome. But he found it impossible to resist the charm of his conversation.

The hours passed only too quickly in such delightful company, and when the time came to separate, Cleanor felt that he had not said a tenth part of what he wanted to say to his new acquaintance. As they were making their farewells, Polybius, who had heard from Scipio an outline of the young Greek's story, found an opportunity of saying a few kindly words.

"I could wish," he whispered, with a friendly pressure of the hand, "that things were otherwise with you. Mind, I don't blame you, or doubt but that you are quite loyal to conscience in what you do. But, believe me, you are on the wrong side. Is there anyone in Carthage whom you can compare in anything that makes the worth of a man with our noble Scipio? I know something of what you feel, though I have not the same cause, for I also am a Greek and have lost my country; but the gods give the sovereignty to whom they will, and who are we to fight against them? Farewell for the present! but I am sure that we shall meet again, and under happier circumstances."

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"I thank you for saying so," replied Cleanor; "but the future looks very dark to me."

And, indeed, as he made his way back to the city, listening with but half his mind to Maharbal's enthusiastic praises of the courtesy and liberality of the Roman commander, he felt his spirits sink into a deeper depression than he had ever known before.

CHAPTER XIV. THE MEGARA.

COURTEOUS, and even generous, as Scipio had showed himself in the matter of the exchange of prisoners, he was not a man to let slip a single advantage that might fall into his hands, or, when he delivered a blow, to hesitate to strike with all his force. He allowed a short time for his army to get used to the new condition of things. This he could well afford, for the season was yet early. When he found his army restored to a sound condition, physical and moral, at once hardened to labour and amenable to discipline, in a word, thoroughly efficient, he proceeded to act. It was as a keen, well-tempered sword in his hands, and he struck with promptitude and energy.

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His first plan was to follow the line of attack which Mancinus had initiated. The weak spot in the defences of a wealthy city is commonly found in the buildings which are allowed to grow up in times of peace outside the fortifications. Life in a walled city is often both irksome and unhealthy. The poor, always compelled to put up with a narrow space whether within walls or without them, is indifferent, but the rich man wants his garden and his playground, wants room for the health of his family or his own entertainment. In this way a suburb, mainly consisting of residences of the wealthy, had grown up outside the northern walls of the city. It presented, only on a larger scale, much the same features as the locality which Mancinus had fixed upon as his point of attack. But it had a fortified wall of its own. This had in process of time become a necessity. For more than four centuries after its foundation Carthage had never seen a foreign invader on its soil. But there came a time when its enemies discovered that it might be most effectually attacked at home. Therefore, splendid houses which offered a rich prize to the plunderer could no longer be left without a defence, and the Megara had to be surrounded with a fortification, which started from the city wall and joined it again. But the space which had to be inclosed was great, and the new wall was neither so strong, so well furnished with towers, nor so adequately garrisoned as the old. It was meant, in fact, rather for a protection against a sudden attack than as a permanent defence.

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Scipio resolved on a night assault, an operation possible only to a thoroughly well-disciplined army. He divided his force into two columns, taking personal command of the one which was actually to attack. The other was to make a demonstration, which was not to be developed into an assault except the officer at its head saw a particularly favourable opportunity. As the two points threatened were more than a couple of miles apart—so great was the circuit of the Megara wall—the attention of the garrison was effectually distracted. Scipio's column succeeded in reaching its destination unobserved, and its sudden approach, coupled with the alarm simultaneously raised on the other side, threw the garrison into confusion.

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But the assault received a check. A deserter had indicated the spot where the wall might be most easily scaled. It had been used as a short cut by marauders, stragglers, and others who did not care to go in or out by the gate. Some stones had been broken down at the top of the wall, while at the bottom there was a natural rise in the ground which diminished the height. But the place had not escaped the vigilance of the officer whose business it was to inspect this portion of the fortification. The stones had been replaced and the rise in the ground levelled. A determined attempt was then made at various points with the scaling-ladders. But an assailant who is mounting a ladder is at a considerable disadvantage when matched with an antagonist who has a firm footing on the wall above. Here and there, indeed, especially where a bit of the wall lay in

shadow, the ladder could be applied and the wall scaled unobserved by the guard. But these successes could not be followed up. The soldiers who thus made good their footing on the top were few and far between; unable to help each other, they could not hold the ground that they had won. The only decided advantage obtained in this direction was the capture of one of the small towers disposed at intervals along the wall. This tower had been deserted by its guard, who had hurried to repel a scaling-party, and was occupied by the Romans in their absence.

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Scipio saw that he was losing men to no purpose, and ordered the retreat to be sounded. But his quick eye had detected a place which seemed to promise better. Some resident in Megara had felt the same impatience of being kept within walls to which the whole suburb itself owed its first existence, and had built, in a spot which commanded a wide view over the sea, one of those towers which we now commonly call "follies". The place was of course deserted when the war broke out, but it was not destroyed, as it ought to have been, for it was dangerously near the wall. So near, indeed, was it that it was quite possible to throw a bridge across the intervening space; fortunately, too, it was not very far from the tower mentioned above as having been occupied by the assailants. A considerable force of archers and slingers was brought up to the spot, and they kept up so vigorous a discharge of missiles that this portion of the wall, some fifty paces or so in length, was absolutely cleared of its defenders. Two scaling-ladders, hastily lashed together, served sufficiently well for a bridge. Across this two or three scores of active young soldiers, picked out for their courage and strength, made their way in rapid succession, and descending from the wall on the inner side, hastened to open one of the gates. Before an hour had passed, Scipio, with nearly four thousand men, was within the walls of the Megara.

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For a time the panic was as great as if Carthage itself, and not a suburb, which never could have been seriously defended, had been taken. The garrison of the Megara fled in wild confusion to the inner city, the gates of which were blocked with a crowd of frantic fugitives. Cleanor, who had joined the flying division as a volunteer, found himself carried back towards the city walls by a quite irresistible torrent of panic-stricken men.

Then a rally took place. In the first place the fugitives were compelled to halt, if for no other reason than because they could not get through the gates. Then the old instinct of obedience and discipline reasserted itself, especially in the mercenaries, among whom the panic had been most severe. Little by little the officers were able to restore some kind of order, and even to recover some of the lost ground. The defenders had the inestimable advantage of knowing the locality. To the mercenaries, indeed, most of whom had never been inside Carthage, the place was as strange as it was to the Romans; but the flying division consisted entirely of native troops, and these were thoroughly at home among the lanes and alleys of the Megara, where indeed most of them had their family residences.

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Cleanor had an hour or so of very lively adventure in the company of an officer of the division, and could not help feeling a certain regret when he heard the Roman bugles sound the recall. Scipio, in truth, had found that his position was not by any means desirable. The Megara was almost covered with detached houses, each surrounded by its gardens and orchards, these again being intersected by running streams, some of which were of considerable depth, and had branches winding in all directions. Any adequate military occupation of such a region would require a much larger force than he had at hand, and would serve no useful purpose. And he could not quite trust his men. They had accepted his reforms with wonderful docility, but here they were in the presence of almost overpowering temptations. Many of the houses in the Megara were full of the accumulated wealth of centuries. A few minutes among such possessions would enrich a soldier with more than he could hope to acquire in twenty campaigns. In fact, it was only too probable that the men would take to plundering, and quite certain that, if they did, they would be destroyed in detail. There were abundant reasons, therefore, why the Roman general should order a retreat. Even as it was, his losses were not inconsiderable.

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"I wonder whether anyone has been paying a visit here?" said Cleanor's companion to him as they approached one of the houses in the Megara. "This is my father's place."

It should be explained that the non-combatant population had fled from the Megara as soon as it was attacked. Even before that many persons had deserted their houses for safer quarters within the city itself.

"It is a very likely place," the Carthaginian continued, "for a man to lose his way in. Perhaps we may lay our hands on a prize. Come this way; I know the best place for waiting."

The two young men, taking a couple of soldiers with them, made their way down a narrow lane which skirted the garden of the house. The moon had set by this time, but there was a dim light of dawn. After a few minutes of waiting, the party could plainly hear that someone was approaching.

"There must be two men at least," whispered the Carthaginian; "and they have missed the path, for they are crashing through the shrubs. By Dagon! we have them, for there is a bit of deep water that they must get over. Let us come a little further on. Mago, you know the hand-bridge; go as quick as you can and secure it."

He had scarcely finished speaking when the party for which they were watching came in sight. It consisted of three persons, and there was now enough light to distinguish them. One was a Roman officer. He wore the ornaments of a tribune, and might have been some twenty years of age.³⁵ His two companions were private soldiers, and light-armed. The three, forcing their way

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through the shrubbery, which here was particularly dense, came upon the water. It was evidently an entirely unexpected obstacle.

"Caius," said the officer, addressing one of the men, "how is this to be managed?"

"We can jump it," the man answered, "with the help of our spears. When we are on the further side, you, sir, must do the best you can, and we will help you out."

"Very good," said the officer, "jump!"

"Let them go," whispered the Carthaginian to Cleanor, "we don't want them; but the officer will be a prize worth having."

Each of the two soldiers planted his spear in the bed of the stream, and swung himself across without much difficulty. The tribune, having first thrown his sword to the other side, jumped his furthest. No run was possible, for the shrubs were thick on the bank; still it was a good leap—[164] excellent, indeed, considering the weight of the young Roman's armour. The breadth of the water was about twenty-four feet, and the tribune had cleared eighteen. His companions were in the act of reaching out one of their spears for him to grasp when the Carthaginian and his party showed themselves. The young Roman understood the situation in a moment.

"Save yourselves," he gasped, as soon as he could speak, "I am lost!"

After a moment's hesitation the men obeyed. To stay would have been a useless sacrifice, for they must have been inevitably cut down while they were attempting to save their companion.

"Speak to him," said the Carthaginian. "Try him with Greek; the Roman gentlemen mostly know it. But perhaps we had better help him out of the water first."



"DO YOU YIELD?" SAID CLEANOR WHEN THE ROMAN HAD REACHED THE SHORE.

"Do you yield?" said Cleanor in Greek, when the Roman had reached the shore.

"I see no choice," replied the young man in the same language.

Giving his promise that he would not attempt to escape, he received his sword, and accompanied his captors to the city. A few inquiries, made and answered in Greek, satisfied them that they had indeed, as the Carthaginian had anticipated, secured a prize. The tribune was a Scipio, a kinsman not very distantly related to the commander. [165]

"Let him be your prisoner," said Cleanor's companion to him. "He may bring you promotion, which I am pretty sure of in any case. Though, indeed," he added after a pause, "I strongly suspect that it will be all the same for most of us, promotion or no promotion, a year hence."

CHAPTER XV. THE PRISONERS.

THE Roman became so unwell, from the shock of his sudden immersion following on a night of unusual exertion, that Cleanor found it necessary to take him to his quarters. They were sitting together at the morning meal a few hours later, when Cleanor's soldier-servant announced that someone had called to see him on urgent business. It was the Carthaginian officer in whose company he had been during the adventures of the night preceding.

"What about the young Roman?" asked the new-comer, who seemed to be in a state of great agitation. "Did you give him up at head-quarters, or did you bring him here by accident?"

"He is here," replied Cleanor. "He seemed so weak that I thought it best to bring him home with me." [166]

"That is well," said the Carthaginian, "though really I can hardly say whether it is well. Do you know what has happened?"

"I have heard nothing. My chief has released me from duty for four-and-twenty hours, and I have taken the chance of getting a good long sleep."

"Well, there have been most horrible doings. Hasdrubal was in a towering rage this morning when he heard what had been going on in the Megara. The fact is"—the speaker lowered his voice to a whisper—"that, between you and me, he was too tipsy last night to appear. I am told that they could not make him understand anything. That did not make him more amiable this morning. Then he has been blamed for letting the Megara remain as it is, and especially for the tower, which certainly ought not to have been allowed to stand. And lastly, there has been more talk of capitulation during the last few days. People were very much struck with Scipio's liberality in the matter of the prisoners, and have begun to think that better terms might be got from him. Well, all these things have been working him up to a great pitch of fury. So this morning he had all the prisoners that were taken in last night's business, some threescore altogether, brought down to the wall at the point nearest to the Roman camp, and there he tortured them to death in the cruellest way. We Carthaginians are not so squeamish as you Greeks; but I tell you that I felt fairly sick at what I saw, and I did not see a half or even a quarter of the horrors that took place. Some had their eyes or their tongues torn out, some were flayed alive; and when he had done with them, he had them flung down from the wall. 'Tell your general,' he shouted out, when the last of the poor wretches was tossed down, 'tell your general that I sha'n't charge him more than one copper coin apiece for them.'" [167]

"But this is mere madness," cried Cleanor. "What can he have been thinking of? What was his motive?"

"That is easily explained," replied the Carthaginian. "When it was all over he turned to one of the senators, who is supposed to favour peace—he had compelled the man to come with him—and said: 'We have heard the last of capitulation, I fancy, for some time. What terms do you think your dear Scipio will be disposed to give you after this?' And now about your prisoner. I have come straight to warn you. We must think what is to be done. One thing, of course, is certain—you can't keep him here. Some bird of the air would carry the matter. Hasdrubal, too, has his spies everywhere, and knows everything, and you would hardly like to give him up. He seemed a nice young fellow." [168]

"Give him up!" cried Cleanor—"certainly not. I should deserve to be crucified myself if I did."

"You might tell him what has happened, and put him in the way of taking the matter into his own hands. The Romans seem never to trouble much about killing themselves."

"That seems but a mean way of getting out of the difficulty. The man is my guest. I have eaten and drunk with him. He sha'n't be harmed, if I can help it. I don't love the Romans, but I could not behave so to the very worst of them, and least of all to a Scipio."

"But you'll get into very serious trouble yourself."

"Well, trouble or no trouble, I am determined to save him somehow. Meanwhile, many thanks to you for warning me. But there's no good in your mixing yourself up in the matter."

"Good! but mind this, the sooner he is out of the way the better for him, if not for you. Farewell!"

"Well," said the young Roman, when his captor returned, "this is a very pleasant way of being a prisoner, but I suppose it can't last. You must do your duty; pray, don't get yourself into trouble on my account."

Cleanor was in a state of extreme perplexity. To hand over a gallant young soldier to a merciless savage such as Hasdrubal was impossible. Yet it seemed scarcely dutiful to Carthage to let a valuable prisoner escape; and, again, if he could make up his mind to this, how was such an [169]

escape to be managed?

"Doing my duty," he said, after a few minutes of silent reflection, "happens to be more than usually difficult."

After another pause he went on, "After all, there is nothing for it but to tell you the simple truth. Hasdrubal has put all the prisoners to death, and to a horribly cruel death."

The prisoner grew pale. He was young, and life was dear to him. As a Roman, too, he knew the hideous traditions of Carthaginian cruelty. In a few moments he had recovered himself and his voice was firm.

"I can bear," he said, "what my countrymen have borne. Or, if you would make me feel that I have been more fortunate than they, give me back my sword for a moment."

"Hasdrubal's deed is a crime," replied the young Greek, "and I will not make myself an accomplice in it. Your sword I will certainly give you if I can see no other way."

Again he reflected, then his face lighted up. He had thought of a way of escape out of part at least of his difficulty. [170]

"There is another way, and I will ask you to follow it without any questioning. I will certainly not give you up to Hasdrubal, nor will I suffer you to give up your life for mine. Your sacrifice, too, would be useless. Hasdrubal will say, if he should come to know about you, that he wanted you alive, not dead, and will be as furious with me for letting you kill yourself as for letting you escape. So put that thought out of your mind. Now about escape; I have had half a hundred plans in my mind during the last half-hour, but the best, I might say the only one, seems to be this. All Carthage is hard at work on some ramparts of earth that are being made in the rear of the south wall, just where the ground dips a little. Men of all ranks are working at them, and even women and children. All are volunteers, no wages are given, and no questions are asked. You can't miss the place, for there is a steady stream of people going backwards and forwards to it. Most of the men wear a rough sort of workman's tunic. I can give you one, and I can furnish you with a spade. Work on there till it is dark. No one will think it strange, for people who are employed in the day often give two or three hours to work at the ramparts in the night. Then you must take your chance. Bide your time, and drop quietly down from the wall. One thing remember: don't on any account open your mouth. If anyone speaks to you, pretend to be dumb or that you don't understand. And there is one thing more which I ask, not because I think it necessary, but because I shall be able to answer for you better: swear by the oath that in your country you think most binding, that you will give to the besiegers no information as to what you have seen in the city." [171]

The young man swore by Jupiter and the household gods of his own family that he would be absolutely silent on all that he had seen or heard. Shortly afterwards, equipped as Cleanor had described, he took his way to the earthworks. It is needless to say anything more than that, after nightfall, he easily made his escape.

When the day came to an end without any inquiry being made for the prisoner, Cleanor began to hope that the whole affair might escape notice. Just before midnight, however, he received a visit from his Carthaginian friend. "I have only a few moments," said the young man. "First, as to the prisoner—what have you done with him? where is he?"

"In the Roman camp by this time, I hope," replied Cleanor; and proceeded briefly to describe what he had done.

"Well," said the other, "as nothing has been seen or heard of him, he has probably made his escape; and a very lucky thing for him! But now about yourself. Hasdrubal knows, or will know to-morrow morning. One of the soldiers who was with us gave information. I will be even with him some day, the mercenary scoundrel! Happily, the chief was too tipsy to understand what was being told him. But he will be sober to-morrow morning, and then look out for yourself. But what do you mean to do?" [172]

"Do?" replied Cleanor, "nothing, except tell him the truth."

"Well, you don't want for courage. But remember, he is the most merciless brute on earth. Don't flatter yourself that you will find him anything else."

"I have made up my mind. Let him do his worst. But a thousand thanks to you!"

"I wish we had a thousand men such as he in Carthage," muttered the young officer to himself as he went away—"as gentle as he is brave, whereas our people's fancy is to be cruel and cowardly."

Early on the following morning an orderly made his appearance at Cleanor's quarters. "The general understands," he said, "that you have a prisoner in your hands. You are to deliver him up."

Cleanor did not feel himself bound to make any explanation to an orderly, and simply replied that he had no prisoner in his hands.

"Then," said the man, "I am instructed to search your quarters."

"Search, but you will find nothing." [173]

The man searched and went away. An hour or so afterwards he reappeared, this time with a guard of four soldiers. He had instructions, he said, to arrest Cleanor, son of Lysis, an officer of the guards of the south-west wall.

Cleanor surrendered himself without a word, and was at once marched to head-quarters. On his arrival he was handcuffed. Hasdrubal, who had never possessed much personal courage, was accustomed to take this precaution when any prisoner was brought into his presence.

"I have it on good authority," said the general, when Cleanor stood before him, "that you had a Roman prisoner in your hands on the night of the day before last. Why did you not deliver him up at once to the proper authorities?"

"Because he was ill. If this was irregular, I acknowledge my fault."

"Let that pass, then. Where is he now? How was it you suffered him to escape?"

"I did not suffer him to escape; I took care that he should escape."

"What!" cried the general in a furious voice—so far he had succeeded in keeping calm—"what! you deliberately let him go! This is sheer treason! What have you to say?"

"I could not let him be dealt with as the others were dealt with. To have given him up after that would have been a crime." [174]

"What audacity! Who are you, paltry Greek that you are, to make yourself a ruler and a judge in Carthage? That is enough. It is your life for his life. Take him away!" he roared to the guards who had the prisoner in their charge.

Cleanor was taken back to the guard-room, and shortly afterwards transferred from that to a cell in the basement of the house, a squalid, stifling, ill-smelling place, dimly lighted by a strongly-barred aperture in the roof. Here he spent five days. Every morning his jailer opened the door just long enough to put within it a loaf of coarse rye-bread and a flagon of doubtful-looking water. He saw and heard nothing more during the day.

On the sixth day he was again brought before Hasdrubal. The general was, or seemed to be, in a different mood. He affected to be much disturbed at the prisoners squalid appearance, inquired how he had been treated, and when he heard the details declared that his orders had been entirely misunderstood. Cleanor knew exactly how much value was to be attached to these protestations, but prudently kept his counsel and thanked the general for his kind intentions.

"I have been wishing," Hasdrubal continued, "to have some conversation about a matter in which you might be very useful to Carthage, but you are really not fit for it. Let me at all events do what I can to repair this deplorable mistake." [175]

He whispered some instructions to an attendant, and Cleanor was ushered out of the room, being treated with a politeness which was in strong contrast to the rude handling which he had received on the former occasion. He was provided with a bath and a change of clothes, and afterwards sat down to an excellent meal.

Later on in the day he was again summoned into the general's presence. "I cannot but think," said Hasdrubal, "that you were wrong in the matter of the prisoner, but you meant well; yes, you meant well, and it may turn out for the best after all. The prisoner who escaped was a Scipio, was he not?"

"Yes," replied the Greek, "he was a Scipio."

"The Scipios will feel that they owe you something for what you have done.... Does not that seem to give you an opening?"

"I don't understand," replied Cleanor, though he had little doubt, as a matter of fact, what it was that the general wanted.

"There are some things," continued Hasdrubal after a pause, "which I should much like to know, and I would gladly give ten talents to the man who would find them out for me."

"To put it plainly," said Cleanor, "you want me to go as a spy?" [176]

"Well," replied Hasdrubal, "if you choose to put it so—yes."

"I cannot do it," said Cleanor.

"I know that it is a dangerous bit of work; a spy gets no mercy. But then, think—I won't say, of the reward, for I believe that you think little of that—think of the service you may be doing to Carthage."

"It isn't that I refuse to be a spy. A spy's work, I take it, is as lawful and honest as any other. But I am not going to trade on what I did for that young man. That would be base."

Hasdrubal checked himself with some difficulty. He could see that the young Greek was not one to be bullied into compliance; but he did not give up the hope of persuading him.

"Well, well," he said after a pause, "we must talk of this again. Perhaps we may find some way for you to help us without offending your conscience. Farewell for the present; and believe me

that I am deeply concerned that you should have been put to inconvenience. It shall not happen again."

Cleanor found his quarters and his fare changed very much for the better. He had now an airy little chamber high up in the house, which commanded a view of the sea. He received a visit from the general's own physician, a countryman of his own, who claimed to be one of the great Æsculapian clan. [177]

"A little reduced," said the man of science, after feeling his pulse and listening to the beats of his heart—"a little reduced, but that is not to be wondered at. I shall not have to exhibit any drug; a generous diet will do all that is wanted. And the general gives you the use of his own private terrace, so that you will not want for fresh air and exercise."

Time now passed pleasantly enough with the young man, though it was irksome to be shut up in idleness while so much was going on. And there was always the anxiety as to what Hasdrubal would do. The tiger was pleased for the time to sheath his claws, but the claws were there, and would be shown some day. Meanwhile he made the best of his position. The physician paid him a daily visit, told him the news of the siege, chatted with him on various subjects, played sundry games of draughts or soldiers,³⁶ and, best of all, lent him some books.

More than once he was summoned to an interview with the general, who, however, did not again introduce the subject of the last meeting, but was always very communicative and friendly, flattering the young man by referring to him sundry military questions, and asking his advice. At the end of a fortnight he was unconditionally released, not a little to his surprise. And his release was followed by reappointment to his old command. [178]

He was not long left in ignorance of the causes which had brought about this unexpected result. The fact was that pressure, which he did not feel able to resist, had been brought to bear upon Hasdrubal. Tyrant and savage as he was, he stood in fear of his soldiers, and could not afford to neglect any strong feeling that they might show. The Greek contingent among the mercenaries was numerous, and constituted the most effective part of the force. With many of these men Cleanor was a personal favourite; most of them knew him by repute, and had heard with sympathy his melancholy story. Among the native Carthaginians also he had not a few well-wishers. Hasdrubal, accordingly, was made to understand that if anything should happen to the young man, it would be strongly resented. His superior officer gave him an outline of these facts, but added, with significant emphasis:

"Be on your guard with him, though that is easier to say than to do. He does not forget or forgive." [179]

CHAPTER XVI. BAAL HAMMON.

FOR some time after the events related in the last chapter the siege went on without any noticeable incidents. The fighting was nearly continuous, but there was nothing like a pitched battle. The besiegers did not again attempt an assault, nor did the besieged make a sally in force. Scipio's plan was to complete the blockade of the city, and then to await events, reserving his attack till famine and disease had exhausted the strength of the enemy.

The first step was to cut off all communication on the land side. Carthage stood on a peninsula, and Scipio's superiority in the field made him master of the isthmus by which this peninsula was joined to the mainland. This he covered from sea to sea by a huge fortification, which served at the same time for a camp. It had a ditch and a rampart both on the side that looked towards the city, from which it was distant little more than a bow-shot, and on that which faced the mainland. It was necessary, indeed, that it should be defensible both in the front and in the rear. It was one of the most formidable possibilities of the war that the Roman army might be attacked from behind by the native allies of Carthage. Scipio knew—it was a mark of his genius that he knew everything—that the emissaries of the city were unceasing in their efforts to raise an army of auxiliaries among the native tribes of Northern Africa. The wall had, as usual, towers at intervals over its whole length. One of these towers, built in the most solid fashion of stone, was carried up to such a height that it commanded a view of all that was being done within the city walls. [180]

Of course the besieged did not allow this work, threatening as it was to the very existence of their city, to be carried on without interruption. Catapults, posted on the city walls, kept up a continuous discharge of missiles; unceasing showers of stones came from the archers and slingers, while bodies of infantry were kept in readiness to sally forth whenever and wherever they saw an opportunity of doing damage. The Romans had, so to speak, to build and dig with a workman's tool in the one hand and a weapon in the other, but they stuck to their task with indefatigable zeal and inexhaustible courage. The officers shared all the toils and dangers of their

men, and the work progressed, not indeed without loss, but without interruption.

Meanwhile the city was in a state of constantly increasing excitement from another cause, not unconnected, however, with the war. The festival of Baal Hammon—otherwise Moloch—was approaching, and it was to be kept with unusual splendour, even, it was said, with rites of worship that had fallen into disuse for many years. For Carthage, though it had much of the unchanging temper of the East, was not wholly untouched by the spirit of progress, and some of the darker and more savage practices of her religion were no longer practised. But now again the fiercer instincts of the race were waking. It was a common topic of talk in the streets that the desperate fortunes of the state called for more effectual methods of propitiating the anger of heaven. Meetings of the Senate were held daily with closed doors, and it was known, though instant death was the appointed penalty of any indiscreet revelation by a senator, that the chief subject of debate was settling the details of the great Moloch feast.

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Cleanor, in common with the other Greeks in the population, whether civil or military, heard but little of the matter. It was, in a way, kept from them by their companions and comrades, who knew that they regarded such proceedings without sympathy, not to say, with disgust. In the ordinary course the great day would have come and passed without his knowing anything about it beyond the fact that it was the chief festival of the Carthaginian year. But this was not to be.

He was returning to his quarters somewhat late in the evening, two days before the appointed time, when he felt a hand laid on the sleeve of his tunic, and heard himself called by his name in a voice which somehow seemed familiar, though he could not immediately connect it with any friend or acquaintance. He halted, and turned to the speaker.

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It was a woman, poorly clad as far as he could see in the dim light, and of middle age, to judge from what appeared of her veiled and cloaked figure.

"Help, noble Cleanor!"

That strange faculty of remembering voices that most of us have, strange because it is a sheer effort of memory, unhelped by any accessories of shape and colour, did not fail him.

"What! is it you, Theoxena?" he cried.

Theoxena was his foster-mother, the wife of a poor schoolmaster at Chelys, who had been persuaded by her own need and the liberal offers of Cleanor's father to undertake the nurture of one of his twin-children. She had been resident for some years at Carthage, to which city her husband had migrated, tempted by the prospect of more liberal remuneration than he could hope for in his native place.

"Yes, sir, it is I," said the poor woman in a voice broken with tears. "And oh, in such trouble! If you could help me—but come in here. 'Tis but a poor place; but I cannot tell you my story in the street."

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Her home was close at hand, and Cleanor followed her in. A poor place it was, but clean and neatly kept, and even with some little marks of taste and culture. In one corner of the room stood a *capsa*, a cylindrical case for holding manuscript rolls, and above it, on a bracket fastened into the wall, a statuette of Hermes. The chairs were of elegant pattern, though of common wood, and the mats on the floor, though worn and shabby, were of artistic pattern.

"Well, Theoxena," he said, "what is the matter? What can I do for you?"

"Oh, sir!" she answered, commanding her voice with an effort, "they have stolen from me my little Cephalus, the dearest, brightest little boy that ever was, and are going to offer him for a sacrifice to their dreadful Hammon."

"But how do you know? How did it happen?"

"You shall hear the story from Daphne, who was with him when he was stolen."

"And who is Daphne?" asked Cleanor.

Daphne, who had been sitting in a small chamber leading out of the main room, came forward on hearing her name, holding in her hands a piece of tapestry at which she had been working. She was a girl of fourteen or thereabouts, not actually beautiful, perhaps, but with a rare promise of beauty; her figure had something of the awkwardness of the time which comes between childhood and womanhood; her features still wanted that subtle moulding which the last critical years of girlhood seem able to give. But her eyes, blue as a southern sea with a noontday sun above it, were marvellously clear and full of light; her complexion was dazzlingly bright, and all the more striking from its contrast to the generally swarthy hue of the inhabitants of Carthage. Her hair was of a rich red gold colour, and would have been of extraordinary beauty if it had had its natural length. As it was, it was cropped almost close, though here and there a little curl of a new growth had begun to show itself.

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"This, sir, is my Daphne," said the woman, laying her hand upon the girl's head. "We are good patriots, I am sure, for the dear girl gave up her beautiful hair—if you will believe me, it used to come down nearly to her ankles—to be made into a string for a bow. The bow-maker said it was the very finest he had had, though all the great ladies in Carthage did the same, I am told. Daphne," she went on, "tell the noble Cleanor about our darling little Cephalus."

"Remember," said the young man, who saw that the girl was trembling excessively, "remember that the noble Cleanor is your brother, even as Theoxena is his mother," and he lifted his foster-mothers hand to his lips and respectfully kissed it.

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The girl began her story: "I took my little brother to walk in the garden—the garden, I mean, of Mago the senator, who kindly lets us use it, because the streets are so noisy and crowded, and the people are so rude." Cleanor did not wonder that she attracted more notice than she liked. "There is seldom anybody there; but that day there was an old man who began to pet dear little Cephalus, and give him sweetmeats and cakes. He seemed very kind, and I never dreamt of any harm; and besides, I was there, for I never leave Cephalus alone. Ah! but I did leave him alone that morning, wicked girl that I am." And she burst into a flood of tears. "But then what could I do? Hylax—that is the puppy that Cephalus is so fond of—began to fight with another dog, and Cephalus was frightened, and said, 'He'll be killed! he'll be killed! Do save him, Daphne.' He would himself have run to help, but I was afraid he would be bitten, though that would have been better than what did happen. So I told him to sit still where he was, and I ran to help Hylax. It took me a long time to get hold of him, for he was very angry, and would go on fighting though the other dog was much bigger. And when I looked round, the dear little boy was gone. I hunted all over the garden, and called him a hundred times, but it was no use. Mother hasn't blamed me once, but I can't help feeling that it was my fault."

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"But what," asked Cleanor, speaking to Theoxena, "has put this dreadful idea of Hammon into your head?"

"Oh! I know from what my neighbours have told me that there is going to be a sacrifice such as there has not been for years and years, and that a number of children are to be put into the fire. The priests say that there must be a hundred, not one less. Some parents offered their own children—to think that anybody could be so wicked!—and these quite rich and noble people, I am told; but still there were not enough, so others had to be taken by force. Besides, the priests said that there must be children of every race that was in Carthage; and no Greek children could be got except by kidnapping them. And there was something, too, which Daphne did not tell you. She picked up a button where the old man had been sitting, and I have been told by someone who knows that it is of a kind that only the temple servants of Hammon use."

"I see," said Cleanor; "there seems very little doubt that it is so. But don't trouble; you shall have your son again. I have a hundred things to ask you, but that must be for another day; there is no time to be lost now. Farewell!"

The young man had spoken confidently enough to the agonized mother, but when he came to reflect on what he had to do he did not feel by any means confident. All night he was busy with the problem, but seemed, when the morning came, as far off a solution as ever. He could not even think where to go for counsel and help. His Greek comrades would feel with him, but they probably knew no more about the matter than he did. As to his Carthaginian fellow-officers, though he was on the best of terms with them, it was quite useless, and indeed impossible, to approach them. At last an idea occurred to him. The Greek physician who had attended him when he was in Hasdrubal's house might possibly be not only willing, but able to help him. Willing he would certainly be, for he was a Greek; able, possibly, seeing that his practice lay largely among Carthaginians of the highest class.

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He lost no time in looking for his friend, and was luckily soon successful in his search.

"I am not surprised," said the physician when he had heard the story. "I knew that something of the kind was going on, though the priests keep it as quiet as they can. I was called in yesterday to see the wife of a senator. She was in a state of prostration, for which I could see no physical cause. Of course I diagnosed mental trouble, and put some questions in that direction. I got nothing but the vaguest answers. Just when I was going away I asked some question about her children. She said nothing, but the next moment she fell into the very worst fit of hysterics I have ever seen. I put two and two together, for I haven't been a doctor for forty years for nothing, and guessed the truth. And afterwards, when I was giving the maid in attendance some directions, I heard it for certain. The poor woman had given up her eldest boy, a beautiful little creature of six, to Moloch. And now about this Greek child. Well, we must not be seen on the street talking together. Come to my house about noon to-morrow, and we will talk it over."

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Cleanor was punctual at the appointed time.

"I have been thinking it over," said the physician when he had satisfied himself that he could not be overheard. "And I don't see any chance of success except by bribery. I know where the child is—in the high-priest's house. I was called in two or three days ago to see a child who was ill there. I thought it strange, for the priests have no families. Still, it might be a child of a relative. But it was stranger still when, after I had prescribed for the little fellow and was going away, I heard the voices of other children. Then it was all explained by what I told you this morning. They keep the poor little creatures, when they have got them by persuasion or force, in the high-priest's house. That is one step, then. We know where the boy is. And the next, by great good luck, is made easy for us. The little fellow that I have been attending will certainly die. I feel almost sure that I shall not find him alive when I go this afternoon. Well, I shall have to report his death to the high-priest, who will have to find a substitute for him, and will, I suppose, kidnap another child. That is a horrible thing; but we can't help it. Now for my plan. You must bribe the attendant who will have to remove the child and see to its burial. That will be easy enough. He is a fellow of the lowest class, and will do anything for a score of gold pieces. And you must also

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bribe the priest who has the business of actually offering the children. That will be a more serious matter. The practice is for the high-priest to offer the first, and to hand over the rest to a subordinate. This is the man you will have to deal with. It isn't that it will be a matter of faith with him. Generally, in my experience—not always, mark that—but generally the nearer the altar the less the faith; and this man I know. But it is a dangerous affair, and, besides, the man can make his own terms. I should say that a hundred gold pieces will be wanted. Now, can you manage that? It isn't every young officer that has a hundred gold pieces to spare. I can help you a little, but a physician's fees are small and hard to come by."

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"A thousand thanks!" said Cleanor, "but I have as much as will be wanted."

"Come again after dark," the physician went on. "You will have to settle with the men, for I must not appear in the matter, but I will arrange a way for you to see them."

"Everything is going as well as possible," said the physician when the two met again. "As I expected, the child was dead. And here I have made a little change in our plans. I thought that it might make complications if two were engaged in the affair. And the priest might object if he found his secret shared by an attendant of far inferior rank. It might mean, he would say, endless blackmailing. What I did, then, was to tell the man that there was something very strange about the child's illness, that I wanted to discover the real cause, and that I would give him a couple of gold pieces—to offer him more would have been suspicious—if he would let me have the body. That is disposed of, then. Now for the priest. He comes here to-night; he has long been a patient of mine, and he wants to see me. The fellow, who is one of the hardest drinkers in Carthage, would have been dead long ago but for me. You will see him, and tell him what he is to do, which, in a word, is to put a dead child for a living one, and what you will give him for doing it. That is the naked truth, but you will wrap it up as you think best."

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"But will not that be an impossible thing—a dead child for a living?" asked Cleanor.

"Not at all," replied the physician, "and not by any means so hard as you think. You don't know, I daresay, that the children are drugged as heavily as possible without making them actually insensible. All the creatures that are brought to be sacrificed have to be drugged. You know that it is thought to be the very worst omen if a bull or a ram breaks away from the attendants as they are bringing it to the altar. You don't suppose that there is a miracle perpetually worked so that what happens every day in the slaughter-house never happens in a temple? And this makes the affair comparatively easy. There is not much difference between a drugged child and a dead child."

The priest came in due course. The physician with some cautious hints excited his curiosity and greed, and Cleanor found his task neither so difficult nor so costly as he had anticipated. It is needless to relate the negotiations. As the physician had anticipated, the priest's faith was not a difficulty. He had not a vestige of belief. He had been a party to too many impostures to have anything of the kind left. Fraudulent miracles were a part almost, it might be said, of his daily business. But he made the most of the risk of the proceeding, and this was undoubtedly great. Not only was the dead child to be substituted for the living, but the living was to be smuggled away. The physician had provided a temporary refuge for it; it was to be received into the family of the couple which kept his house. The thing probably appeared to be more difficult than it really was, chiefly because no one would have any idea that it would be attempted. A bargain was ultimately made for a somewhat smaller sum than the physician had named. The priest was to receive five-and-twenty gold pieces down, and fifty pieces more when Cleanor was satisfied of the safety of the child.

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Cleanor was long in doubt whether or not he should be present at the hideous ceremony of the coming day. All the instincts of his own nature and his race revolted against such doings. The Greek temper was not particularly merciful, and certainly never shrank from taking life when occasions of policy or promptings of revenge seemed to suggest it, but it had no liking for spectacles of blood. Even in its degradation it revolted from the savage amusements which fascinated the Romans. And Cleanor had the best feelings of his race in high development. On the other hand, he reflected that if any chance suspicion should arise his presence might help to disarm it. Above all, his interest in the fate of his little foster-brother was so overpowering that he felt it impossible to keep away.

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The solemnities of the day began with a great procession, in which the inferior deities of the Carthaginian faith were carried to pay their homage, as it was said, to Baal Hammon their chief. Each had his own company of priests and temple attendants; both the deity and his satellites were decked out for the occasion with all the splendours which the temple treasures—most of them rich with the accumulation of centuries—could furnish.

First,—for it was right that the most dignified visitor should be the first to arrive,—came Melcart, Hammon's vicegerent, as he might be called, who had under his special protection the daughter cities of the Phœnician race, as he had the great mother-city of Tyre. The god was not represented by any human figure, but a great sun, with gilded rays, was borne under a canopy of rich purple curtains. Next to Melcart came Tanit or Astarte, symbolized by a similar image of the moon, but smaller, and with silver rays; and after Tanit again, Dagon, the fish-god, the special protector of the fleets of Carthage, held in less reverence since the eldest daughter of Tyre had lost the hereditary supremacy of the seas. These were the three great dignitaries of the procession; after them followed a crowd of inferior powers with figures of man or brute, always heavy with gold or sparkling with gems, but grotesque or even hideous in shape, for the

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Phoenician craftsman made no effort to emulate the grace of his Greek rival.

Hammon's temple was thronged, and indeed had been thronged from the hour of dawn, when its gates were thrown open, with an excited multitude. A lane, however, was kept clear in the middle by two ranks of stalwart guards, native Carthaginians, all of them splendid in gilded helmets, with nodding plumes of the African ostrich, and armour of shining steel, with short purple cloaks over their shoulders. This lane was left for the approach of the divine visitors. As the first of these drew near, the great doors, themselves covered with a scarlet curtain, that separated the sanctuary from the body of the temple, were thrown back, and the holy place became visible, to most of those present that day for the first time in their lives.

In the centre of a semicircular recess at the further end, on a throne of gold, approached by twelve steps, each flanked by the image of a lion, sat the colossal statue of Hammon. The canopy above it was formed by the meeting wings of two stooping figures. The image was made of some black stone, probably basalt, carved into a rude similitude of the human figure, with arms of steel which extended forwards. In front, so close to the image as to be partly under the arms, was an opening six feet wide, from which, now and then, a slender tongue of coloured flame might be seen to shoot forth. [195]

When the opened doors revealed the image, an instantaneous silence fell upon the assembled multitude, in striking contrast to the babel of sounds which had filled the temple a minute before. The awful moment had come, and the multitude waited with mingled wonder and terror for what was to follow.

The silence was first broken by the voice of the high-priest as he began to chant the litany of supplication. It was heard plainly enough, but few understood it, for the form had not been changed from the earliest times, and the language was mostly obsolete. At certain intervals the voices of the inferior priests might be heard coming in with the refrain. The ancient formula ended, the high-priest added special supplications for the day. He invoked blessings on Carthage, on her armies, her fleets, her priests, and her people. He cursed her enemies, Rome first of all, with special mention of the name of Scipio. The supplications ended, the high-priest turned to the people, crying, "Sons of Carthage, offer with a willing heart, and of your best, to your Lord and Saviour Hammon!"

There was a momentary pause. Then the Shophetim descended from the seats on which they had been sitting, and, coming forward, cast gold and spices into the opening. No one imitated, or was expected to imitate them. They represented the people, and their gifts symbolized the offering of the people's wealth. The more solemn part of the sacrifice remained to be performed, and this part, for evident reasons, the priests retained in their own hands. [196]

The high-priest began again:

"O Baal Hammon, we have given thee the most precious of things without life; now we give thee flesh of our flesh, and life of our life."

So saying, he took from the hands of a subordinate priest something—what it was no one could discern—wrapped in white linen, and placed it on the outstretched arms of the colossus. The image, worked by concealed machinery from behind, bowed its head, and at the same time lowered its arms, dropping the burden that had been placed upon them into the chasm underneath. Something between a roar and a shriek went up from the multitude that filled the temple. There was the joy of seeing that the great Hammon accepted their offering; there was the horror—for even the Carthaginians were human—of knowing what the offering was. The next instant a loud crash of sound came from the cymbal-players, who had been stationed in a recess out of sight of the multitude. Every time another burden was placed on the arms and dropped into the chasm there was the same outburst of wild music. [197]



"THE HIGH PRIEST PLACED THE SACRIFICE ON THE
OUTSTRETCHED ARMS OF THE GOD."

Cleanor watched the horrible ceremony with intense attention. Now and then he fancied—he had found a place, it should be said, not far from the sanctuary—that he saw a movement, and even heard a cry. But he could not feel certain. He recognized the priest who handed the first child to the high-priest, and who placed the others on the arms of the image, as the man with whom he had negotiated, and he felt sure that on one occasion he made a slight gesture, which no one else would notice, in his direction. It was a great relief when the horrible rite was finished. As to the fate of the child he could not immediately satisfy himself. It would have been imprudent to make any inquiries. He had, however, the satisfaction of receiving, during the course of the next day, a message from his friend the physician that the boy was safe. The same comforting intelligence was conveyed to the mother. She, of course, had to be content with an occasional sight of her child, and the hope of regaining him at some happier time.

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CHAPTER XVII.

MOVE AND COUNTERMOVE.

THE great festival of Hammon, with all its lurid splendours, did not fail to produce something at least of the effect which the authorities had expected from it. The flagging zeal of the Carthaginian people regained its old energy; the hope that their country might yet be saved to them, a hope almost abandoned during the last few months, began to revive. Hammon, they thought, must be propitiated by a piety so devoted, must interfere to save so dutiful a city.

There was, indeed, need of all the encouragement that could be had, for the situation of the civil population of Carthage was precarious in the extreme. The Senate had not neglected to lay up in the time of peace such provisions for the war that they knew to be impending as it had been possible to collect. But the work had had to be done almost by stealth. Rome had watched with suspicion anything that looked like preparations for war, and had remonstrated more than once against the purchase of unnecessary stores.

What was done in this way had to be done without the knowledge of her regularly appointed agents and of residents who were secretly in her pay. Something had been accomplished; the garrison had ample supplies; the houses of the upper class were, for the most part, well furnished. But the poor, who had no room for stores in their dwellings, even if they had the means to purchase them in advance, were dangerously near to want. It is for the needs of this class that public provision has to be made in any city that expects to be besieged, and it was in

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respect of this public provision that the action of the Carthaginian government had been hampered.

Things had grown rapidly worse since the building of the walled camp across the isthmus. Nothing could now be brought into the besieged city by land. The sea was still partly open. The Roman fleet kept up a blockade, but it was not really effective. As soon as the wind began to blow from the sea the war-ships had to stand off from the shore, and the blockade-runners had their opportunity. Prices ruled so high in the city that a trader who contrived to take safely to its destination one cargo out of two made a very handsome profit.

All the fishing population of the African coast for a hundred miles on either side of the besieged city was busily employed in the traffic. Light vessels drawing but little water were chiefly used, for they could be safely navigated in places where a war-ship would inevitably have grounded. So rudely and cheaply were they built that the loss, if they were wrecked, was insignificant. The great difficulty was the weather; if this continued to be fine for ten days together, a large part of the besieged population came within an easily measurable distance of starvation. [200]

Scipio now resolved on making a great counter-move—he would block up the approach to the harbour. He had, in fact, for some time past foreseen the necessity of taking this step, and had prepared a vast amount of material for the work, employing great numbers of the native population in quarrying stone and cutting timber. So much had been accomplished in this way that when the time came for executing the work little more than the actual construction remained to be done. This was not so difficult as it had seemed. The harbour mouth was not very far from the shore occupied by the Romans.

The first thing was to lay a foundation for the mole that it was proposed to build. This was done by sinking huge blocks of roughly-hewn stone, chiefly during moonless nights. During this stage of the work the besieged took little heed of what was going on, or, anyhow, took no pains to interrupt or hinder it. There was a suspicion, and more than a suspicion, of Scipio's purpose, but Hasdrubal, himself indolent and incompetent, haughtily refused to listen to any suggestion from his subordinates. But even Hasdrubal was roused when the structure reached the surface of the water. What he saw was a mole, more than thirty yards broad, stretching across the mouth of the harbour, and shutting off every channel available even for the smallest craft. [201]

Hasdrubal now developed, or accepted, a plan which for a time at least was a virtual check to Scipio's move. He kept up a brisk discharge of missiles on the men employed in building the mole. So sharp and continuous was it that the besiegers had little attention to give to what was being done on the opposite side of the harbour. It was a surprise, and a very unwelcome surprise to them, that no sooner had they stopped up one mouth of the harbour, than they found that another exit had been created. The whole population, every man, woman, and child in the city, that could ply a spade or a pick, wheel a barrow-load or carry a basket of earth, had been working night and day at excavating another mouth to the harbour.

Nor was this all; a still greater surprise, so great, indeed, as to be almost overwhelming, remained behind.

One of the conditions of the peace granted to Carthage after the fatal defeat of Zama³⁷ had been the surrender of all the ships of war but twenty. In a way this condition had been observed. There had never been more than twenty ships in commission at one time; but the old hulks had not always been destroyed. At first they had been kept to serve various purposes; latterly, as another war began to loom in the future, they had been preserved with the intention of using them again. A number of merchant vessels also were furnished with crews and an armament that was at least passably effective. [202]

And, marvellous to relate, all this had been done without the knowledge of the besiegers. There was a constant flow of deserters from the city, increasing as time went on and the prospects of Carthage became less and less hopeful. Yet none of them had any definite information to give. That something was going on they knew; they had heard for some time a great sound of hammering—that, indeed, had been audible in the Roman camp when the wind blew from the dockyard—but the restrictions on admission to the arsenals had been rigidly enforced. So there ended the information which they were able to give.

Nothing, then, could have exceeded the astonishment of the besiegers when a new fleet, the existence of which no one had suspected, issued from a harbour mouth which no one had ever seen. A thin bank of earth had been kept to the last, so that to observers from outside, as also to the Roman ships as they cruised backwards and forwards along the coast, nothing appeared to have been changed. When everything else was ready, all the available labour in Carthage was set to work to clear this bank away. The task was finished by dawn. At sunrise the new fleet, magnificently equipped, for there had been a lavish expenditure on the ornament as well as the armament of the ships, sailed out of the harbour by its new exit. [203]

Unfortunately for Carthage there was no one to make the most of the opportunity. A vigorous attack on the Roman fleet—scattered as it was, and altogether unprepared for action, some of the ships being under repair, and nearly all of them but half-manned, their crews being largely employed on shore—might have been successful, and have even postponed the fate of Carthage. But it was not to be. Hasdrubal, self-opinionated and incapable, paralysed everything and everybody. The fleet paraded for a while along the coast, and had the barren honour of holding

without dispute, for that day at least, the possession of the sea.

"The crews must be exercised first," said Hasdrubal, who was on board what we may call the flag-ship, to the veteran who directed its navigation; "but in a few days—"

"There's no exercise like fighting," growled the old man as he turned away.

And this was the common opinion of Carthage. So strong and so general was it, and so vigorously expressed, that Hasdrubal could not afford to disregard it. Word was passed round to the captains that they must be ready to engage the next day. In the morning, accordingly, the fleet sailed out again. Every one was in high spirits, for it is an immense relief for those who have been long cooped up within walls, occupied with the tedious task of a protracted defence, to renew the more adventurous and interesting experience of attack. Some victories were won. One of the Carthaginian ships contrived to ram two antagonists in rapid succession. This vessel was a present to the state by one of the merchant companies, and no expense had been spared in making it of the strongest build and furnishing it with an effective crew of freeborn, well-paid rowers. Another captured one of the Roman ships by boarding. Cleanor was serving in this, and, owing to the death of one and the disablement of the other of his superior officers, had the unexpected honour of leading the boarders. There was a sharp struggle, but ultimately the Roman crew was overpowered and compelled to surrender.

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On the other hand, there were counterbalancing, or almost counterbalancing losses, for towards the end of the day the Romans had recovered from their surprise, and more than held their own.

Scipio was everywhere, conspicuous in the scarlet cloak of the general-in-command. Once as he passed he was well within a javelin-throw of our hero. Cleanor, as he doubted whether he ought not to do his best to rid Carthage of a formidable enemy, fancied that he saw a smile of recognition on his face. When it grew dark, the struggle was suspended by mutual consent.

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The next morning it was renewed. This time fortune declared itself unequivocally against Carthage. It was not that there was any marked falling-off in the efficiency or courage of the crews. It was the ships themselves that began to fail. Many, as has been said, were old hulks patched up to serve again. Two days of incessant use, with occasional collisions with friends and enemies, had not improved them. The seams began to open and old leaks to show themselves, so that by noon at least a score were more or less water-logged. Those that had suffered most, about half the number, fell into the hands of the enemy. Five other ships were sunk.

The Roman loss was less than half of this amount. It was not a crushing defeat, but it was sufficient to show that Carthage could not hope for deliverance from her fleet. Still, some advantage remained to the besieged. It would be impossible to close up the new mouth of the harbour, so deep was the water into which it opened. On this side, therefore, the Roman blockade could never be made complete. Notwithstanding this gain, the whole result was a heavy discouragement.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

HELP FROM THE HILLS.

ONE day shortly after the events related in my last chapter, Cleanor's somewhat melancholy musings on the prospects of the future were interrupted by the arrival of his friend Gisco, who had been absent from his duty for several weeks.

"You have been wondering, I dare say," said the Carthaginian, "what has become of me the last month or so."

"Yes, indeed," replied Cleanor; "I asked the officers of your battalion about you, but could find out nothing. However, I noticed once or twice just a suspicion of hesitation in their answers, and so I came to the conclusion that there was a secret."

"Well," said Gisco, "there was what you may call a secret. Anyhow, we thought it best not to say anything about the business I had on hand. It was to be a little surprise to our friends outside, and that is not so easy to manage as things are now. There is very little that goes on in Carthage but is known the next day in Scipio's tent. This time, however, we have managed, I hope, better."

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"Is it a secret still?" asked Cleanor.

"No, no," said Gisco, "everyone may know it now, and, besides, you are not one of those that a man has to keep secrets from. But now for my story. I left Carthage just thirty days ago—it was, I remember, the day before the new moon. It was no easy matter, I can tell you, to get away. One of the Roman sentinels caught sight of me, and I had to take to the lagoon. Happily the water was deep enough for diving, and I am a good hand at that business, but when I came up to breathe I

was all but hit by an arrow. However, I got safely to the place I was bound for. There Bithyas met me—Bithyas, you remember, was Gulussa's master of the horse—with two or three troopers and a spare horse for me. Our errand was to go to the tribes that live far up in the country, and gather recruits for a campaign against Rome. Bithyas, who knows the whole region and the tribes better than any man living, was to introduce me, and I was to make engagements on the part of Carthage. We carried with us a sort of talisman which Bithyas had got hold of, I don't exactly know how. Anyhow, it seemed to be respected everywhere, and as soon as it was produced we never failed to get a hearing, and we must have gone to not less than fifteen chiefs."

"You say a 'hearing'," Cleanor put in; "but how did you contrive to make yourselves understood?" [208]

"Well, in this way. We took new interpreters when they were wanted. We found that a man could always make himself understood by the people of the next tribe. Sometimes the same man served for two or three. When he came to the last place where he could be of use, he picked out some likely man, and instructed him in what he was to say. This, after all, was very simple. It was chiefly that they were wanted to fight, and that a chief was to get so many gold pieces, an under-chief so many, and a common man so many. It does not take much talking to explain so much. It might almost be done by signs. Of course we could not carry the money about with us, but we made a present to each of the chiefs, and commonly, when the tribe was a strong one, to one or more of the sub-chiefs. Promises, you may be sure, we did not spare. Even if all goes well, I don't see how Carthage is ever to pay her debts."

"And did you have much success?" inquired Cleanor.

"Yes, we had," replied Gisco. "If all the promises that were made to us are kept, we shall have a hundred thousand men. But that is, of course, too much to expect. If three-fourths, or even a half, let us say, are put into the field, it will be a very great thing, and with what we can do to help by a sortie from the city, we ought to give a good account of the Romans." [209]

"And how soon is this to be?"

"Very soon now; the tribes were beginning to move when we left to return. It took us ten days' hard riding to get back from the last settlement that we visited. They can't come as quickly as that, but they don't linger on the march. Remember that they are all horsemen, though, when it comes to a battle, some of them dismount."

"Well," said Cleanor, "you have been into a new country. Did you see anything strange? There are marvellous tales told about these regions and the people who live in them. What has your experience been?"

"Well," replied Gisco, "I saw some very curious things. And as to the things I heard, and heard too from people who swore that they had seen them with their own eyes, they pass all belief. I never saw such trees as there are on the lower slopes of the hills. You know those tables made of one piece of wood? Well, they come from that region. I saw some that were being sawn off, and others that were being polished. Then the vines were enormously large. I came across some with stems as big as an ordinary-sized column of a temple, and I heard of others—one never sees things quite as wonderful as one hears of—that two men could hardly encompass with their arms. I saw crocodiles, just like those one has heard of in the Nile, and I was told of leeches that were ten feet long—that is pretty good, but then the ear can take in more than the eye. In one place that we came to there was a whole colony of monkeys, just like so many men and women, mothers nursing their children, and old ones with white heads, some chattering peaceably together like friends, and some quarrelling ever so fiercely. As for lions, there were troops of them. Hardly a night passed without an alarm, and though we picketed our horses close to our tents, we had several carried off at night." [210]

"And what," asked Cleanor, "do you think of these people as soldiers?"

"Well," replied Gisco, "I can hardly judge. They are marvellously good horsemen, and have their animals trained to obey them in a most wonderful way. A man may leave his horse standing, not tethered, you understand, as long as he chooses, and when he is riding on one, he will have another following him like a dog. But whether they will be able to stand against the Romans is another matter. If it were not for their numbers, I should not expect much. But with four or five to one they must do something; let them only go on charging, and they must break the line at last."

As Gisco had predicted, the native forces did not linger on the march. They had none of the *impedimenta* of an army, carrying only their arms and their food,—of this last but a few days' supply,—and they were all mounted. On the third day after the conversation related above their advanced guard could be seen on the summit of the hills which formed the sky-line to the south. It had been arranged that they should make their way to the rock-fortress of Nopheris, now almost the only place, some remote spots in the hills excepted, which Carthage still possessed outside its own city walls. Nopheris was held by a strong garrison of mercenaries, under the command of a skilful soldier, Diogenes by name. Scipio had never been able to spare a sufficient force to invest it, but it had been masked by a considerable body of troops under the command of King Gulussa, strengthened by a small Roman contingent under the leadership of C. Lælius.³⁸ This force was to be attacked by the native army, while Diogenes with his mercenaries was to make a sally from the fortress. Another sally, timed as nearly as possible for the same moment, [211]

was to be made from the city. Everyone, besiegers as well as besieged, recognized the fact that the critical moment had come. If this effort succeeded, the fate of Carthage would be postponed almost indefinitely; if it failed, the capture of the city could be only a question of time. If it did not yield to force, it would certainly succumb to famine.

Hasdrubal himself was roused by the gravity of the situation from his usual self-indulgence and lethargy. He was not wholly without the feelings of a patriot and a soldier, and in this supreme effort of his country he did his best to rise to the occasion. The chief object of his energies was the formation of what may be called a Sacred Phalanx. It was to consist entirely of native Carthaginians, a class of troops seldom used except in cases of grave necessity. These were to be chosen by a method which Hasdrubal borrowed from the practice of Rome. He began by selecting a hundred men of tried courage. Each of the hundred chose nine comrades; and each of these nine, again, chose nine more. The result was a hundred companies, numbering each a hundred men, all bound together by the special obligation of a common tie. The legion was splendidly equipped with richly gilded armour, and arms of the very finest quality. Each company had its own badge.

It was a fine force, but it was all that the citizen population of Carthage could do to raise it. Indeed so reduced were the numbers on the roll of military effectives that some recruits had to be enfranchised in order that they might be enrolled in the legion. Cleanor, not a little to his surprise, found himself attached to Hasdrubal's own staff. The general, indeed, said a few gracious words to the young man when he reported himself. If there had been any difference between them, said Hasdrubal, it might now be forgotten. A chance such as might never be repeated had occurred of saving Carthage. The city would not be ungrateful to those who used this occasion energetically. [213]

Cleanor could not banish his recollections of the past, and the suspicions which persistently followed them; but his pride was naturally flattered, and he hoped for the best.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BATTLE ON THE ISTHMUS.

THE Sacred Phalanx, as described in the last chapter, was undoubtedly a formidable body of men, one that, rightly handled, might win a battle. The difficulty was to bring its force to bear. There were, in fact, only two ways of doing this. One was to break through the lines of investment which had been drawn across the isthmus; the other was to transport the troops on shipboard to some place from which they might operate. Both methods were risky and doubtful, but both offered some hope of success. [214]

The lines of investment had been hastily made, contained some weak places, and were not adequately guarded throughout their length. It was possible that they might be carried at one point or another by a determined attack. Of the plan of transport by sea it could only be said that it was not impossible. The new harbour-mouth had, as has been said, this advantage over the old, that it opened into deep water, where the blockading ships could find no anchorage. But if in bad weather it became impossible for the Roman fleet to watch the exit, it was also impossible, or, to say the least, highly dangerous, for any ship to venture out.

Hasdrubal determined to try both methods. He divided the phalanx into three parts. Two of these three were to assault the investing lines at widely distant points; the third was to try the adventure of transport by sea. This was by far the most risky undertaking. If the division succeeded in reaching the spot at which it aimed, there still remained the problem of getting back. As a matter of fact, there would be no getting back, except in the event of victory.

For this enterprise, therefore, volunteers were called. The volunteering, however, was by companies. It would have been against the principles on which the phalanx was constituted for any one soldier to leave the comrades to whom he was bound, either by their choice or by his own. But about the volunteering there was no difficulty. Twenty companies only were wanted, for more could not be safely accommodated in the transports, but double the number could easily have been obtained. The force was put under the command of an officer who had a high reputation for dashing courage, another of the numerous Hasdrubals, who, it might almost be said, swarmed in Carthage. Cleanor was commissioned to act as his *aide-de-camp*. [215]

Of the attack on the lines of investment little need be said. It was not wholly a failure, but it was certainly not a success. Stubborn as was the resistance offered by the Romans, the assailants broke through the lines at several points. At one time as many as seven or eight companies found themselves on the further side of the intrenchment, with somewhat diminished numbers indeed, but still substantially intact. Yet, for the most part, the line was still held by the besiegers. If the object of the Carthaginians had been to cut their way through the blockading force, it was accomplished. At various points the way out of Carthage lay open, and it would have been [216]

possible for at least a large portion of the force to escape.

But much more than this was wanted, nothing less, in fact, than that the investment should practically cease to exist, that the besieged should be free to go and to return as they pleased. Nothing like this had been achieved. Those who, after a fierce struggle, had forced their way through to the open country, would have to struggle not less fiercely to force their way back. Hasdrubal could not afford to run the risk. The loss of such a force meant ruin to Carthage, which no longer possessed its old powers of recovery. He reluctantly ordered the signal of recall to be sounded, and the troops still more reluctantly obeyed.

The division to which Cleanor was attached fared better, so far, at least, as to reach the field of battle. It was exceptionally fortunate in both embarking and landing without hindrance. A strong sea-wind had been blowing for some days, and the blockading squadron had been compelled to leave the harbour-mouth unwatched. Then came a sudden change of weather, and the troops, who had been bivouacking for two days on the chance of some such opportunity occurring, were hurried on shipboard, and had actually reached their destination before the Roman ships had put to sea again.

The march to the place of meeting was effected without molestation, and a junction was made with the native allies. Diogenes, too, did not fail to perform his part in the concerted plan, arriving exactly at the right moment with a picked force of a thousand mercenaries. But the hope that something towards the relief of Carthage might be effected by this combination of forces was entirely disappointed. The native allies made one charge, but only one. Twenty thousand horsemen came down the incline, at the foot of which the Roman army was drawn up, at a gallop, their white burnouses streaming behind them, and their spear-points flashing in the sun. [217]

Cleanor always said that it was the most magnificent spectacle that he ever saw. Some of King Gulussa's squadrons were swept away by the impetuous rush of a multitude which outnumbered them many times. But the line of the Roman legions—there were three of them on the field, for Scipio had brought all his available force into action—did not waver for an instant. A few of the boldest riders hurled themselves on the Roman pikes. But not so much as a single gap was made in the ranks. Almost in a moment the huge array—like some great animal which exhausts its strength and spirit in one struggle—broke into hopeless confusion. Then the Roman cavalry, with the reserved squadrons of Numidian horse, charged the helpless mass. [218]

The slaughter that followed was terrible. It was said that seventy thousand mountaineers were left dead on the battle-field. That is impossible. Many of the tribesmen fled as soon as they saw that the day was not to be theirs, and these must have secured such a start as to make their escape easy. But the victorious cavalry went on slaying till their arms were weary.

The safety of the mercenaries and the third division of the phalanx was now seriously compromised. They had, fortunately, effected a junction before the battle began, and it was of course a necessity that they should keep together. So much was certain, but it was not equally certain what was the best course for them to follow. The Carthaginians were anxious to return, if return was in any way possible, to the city. Their families, their friends, everything in fact that they held dear was there; it was only too probable that unless they got back at once they would never see the city or them again. The mercenaries, on the other hand, were bent on returning to the fortress of Nopheris, from which they had sallied forth. The fortress was near, so near that the legions could not bar their way, though the light-armed troops and the cavalry might molest them on the march.

A hurried council of war was held; there was no time for discussion. Each officer—there were seven of rank to vote—gave his decision without reasons. Considerations of safety, which were overwhelmingly strong in favour of a retreat on the fortress of Nopheris, carried the day. Five voted for this course, and a sixth, who had originally declared for cutting their way through to Carthage, changed his mind when he saw himself in a small minority. [219]

Only Hasdrubal was left in opposition. "I swore to defend Carthage, not Nopheris," he exclaimed. Then, with an unconscious imitation of the obstinate Spartan at Plataea, he took a huge stone from the ground and threw it down in front of him, saying, "I give my vote for remaining."³⁹

Cleanor's private opinion was that his chief's obstinacy was nothing else than madness, but he could not leave the general to whose person he had been attached.

If Hasdrubal had thought that his opposition would determine the action of his colleagues he was mistaken. Without a word—and indeed there was no time for argument—they moved off in the direction of the fortress. Hasdrubal was brought to his senses by this decisive action, just as the Spartan had been before him. Nor could he mistake the meaning of the agitation that at once showed itself among his men. It was not difficult to see that he would soon be left almost alone. [220]

Accordingly he gave the signal to march. Some time, however, had been lost, and a number of light-armed troops from the Roman army were within a short distance of the retreating force. It became necessary, if their attacks were to be checked, for the rear ranks to face about. There was little or no actual fighting. The pursuers fell back as soon as the retreating division showed them a firm front. Their object was to cause as much delay as possible; the Carthaginians, on the other hand, had to solve the problem of making these necessary halts interfere as little as possible with the rapidity of their retreat. In this they were greatly helped by their high discipline

and what may be called their perfect coherence, and they had actually got almost within a bow-shot of the rock-fortress when they had to turn, as they hoped, for the last time.

There was now some really sharp fighting. The pursuers had been reinforced by a detachment of picked troops from the main body, men chosen for the speed with which they could move under a heavy equipment of armour and arms. The Carthaginians fell slowly back before them, keeping an unbroken line, and encouraged by the thought that if they could get within range of the walls they would be in comparative safety. [221]

Nor was this hope disappointed. The Romans, indeed, pressed on, for the walls were to all appearance deserted, but this appearance concealed a carefully concerted surprise. Hundreds of archers and slingers were crouching behind the battlements, and there were scores of catapults, with their range carefully adjusted, ready to discharge volleys of stones and javelins. At a given signal, fire, if the expression may be allowed, was opened with overwhelming effect. The Roman line absolutely staggered under the blow. At the same time the gates were thrown open, and before the enemy could recover, the whole of the retreating force was safe within the walls.

But when, an hour or so afterwards, the roll was called, Cleanor was among the missing. [222]

CHAPTER XX.

TREACHERY.

THE young Greek had had a narrow escape with his life. Two wounds—one on the head, producing a severe concussion of the brain; the other on the thigh, causing an almost fatal loss of blood—had well-nigh finished his career. For nearly forty-eight hours he remained in a state of complete unconsciousness; then the brain slowly began to resume its functions. But the weakness of extreme exhaustion still continued. He lay for days dimly conscious of his existence, but content to accept his surroundings, to swallow the food and drink which were offered him, and to sleep without asking any questions.

Then a certain curiosity began to awake in him. The place in which he found himself was unfamiliar, and he lazily wondered where he was. The voices about him were strange—his sight was still too weak to distinguish faces—and the speech which they used was strange. His first attempt to move was followed by a feeling of absolute helplessness; his first effort at speech produced a sound so far-away that he hardly recognized his own voice.

It was on the morning of the seventh day, after an unusually long and refreshing sleep, that he felt equal to the task of realizing where he was. The physician, who luckily happened to be paying him his morning visit, at once recognized the improvement in his patient. [223]

"Hush!" he said, when the young man attempted to speak. "Be quiet till you have had some food. You are better, I see, but you want some refreshment. Then you may ask questions, and listen to what is told you, but only for as long as I allow."

He clapped his hands, and an attendant entered the room, carrying a cup of broth which had been fortified with a cordial. Cleanor, who was still so helpless that he had to be fed like an infant, swallowed it with an excellent appetite, and was sorry when the last spoonful had been administered.

"Good!" said the man of science; "we have positively brought a little red into your cheeks. You shall have another allowance when that has run itself out three times;" and he turned, as he spoke, a water-clock which stood on a table by the bedside. "Meanwhile, you can receive a friend who has been waiting for some days to renew his acquaintance with you."

He nodded to the attendant, and the man pushed aside the curtain which hung over the entrance to the tent. The next moment the expected visitor appeared. Cleanor recognized in him the young officer, kinsman to Scipio, whose life he had saved in the attack on the Megara. [224]

"The gods be thanked," said the young Roman, "that I see you yourself again!"

"That I am myself I must believe," replied Cleanor, "but of everything else I feel doubtful. Tell me what has happened."

Scipio looked to the physician with a tacit inquiry whether the subject was permitted.

"Speak on; it will worry him more, now that he has begun to think, to be left in ignorance."

"To begin, then," said Scipio, "when did you see me last?"

"Now I come to think of it, a dim remembrance of your face is about the last thing I can recall. But between that and the present there is a gulf of forgetfulness."

"And no wonder; if you hadn't had a head of adamant that same gulf would have swallowed

you up for good. Well, do you remember anything about a battle?"

"Yes, yes; the things begin to come back to me; you were on a bay horse. I remember thinking what a skeleton it was."

"No wonder; these African pastures are terribly bare."

"And now I remember that I thought of something else. It was those verses in Homer, the verses that Diomed says to Glaucus when they meet on the battle-field, and find that they are old family friends."⁴⁰

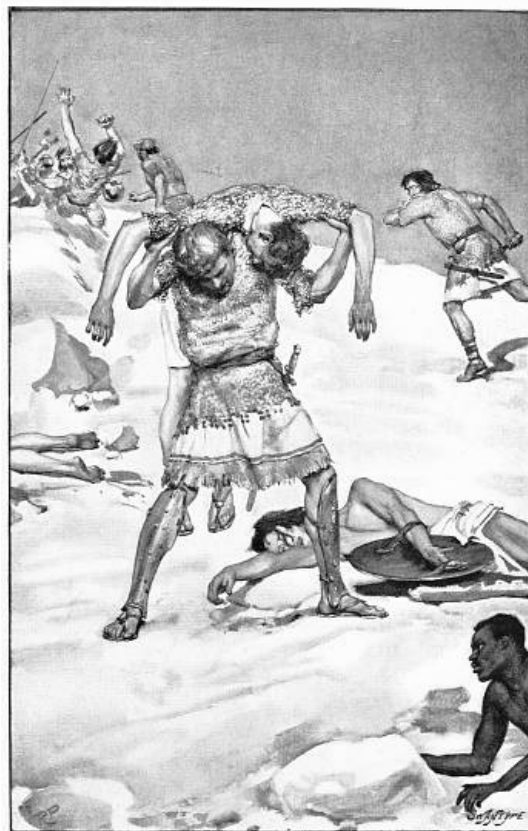
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The young Roman laughed aloud. "Now, this is curious," he cried. "We are bound to be friends, if thinking the same things be a mark of friendship. I remember that the very same thought about Glaucus and Diomed occurred to me. You have not forgotten everything, it is clear."

"Come, my dear sir," interposed the physician, "you must not let him talk so much. Tell him your story, and then leave him to get a little rest."

"Well," said Scipio, "what I have to say is very soon told. You will remember the discharge from the walls of the fort that checked our advance. It was admirably calculated; but, of course, when the fighting was so close as it was at the time, and the front ranks of the two armies were actually mixed together, it could not damage us without doing some harm to you. I saw two or three of your men struck down, manifestly, from the way in which they fell, by some missile from the walls. One of them I noticed particularly, because he was close to you. There could be no mistake, for there was a clear space round you. Our men had fallen back, and yours were making the best of their way to the gates. You two were rather behind the rest. I saw you stoop as if to lift your companion from the ground. You were looking towards us, for I particularly remember that I saw your face. You raised the man from the ground, but then your foot seemed to slip, and you fell forwards. Then you raised the man again. Several of us were watching you, and I have heard from them since that their recollections agree exactly with mine. And of this, too, I am quite certain, there was not a hand raised against you from our side of the field of battle. Well, we all saw you rise again with the man in your arms. You got him over your shoulder, for that, of course, was the easiest way of carrying him, but you still had your face looking our way. And before you turned you were struck by—"

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"I SAW YOU STOOP AND LIFT YOUR COMPANION FROM THE GROUND."

"Before I turned?" interrupted the sick man, who had been listening with rapt attention to the narrative. "Before I turned, you say; you are sure that I was struck by my friends behind me?"

"As sure," replied Scipio, "as that I am sitting here and speaking to you at this moment."

"Go on, then."

"Before you turned you were struck from behind. The first blow was on the back of your leg. I saw you put your hand to the place. And you had hardly done that when you were felled to the ground by a second blow. That was on your head. We guessed as much from the way you fell; and when we came to examine you afterwards, we found it to be as I have said. Your good physician here will tell you the particulars."

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"Yes," said the leech, "I will at the proper time. But for the present my patient has heard enough. Indeed, unless I am very much mistaken, he has heard too much."

"Whether it is enough or too much," said Cleanor, "I must hear it all. It would be ten times worse to be left in this suspense. I can only judge from what you say that I must have been struck from behind, that is by my own friends. But that treachery I can't believe. What do you say, sir," he went on, looking to the physician; "can you throw any light on the matter?"

"Be calm, be calm, my friend," said the physician. "You will undo all the good that we have been doing you for the last ten days. Here, let me feel your pulse.... It is just as I thought," he went on, "a regular bounding pulse. I would have given anything for you to have had such a pulse when I first took you in hand. But now it means fever, and fever means I don't know what."

"Still, I must have the whole story now," persisted Cleanor. "Do you think I can sleep with this doubt regarding my friends hanging over me?"

"Well, a wilful man will have his way, but, mind, I wash my hands of the whole business. I am not responsible for what may happen. And it promised to be such a beautiful cure, too!"

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"For heaven's sake go on! Tell me how I came to be wounded?" cried the patient, with an emphasis of which no one would have thought him capable half an hour before.

"Well," replied the physician, "I will tell you what I know, but it is under protest. You see this"—he produced from his pocket a leaden bullet of the kind commonly used in slings—"I extracted this from the wound on your hip. A nasty wound it was, and had caused a terrible loss of blood. You see that mark? It is not a Roman mark, certainly. Do you recognize it? Unless I am very much mistaken, it is the Carthaginian letter that answers to what we Greeks call *alpha*. What do you say?"

"You are right," said Cleanor. "I have myself given them out to the slingers from the stores. Yes, it is a Carthaginian bullet."

"Then there is another thing," the physician went on. "When they were stripping you to put you into bed, this stone that I hold in my hand fell out of a fold in your clothes. There were some fragments of hair upon it, and I recognized the hair as yours. See, they are here still;" and he produced a small piece of papyrus in which they were wrapped. "Now, where did that bit of stone come from? It has got, if you look closely at it, a little mortar on one side. At some time it has been built into a wall. You don't find such things lying about on the open plain. No; that bit of stone came from somewhere inside Nepheris. I have got some ten or twelve other pieces of stone very like it, that were picked up near the place by a boy whom I sent to search the next day. They are much of a size, and, I should say, though I don't profess to know much about such things, that they came from a catapult. Nothing else could have sent them so far. Now I have told you all I know."

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"Many thanks, sir!" said the Greek in a low voice. "I am convinced that there has been treachery; indeed you leave no room for doubt. But I could almost wish," he added with a melancholy smile, "I could almost wish that you had been less skilful, and my friends here less affectionate. I hardly feel as grateful to you as I ought to be. It is a grievous thing for a man to feel that he has been wounded in the house of his friends."

"Come, come," said the kindly physician, "it may have been only an accident or a mistake after all! However, you have had excitement enough, and more than enough, for the day. Take this, and it will send you to sleep;" and producing a small phial of poppy-juice from his wallet he poured a potent dose into a cup of wine, and gave it to his patient.

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"Thanks, doctor!" murmured Cleanor, but added in a whisper, "Yes, sleep, but if only there could be no waking!"

CHAPTER XXI.

POLYBIUS.

CLEANOR'S wish for the sleep from which there is no waking was only too genuine. He felt almost heart-broken at the treatment which he had received. He had thrown himself into the cause of Carthage with a single-minded energy which had never been permitted to flag, and these wounds were his reward!

True, he had a pretty clear notion of the quarter from which this treacherous enmity had proceeded. He felt sure that Hasdrubal had never forgiven him. That his vanity had been humbled and his cruelty baffled were offences that would be sure to rankle in the mind of such a man. But what could be said for a people which was content to be ruled by a Hasdrubal? The young Greek felt that he had lost his country, so to speak, a second time. His native town had perished, and now the city of his adoption, Carthage, which he had been eager to serve with life and death, had cruelly repudiated him.

The first result of these thoughts was an absolute loss of all interest in life. He did not wish to recover, and for a time it seemed most likely that what he did not wish would not be. The physician found that all the ground which had been gained was lost, and for some days he despaired of his patient's life. There was no active disease; that would have given his art something definite to combat. But there was a total indifference to everything, which offered an inert, and, as it seemed, unconquerable resistance to all his efforts. [231]

Still, at twenty there is an almost physical desire for life which triumphs over the deepest sorrows and the most acute disappointments. Had Cleanor been master of his own actions he might have committed suicide. As it was, lying helpless in the hands of his physician and his friends, he had to submit to being kept alive. His appetite returned by degrees, though he was almost ashamed of being hungry. As his strength grew, and the blood began to course more briskly through his veins, he found interests revive which he had thought to be extinguished, interests to which he seemed to have bidden farewell. And so the process of recovery went on.

The young Scipio did his best to help it forward. He had often reproached himself with haste and want of discretion in prematurely revealing to his friend and preserver the revolting truth of the treachery of which he had been the object. He now exerted himself to repair the mischief. His attendance by the sick-bed was unceasing. He was always ready to talk, to read aloud, or to play a game of draughts or soldiers, as the strength of the patient permitted. [232]

And all was done with so genuine an affection that it could not fail to win its way to the heart of the patient. More than once the young man's great kinsman, the Commander himself, spared an hour from his innumerable occupations to pay a visit to the sick man's tent. Cleanor felt again, in even increased force, what had impressed him at his first meeting, the inexplicable charm of Scipio's personality.

Under these circumstances Cleanor's health improved, at first almost in spite of himself, for he could hardly be said to have had any wish for life, and then with greater rapidity, as time weakened the painful impressions of the past and strengthened new interests and hopes. In the early days of his illness his host, for he occupied the private tent of the younger Scipio, had been granted a furlough from his military duties, for the express purpose of attending on his guest. Though renewed more than once, this had to come to an end.

But Cleanor never lacked company, and that of the most interesting kind. It will be remembered that on the occasion of his visiting the Roman camp in the capacity of interpreter to the officer negotiating an exchange of prisoners, he had made the acquaintance of the historian Polybius. This acquaintance he was now able to improve. Polybius, as a non-combatant, had plenty of time to bestow on the invalid, in whom he found an intelligent listener and even critic. It became his constant custom to bring what he had written on the previous day, read it aloud to the invalid, and invite his criticism on it. [233]

"I want above all things," Polybius said, "to be both candid and clear. Tell me if I seem to write like a partisan, or if I am obscure. What you do not readily understand will certainly be unintelligible to nine readers out of ten."

The reading was commonly followed by a conversation, in which a great variety of subjects were touched upon, and in which Cleanor found a quite inexhaustible interest. Polybius, who was now past middle age,⁴¹ had seen about as much of men and manners as any man of his time. He had held high military office in his native country, commanding the cavalry of the Achæan League, the last effort of Greece to hold her place in the world of politics. He had never seen, it so happened, any active service of importance, but in the knowledge of the theory of war he was unsurpassed by any man of his time. He had indeed made a very important contribution to the military art by greatly improving the practice of signalling. If there was anything that raised the old soldier's vanity it was this. He could not boast of any victories, and he belonged to a nation which had ceased to be a factor of importance in the politics of the world, but the credit of this invention gave him, he believed, a rank among the great soldiers of history. It was, he told Cleanor, the proudest moment of his life when he saw his system used, and used with success, by the great Scipio himself.⁴² [234]

But nothing in Polybius' conversation was more interesting than what he had to say about his experiences during his seventeen years of exile in Italy. Along with many hundreds of his countrymen—with all, it might almost be said, who were in any way distinguished or able—he had been deported to Italy. But he had been more fortunate than most of his companions. While they were distributed among the towns of Northern Italy, where they dragged out a miserable existence, without books or society, and often with but the scantiest means, he had been permitted to live in Rome. He had won the friendship of Æmilius Paullus, the great conqueror of Macedonia, and he and his two sons interested themselves in him. The society into which he was thus introduced was the most brilliant which Rome possessed, and Polybius was never weary of [235]

talking about it. Cleanor, who, like his countrymen in general, had been accustomed to regard the Romans as little better than barbarians, was astonished at his enthusiasm.

"We haven't any society in Greece," Polybius would say, "that can be fairly matched with them. They are on a larger scale, more strongly built, so to speak. They are not so acute, perhaps, as some of our people, but far more solid and strong."

"But they have no literature, I am told," interrupted Cleanor.

"That is hardly so," replied Polybius, "they have the beginnings of what will be, I am sure, a great literature. At present they do little more than translate from us. But their translations are better than any originals we can now produce. I used to be present at the first readings of the comedies of their great writer, Terence. They were taken, it is true, from Menander and Diphilus and other Greeks, but the taking was done with the greatest art, and the language was admirable. You may take it for granted that with a language so finished as Latin now is, a real literature is sure to come before long. And it was curious, too, to see what admirable judges of style these young nobles were. It wasn't true, though it was commonly reported, that Scipio and his friend Lælius wrote Terence's plays for him, but I can bear witness of my own knowledge that they helped him greatly with them. You see, he was not a Roman born, and it is not everyone that can write Roman Latin, any more than everyone can write Attic Greek. And there is another thing which we cannot match: the culture of the women in the best families. Among us it is very seldom that a respectable woman can do more than read and write; very often she cannot do as much as that. It is very different in Rome—not, of course, everywhere, for there are some who stick obstinately to the old ways, but in the circle of which I am talking. Lælius—he, you know, is Scipio's great friend—whose acquaintance you will soon make, has a daughter whose learning would put many of our students to shame. She was a girl not far into her teens when I used to see her—they do not shut up their women in our fashion—and she could speak Greek with the very finest accent, and they said just the same of her Latin; of that, of course, I could hardly judge so well."

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"Did you ever see the old man Cato?" asked Cleanor. "I have often heard talk of him. He must have been a worthy of a very different stamp."

"Yes, yes, I knew him well," replied Polybius, "and have excellent reasons for remembering him. As you say, he was of a very different stamp, and belonged to quite another age. He was of a time when scarcely a Roman had ever set his foot outside Italy, or even imagined that anything good could come from beyond the seas. Yet it was strange how the new spirit had succeeded in touching even him in his old age. Do you know that I had the honour of having him for a pupil? He must have been close upon eighty years of age when he found that it put him at a disadvantage not to know what other men knew, and he actually took to learning Greek. He had long been able to speak it in a way, but he took to reading it, and I had the pleasure of being his teacher. I used to stay at his country house, for it was only there that he had leisure for his lessons. It was a curious experience. He used to entertain his neighbours, the country-side folk, farmers and the like, in the friendliest fashion. They were fine, sturdy folk, and I soon understood, when I saw them, how Rome seems likely to conquer the world. And what heads they had! The wine-cup didn't halt in its rounds, I can tell you, and if I hadn't missed my turn as often as I could, the end would have been disaster. As for the old man, he never shirked.⁴³ But there was a very harsh side to his character. Nothing could be harder than his dealings with his slaves. They were mere beasts of burden to him, not one whit of more account than his horses and oxen, —not indeed of so much, seeing that they gave more trouble. He gave them just as much food as would keep them alive, not a morsel more. When they grew too old for work, he turned them out of doors to starve. However, he behaved very well to me, and if I gave him any help, he repaid me many fold. He was won over somehow to take the part of the exiles. Of course Scipio and his friends had a great deal to do with it, but I always thought that he had also a kindness for me. I was in the senate-house when the question came on—should the Greek exiles be allowed to go home? There was a hot debate, and a close division was expected. The old man rose to speak quite at the end of the sitting. I must say that what he said was not flattering, but it was certainly effective. 'Are we going to waste any more time about these trumpery Greeks? If we don't settle the matter to-day we shall have the whole discussion over again.' Then he sat down. The senators laughed; and the motion was carried easily. I went to thank him the next day. He was very friendly, and I took courage to say that if we were allowed to go back, we might also be restored to our rank and honours. He smiled very grimly. 'Friend,' he said, 'when a man is lucky enough to get out of the Cyclops' cave, I take it that he would be a fool to go back after his hat or his cloak.' I took the hint, and was off before two days had passed. But before I went, he sent a message that he wanted to see me. He was then at his country house, and he was busy making some alterations in a book that he had written about agriculture. He was dictating, and a slave, a wretched Greek, who looked, as he probably was, half-starved, was writing down. 'I bought him at Magnesia⁴⁴,' he said, 'for £20, and an excellent bargain it was, but he is getting past his work now.' I saw the poor fellow flush up, but Cato cared no more for his feelings than if he had been a dog. 'But now for what I wanted to say to you. I don't suppose that I shall see the end of Carthage, though it will not be for want of urging my countrymen to bring it about.⁴⁵ But you probably will, for it can hardly be postponed for another ten years. Well, there is one thing in Carthage that I have always wished to see, and that is, Mago's work on agriculture. I have never been able to get anything like a complete copy of it. Only two or three of the books—there are twenty-eight in all—have come into my hands, and I have found them quite admirable, and have made all the use of them that I could for my own treatise. What I wanted to say to you was to

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bear this matter in mind if you should chance to be at hand when the end comes. Books often fare very badly at such times. What, indeed, does the common soldier know about their value? But, depend upon it, this one will be worth a whole ship-load of gold and silver. Keep your eyes open, then, and warn all whom you know to be on the look-out for Mago's book.' That was the last time I saw him. He lived two years longer, and died happy, I suppose, because war had been declared against Carthage."

CHAPTER XXII.

A PLEASURE TRIP.

THE year drew to its close with a period of inaction on both sides. The Carthaginians, greatly disheartened by the defeat of the native tribes, made no further attempt to assume the offensive. They still held Fort Nopheris, the Romans not being able to spare enough men to invest it. The besiegers, on the other hand, were content to let things alone for the present. Time was on their side. They added daily to the strength of their siege-works, and their troops, most of them at their first landing raw recruits, were now becoming well-seasoned soldiers. A few days before the end of the year Scipio left for Rome in order to be present at the elections. Nothing was done during his absence, but it was understood that on his return active operations would be commenced without delay.

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On the day after the departure of the commander-in-chief, Cleanor received a visit from his physician. Latterly these visits had been rare and brief, not going beyond a few questions and a short gossip on the news of the camp. Now, however, the patient was subjected to a close examination. When this was completed, the physician shook his head.

"My young friend," he said, "you are not making quite the progress I had hoped and expected to see. The pulse is weak, I find. You have headaches, you tell me, now and then, and little appetite. This last is not a good sign. A young man like you, when he is really getting well, ought to be as hungry as a wolf. On the whole, I think you would be the better for a change, and we must consider how it can be managed."

At this point of the conversation Polybius entered the tent. "I am not satisfied," said the physician, addressing the new-comer. "I don't find my young patient making as good a recovery as I had hoped, and I have been suggesting a change. These are excellent quarters, and every care is taken, I know, of our friend, but a camp is not a good place for a complete recovery. Somehow the presence of a number of men seems to make the air somewhat stale."

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"I am particularly glad to see you," said Polybius, "for this is exactly the business about which I have come. Scipio, who thinks of everybody, and forgets nothing, was talking to me about Cleanor here the day before yesterday, and the very last thing he said to me yesterday when I bade him good-bye on board his galley was, 'Don't forget the invalid.' He left the matter, as a whole, to my discretion, but his idea was a short trip to Egypt. I was to ask your opinion, and if that was favourable, I was to arrange the details. Scipio will be away for nearly or quite a month, for there are many things to settle in Rome, and of course nothing of importance will be done during his absence. That gives us plenty of time. What do you say, doctor?"

"Nothing could be better," replied the physician. "We will say a month. That won't give you much time on shore. But I don't care about that. In fact it is the sea voyage that I count upon for putting our young friend right. Still, there is plenty to see in Alexandria, even if you can't get any further."⁴⁶

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"That is exactly what I expected to hear," said Polybius. "In fact, I so much took it for granted that I have given orders for a galley to be ready this evening. So if you don't object, Cleanor, we will start at once. There is a nice westerly breeze blowing, which we ought not to lose."

Cleanor had no objection to make. He was, on the contrary, much pleased with the idea. He had certainly been feeling somewhat languid, and the time was beginning to hang heavy on his hands. Besides, what could be more delightful than to see Alexandria?

A start accordingly was made at sunset. Everything favoured the voyagers. The wind never veered from the west, and though towards evening it commonly lulled, it never ceased; during the day it always blew briskly, but never was so strong as to cause inconvenience. In consequence the galley's voyage was almost a record, for she reached the quay in what was called the Eunostos or Haven of Happy Return in nine days. The travellers paid the customary visit of thanksgiving for a safe voyage to the Temple of Poseidon, and dropped a half-stater⁴⁷ apiece into the chest for offerings. This done, they presented a letter of introduction, with which Scipio had furnished them, to the official who represented Rome in Alexandria, were received by him with effusion, and pressed to accept his hospitality, but preferred the independence of lodgings of their own.

Their first visit was, of course, to the great Library. This had not at that time reached the enormous proportions which it attained about a century later, when it received, in addition to its own wealth, the vast collections of Pergamum,⁴⁸ but the volumes on its shelves already numbered more than a quarter of a million. The two friends could have spent months, had months been at their disposal, in this wilderness of learning. It was not only the multitude of its treasures that astonished them, it was the extraordinary value of many of the particular volumes. Here the student was permitted to inspect, under due safeguards, of course, the actual autographs of some of the most famous authors of the world. One of the Ptolemies, ironically called the Well-doer, had fraudulently possessed himself of the originals of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, presenting the Athenian people which owned them with copies and a money compensation. His successors had followed the same unscrupulous policy. Indeed, no valuable manuscript that once found its way into Alexandria was ever permitted to leave it.

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Adjoining the Library was the Museum, with its theatre or great lecture-hall, its smaller lecture-rooms, its dining-hall, and collegiate buildings, cloisters, gardens, and park. The two friends wandered from room to room, where all comers were welcome—the munificent endowments of learning rendered all fees unnecessary—and listened to discourses on all the subjects of knowledge under the sun.

There did not happen to be any commanding or famous personality among the professors of the time, but there was plenty of learning and abundance of rhetoric if not of eloquence. A successor of Aristarchus discoursed on the criticism of Homer, denouncing, for such happened to be the subject of the day, the pernicious heresy of the *Chorizontes*, the critics who maintained a diverse authorship of the Iliad and the Odyssey. The chair of Euclid was occupied by a geometrician who had made some additions to the science of trigonometry. In the lecture-room devoted to astronomy they had the good fortune to hear a really distinguished man of science, Hipparchus of Bithynia, who had been invited by the authorities of the Museum to give a course of lectures. He had chosen for his subject his own great discovery of the precession of the equinoxes, made, as he explained, by a comparison of his own observations with those of earlier astronomers.⁴⁹

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As they left the room they were invited by an attendant, who observed that they were strangers, to read an inscription written in letters of gold over the principal door. It was the epigram of Apollonius of Rhodes on the reception of the Hair of Berenice among the Constellations. Polybius was recognized by one of the professors, who had been glad to leave the thankless politics of Greece for a quiet competence in this abode of learning, and was invited by the professor to take dinner in the great banqueting-hall. Cleanor was, of course, included in the invitation. The intervening time was spent pleasantly enough in inspecting the garden, in which the collection of tropical plants, afterwards so famous, had been already begun, and in examining, what was then a sight peculiar to Alexandria, a menagerie.

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Both Polybius and his friend were inclined to think that all time not spent in the Library or the lecture-room was more or less wasted. Still, there were sights which it was impossible for a visitor to Alexandria to neglect. Such was the mausoleum of the Ptolemies, with the coffin of gold in which reposed the remains of the great Alexander; the observatory; the palace of justice; and the market, thronged with the commerce of the whole of the civilized world. There were hours, too, when the Library was shut, and these were spent in a way both amusing and instructive. The two wandered through the different regions of the great city, the streets inhabited by the Jews, with squalid exteriors, often concealing palaces fit for kings, and the native quarter, crowded with figures and faces that might have belonged to long-dead subjects of the Pharaohs. Not less interesting than the city were the docks and quays. Egypt was already one of the great granaries of the world. Loading the wheat ships was an employment that provided thousands of labourers with sustenance, and at this time, thanks to the war, which had thrown out of cultivation the fertile territory of Carthage, the trade was particularly brisk.

Anyhow, the time did not hang heavily on the visitors' hands, and Cleanor could hardly believe that ten days had passed when Polybius introduced the subject of departure. There was a certain hesitation in the old man's manner, and Cleanor, who had all the quick observation and alert intelligence of his race, did not fail to perceive it.

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"This is a delightful place, Cleanor," he said, "and I hope to see it again. Indeed, there are books in the Library which I must go through carefully before I give my *magnum opus* to the world. But that must be for the future. Now I have no choice but to go. We must not allow less than twelve days for the return voyage, though, if this wind holds, we shall not take so long."

"Yes," replied Cleanor, "I am ready to start at any time."

Polybius hesitated a second before he spoke. "Well," he said, "I don't think that there is any necessity for your coming with me. It is a pity that you should not see something more of Egypt now you are here. And then there is the question of health. It would be a thousand pities that you should have anything like a relapse. As for me, I must go. Next month, or, at furthest, the month after, is likely to see one of the greatest events in the history of the West, and it would be folly in me, who pretend to be an historian, if, having the chance of seeing it with my own eyes, I should fail to be present."

Cleanor saw in a moment that the whole thing had been planned, and that his companion was speaking by instruction. But he thought it prudent to conceal his knowledge.

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"Yes," he said, "I understand; but I think that I would sooner go back with you."

This was put out as a feeler, and it did not fail in its object.

"I think it must be as I said," replied Polybius with some hesitation. "To tell you the truth, it was Scipio's wish that you should remain here, and I should not like to go against his wish. The master of legions," he added with a smile, "must have his own way."

"Exactly so," said the young man, "and I have no wish to oppose him."

"Good!" replied Polybius with evident relief; "I was sure that you would be reasonable, so sure, in fact, that I have made arrangements for you to start to-morrow on a journey up the Nile. All expenses have been paid, and you will have nothing to do but enjoy the most wonderful sight in the world. There need be no hurry. Take your time and see everything at your leisure. The chance may never come again. The boat and its crew have been hired for three months. When you return you shall find, all being well, a letter with instructions awaiting you here."

"Well," said Cleanor, "I can't help being sorry that you are not coming with me, but the plan is a most delightful one. You could not have devised anything better." [251]

The young man's real thoughts were quite of another kind, though he concealed them with an adroitness which would have done credit to a veteran diplomatist. The fact was that he had been haunted for some time past by anxieties with which was mingled a certain feeling of self-reproach. They had scarcely presented themselves, or had been readily banished, during the period of his weakness and forced inaction. But when health was fully restored, and he again felt himself capable of action, he could no longer ignore them.

What had happened, what was likely to happen, to his foster-mother and her daughter? To Theoxena he was bound by one of the most natural and tender of ties. To let her perish, or suffer a fate worse than death, would be a shameful failure of duty, only less disgraceful than if she had been his mother indeed. And her daughter—? He had scarcely thought of the girl at the time, so engrossing had been the anxieties of the moment. But her image had been impressed deeply on his memory, and even on his heart. He seemed to see her still, as she told, with all the simplicity of a child, the pitiful story of her kidnapped brother. The large pathetic eyes, brimmed with tears, haunted him night and day. [252]

And there came with the thought the memory of another face, his sister in blood, lost to him for ever. Was Fate about to deal him another blow even worse than the first? Cleoné was dead. Was the time coming when the best thing that he could wish for Daphne would be that she should be dead also? And was he to be sight-seeing on the Nile, curiously speculating on the history of long-past generations, while this awful tragedy of the present was working itself out at Carthage? The thought was maddening. "No!" he said to himself; "I may not be able to do anything to help, but at least I will not be taking my pleasure while they are suffering torture or death!"

It was, however, necessary to dissimulate. It was plain that Scipio was determined to have him out of the way when Carthage fell. Nor could anything, he acknowledged to himself, be more reasonable or more kind. Though he could not be supposed to feel any sense of duty to a state from which he had received such treatment, still he might well wish not to witness its final catastrophe. Of his private feelings the Roman general could have no knowledge.

His only course was to appear to acquiesce in the plan. Scipio must undoubtedly have provided for the contingency of his resistance. Polybius, he remembered, had introduced the subject with a certain hesitation, as if an objection was not impossible. He was now, Cleanor trusted, off his guard. A too prompt consent might have seemed suspicious. As it was, he reflected with satisfaction, he had shown exactly the right kind of reluctance. He had expressed regret at losing his friend's company, without giving a hint of any personal unwillingness to accept the plan. [253]

That evening Polybius started on his return voyage. Cleanor was with him to the last moment, talking with an admirably simulated gaiety and interest of the pleasure which lay before him in exploring the Egypt of the Pharaohs.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DIPLOMACY.

THE Nile boat which had been engaged for Cleanor was lying at one of the quays which bordered a considerable part of the eastern or city shore of Lake Mareotis. The arrangement had been that it should start early in the morning of the day following the departure of Polybius. But the young man purposely delayed his appearance till late in the day, and the captain and crew, who had plenty of private affairs to occupy them for as long as their employers chose to stay, made no complaint. [254]

It wanted but two or three hours to sunset when Cleanor at last presented himself. The captain explained that they would not have time that day to go further than the mouth of the canal which connected the lake with the river Nile. This was false. They had plenty of light to make the passage of the canal itself. But the passenger assented with an unquestioning alacrity which inspired the old rogue who owned the boat with the liveliest expectations of a lazy and prosperous voyage. Both were, in fact, equally satisfied. The captain wanted to do as little as possible, and also contemplated a final carouse at the Canal Tavern, a house famous for its wines. The passenger, who had made up his mind to leave the boat at the earliest opportunity, was glad not to be taken any further distance from the city than could be helped.

As soon as they halted for the night he summoned the old captain and had an explanation with him. He began by asking in an indifferent tone the names of the chief cities which they were to pass. The captain of course had his lesson by heart, and answered with a long list of places, adding, as he mentioned each name, the chief sights for which it was famous.

"And do you particularly wish to see all these places again?" asked the Greek with a smile. [255]

The old man stared at him. "It is my business, my lord," he answered; "a poor trade, it is true, but it was my father's before me, and his father's too, and so on for I don't know how many generations. I don't know why I have stuck to it, for the pay is poor, but so I have. It is our way, I suppose, in Egypt."

"The pay is poor, you say," said the Greek; "but it would be better if you didn't go this voyage, and had the pay all the same."

"My lord is laughing at his servant," said the captain, staring again with eyes more wide open than ever.

"Not at all; the fact is that I have no more wish to see these places than you have."

The captain went on staring. "Then why—?" he began.

"My friends settled the matter for me; but I would sooner stay where I am."

"I understand," said the captain, closing one eye entirely, and diminishing the other to its natural size. "I understand. You have a friend, a young friend, I daresay, and you don't think that this is a good time for a long voyage."

Cleanor saw that the captain had his own ideas of what was keeping him in Alexandria, and did not care to disabuse him. After all, he reflected, he was not quite wrong. He nodded. [256]

"You are right, my lord. These cities and temples and tombs up the river are very fine, but they will be just as fine ten, twenty, thirty years hence. You can't say that of youth. It passes, my lord, it passes, and you must enjoy it while you can. But what am I to say? I have been paid to take you up to Philæ, and, if you wish it, as far as the Second Cataract. I signed the agreement before a notary. He knows all about it; other people know it. What am I to say when they find me loitering about here and your lordship not to be seen? You will hardly believe it, but there are positively people so wicked that they will say I murdered you to get the money without making the journey."

Cleanor did believe that there were such people, and thought to himself that the captain did not look altogether like a man to whom such things were impossible.

"Oh!" said he, "I will set that all right. I will sign a paper before the chief of the village, or anyone else that will serve, to say that I was compelled by urgent private business, which kept me in Alexandria, to give up my proposed voyage. You will be able to show that to any one who may be curious enough to inquire."

And this was actually done. The village headman was called on for his services, and witnessed a declaration on the part of Cleanor that he released the captain of the *Sphinx* from his contract to carry him to Philæ and the Second Cataract, and that he claimed no compensation or return of the money or of any part of it for the non-fulfilment of the conditions. This done, he made the captain and crew a present of a gold piece, and saw with satisfaction that they departed to expend it at the Canal Tavern. Shortly afterwards Cleanor hired a small rowing-boat, and before long found himself again in Alexandria. [257]

As to his general plan of operations he was quite clear. There was only one plan of getting into Carthage. It was full of risk, but still it was practicable. A brisk trade was being carried on from Alexandria in blockade-running. Corn had long been at famine prices in the besieged city. What was worth an ounce of silver on an Alexandrian quay could be sold for at least half an ounce of gold in the markets of Carthage. If only one ship-load out of three succeeded in escaping the Roman galleys a magnificent profit was realized. The average of those ships that ran the blockade was not smaller; it was probably higher. The new harbour-mouth gave, as has been explained, a better chance.

Cleanor, then, was resolved to make his venture in a blockade-running corn-ship. The question was, what disguise should he use? Fortune had done something for him. The wound in his thigh had given him a limp. During his illness a slight beard and a fairly thick moustache had grown. These things meant a considerable change. More was effected by a brown dye which gave him the complexion of an Arab. The character that he thought it best to assume was that of [258]

pedlar. He provided himself with suitable clothing and a pack, which last, however, he left for the present unfilled.

As Egypt was in alliance with Rome the traders that followed the business of blockade-running had to affect a certain disguise. The cargoes were consigned to dealers in Italian ports, and the ships themselves actually shaped their course for Italy, and kept on it as long as possible, so as to minimize to the utmost the chances of capture. The event of a passenger offering himself was rare, for the destination of this class of corn-ships was an open secret. If, however, one chanced to come, the captain could hardly refuse a passage. If he was exceptionally honest he might put difficulties in the way; commonly he left the stranger to find out his mistake, taking the precaution of having the passage-money paid in advance.

Cleanor, who had put up for the night at a little tavern close to the water-side, picked up a little information from the talk which was going on round him. Improving his acquaintance with a sailor, who seemed the most respectable of the somewhat miscellaneous company at the tavern, he learnt a good deal more. Finally his new friend offered to introduce him to the captain of the *Sea-mew*, a blockade-runner which was intending to sail the following day. [259]

"Dioscorides," said the sailor, "is an honest man in his way. He would have taken your passage-money for Rhegium, it is true, and made no scruple about carrying you to Carthage. That, you might say, is scarcely fair. But then you are quite safe with him. He won't cut your throat and throw you overboard for the sake of your pack. That's what I call honesty in a sea-captain. If you want to find a finer article, you will hardly get it on this side of the Pillars of Hercules. We will go on board at the last moment, and I will give him a hint that it is all straight."

The object of going on board so late was to show that the person proposing himself as a passenger had no idea of lodging an information against the ship with the agent of the Roman Republic.

On the following day, accordingly, this programme was carried out. The *Sea-mew* was taking on board the water wanted for the voyage, a part of the preparations naturally left to the last, when Cleanor and his friend reached the quay. A grizzled veteran, whose face was tanned by the suns and winds of some fifty years of voyaging, was receiving his last instructions from a keen-looking man, whose pale and unhealthy-looking skin spoke of long confinement to the desk and the counting-house. The conference over, Cleanor was introduced. [260]

"My young friend here," said the sailor, "is going the same way as you are. Cleanor, this is Dioscorides, the captain of the *Sea-mew*. You could not sail with a better man; and you," he went on, turning to the captain, "will find him an agreeable and accommodating passenger." The word "accommodating" was emphasized by a wink.

"Good!" said the captain; "come and see your quarters. That is the last water-cask, and now we are off."

He led the way as he spoke to the gangway that connected the quay-side with the deck. In five minutes more the *Sea-mew* was on her way westward.

A little after noon, the *Sea-mew* being now fairly started and making good way with a strong breeze that was almost dead aft, the captain invited his passenger to come below. The cabin was not spacious,—for the vessel, though carrying cargo, was built for speed, her owners having had in view the more risky kinds of trade,—but it was well furnished, and the meal that was spread on the table was almost sumptuous. The captain did not fail to observe his passenger's look of surprise. [261]

"In this business," he said, "a mina or two this way or that does not make much odds. It is no use to save when you are going either to make your fortune or be drowned, or, it may be, hanged."

"Possibly," replied Cleanor; "but a passenger is not in the same case. I am afraid that such fare will not suit my modest means."

"Don't trouble yourself on that score," returned the captain. "Suppose we say fifty drachmas for your passage-money, and ten more as a present to the crew, if the voyage turns out to your liking."

"I am afraid that you will not gain much by me on these terms," said Cleanor as he produced the money, which he had carefully made up out of a variety of coins. He thought it safer to avoid any appearance of wealth.

The voyage which followed was prosperous in the extreme. A west wind, with just a touch of south in it, carried the *Sea-mew* towards Italy, which, as has been said, was nominally her destination, with a quite surprising regularity of speed. She seldom made more than six miles in the hour, but she did this day and night with little variation, and without a single drawback. Her course lay just within view of the African shore till Cyrene was sighted. Then the captain struck a bolder course, nor did they come again within sight of land till a little object showed itself in the northern horizon which was speedily identified as Malta. Not long after they spoke a coral-fisher's boat, from which they learnt that a Roman squadron, with the commander-in-chief on board, had passed a couple of days before. [262]

"If that is so," said the captain, "I shall steer straight for Carthage. We are likely to have a

clear course. It is scarcely likely that the Roman cruisers will be prowling about for prizes in the wake of their own squadron."

As they sat together at their supper, the only officer who messed with them having gone on deck to superintend the setting of another sail, the captain said to Cleanor:

"Don't suppose that I want to intrude on your private affairs, and if my questions are inconvenient, or you have any reason whatever for declining to say anything more about yourself, don't hesitate to tell me. I sha'n't be offended or think the worse of you for it. On the other hand, I may be able to help you or give you a hint. Now, to be quite frank, I can't make you out. You wish to pass as a pedlar—excuse my plainness of speech. Now, you are no more a pedlar than I am; not so much, indeed, for you have never, I should say, either bought or sold anything in your life. You talk like a gentleman. I could not do it myself, but I know the real thing when I hear it. Now, what does it mean?"

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Cleanor had been long prepared for some such question as this. When he adopted his disguise he had vaguely counted on being one among a crowd of passengers, and able to keep himself as much in the background as he pleased. In such a situation he might have sustained his character with fair success. But it was a very different thing to sit *tête-à-tête* for a fortnight together with a shrewd man of business, who had been accustomed to mix with all sorts and conditions of passengers. Cleanor had felt from the first that it would be useless to maintain the pretence, and he was prepared to abandon it if he should be challenged. But he was not prepared to tell his true story. He had devised what he could not help thinking a very plausible substitute for it.

"You are quite right, my good friend," he said, "I am not a pedlar. Still, I hope to do a good stroke of business in Carthage."

"Business!" said the captain, opening his eyes wide. "I fancy this is a poor time for business there."

"For buying, doubtless—I suppose they have to keep all their money for food—but not for selling. That is what I am after. I have had a commission from someone whose name I must not mention to buy books."

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"Books!" repeated the old sailor in unfeigned astonishment; "who in the world wants to buy books?"

"Well," said Cleanor, "there are people who have the taste. There are some very valuable things of the kind in Carthage, taken, most of them, from Greek cities in Sicily. My employer thought it a good opportunity for picking up some bargains, and he has made it worth my while to go. You see, books are not like gold and jewels. Most people don't see anything in them. You yourself, though you have seen a good deal of the world, could not understand anyone buying them. I am not likely, you see, to be interfered with."

The sailor shrugged his shoulders.

"Well," he said, "everyone to his taste. However, now I understand how it is that you don't talk like other pedlars. Good luck go with you!"

The captain was right in supposing that the sea would be clear in the wake of the Roman squadron. He now matured a very bold design, which wanted for its successful accomplishment only one element of good fortune, an absolutely favourable wind. The *Sea-mew* was one of the fastest sailers in the Mediterranean, and with her own wind, which was a point or so off aft, could do what she liked even with a well-manned ship of war. The captain's plan was to hang closely, but just out of range, on the skirts of the Roman squadron as they neared their destination. This he could do without difficulty. Twenty galleys presented a larger object to him than he to them, and he reckoned, with a confidence that was not misplaced, that they would not keep a very careful look-out aft. If a solitary sail was to heave in sight for a moment it would probably attract no attention.

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What was wanted was the right wind, and this, to his great joy, he got just when it was wanted. The breeze, which for some hours had been due north, shifted to W.N.W. The weather thickened a little, and to make the lucky combination complete, the voyage came to an end a little after nightfall. The *Sea-mew*, which for some hours had been keeping, under shelter of the failing light, within two miles of the Roman squadron, now came up close to the rearward galley. In the preoccupation of the time she was practically unobserved. The *Sea-mew* was built almost on war-ship lines, and was flying Roman colours. No one certainly supposed for a moment that she was an Alexandrian blockade-runner.

Two hours afterwards she was safe in the harbour of Carthage, and the captain—he was owner as well as master—had realized a handsome fortune. He had shipped one hundred and fifty tons of wheat and as much barley at Alexandria, the wheat at one mina and a half⁵⁰ per ton, and the barley for half as much, and he now sold the wheat for eight and the barley for five minas per ton. The crew had a fourth of the gross profits divided between them, but enough was left to enable the captain to give up this very perilous kind of business for good and all.

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"If I tempt the gods again after this I deserve to be crucified," he said to his chief officer; and he kept his word.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN SORE NEED.

CLEANOR succeeded in landing without attracting, as far as he knew, any observation. He lent a hand to the disembarking of the cargo of the *Sea-mew*, and after going to and fro between the ship and the warehouse some half-dozen times, quietly slipped away. It was now far on towards midnight. The rest of the night he spent in a shed. This gave him shelter; of food he had been careful to provide as large a supply as he could conveniently carry. He foresaw an immediate use for it. [267]

Rising—it cannot be said waking, as he scarcely slept during the whole night—as soon as the earliest light of dawn made its way into his resting-place, he made his way out of the inclosure which surrounded the docks by an exit which he had observed during his sojourn in the city, and had noted for possible use in the future. He was still fortunate enough not to be seen.

This done, he soon made his way to the street where he remembered the house of his foster-mother, Theoxena, to be situated. It was still early morning, and but very few persons were about, these being almost entirely women, who were fetching water from the public fountain at the end of the street. He was not long in recognizing among these his foster-mother, and it went to his heart to see how pale and wasted she looked, and how slowly and painfully she moved under the slight burden of the pitcher which she carried upon her shoulder.

He was careful not to betray himself by look or movement, for he was anxious to know whether his disguise was successful. If her eyes, sharpened by a love that was almost as strong as a mother's, did not discover him, he felt that he was safe, and on this not only his own life but the power to help others depended. He passed her slowly, exaggerating a little the limp caused by his lameness. She looked at him twice, the second time, he thought, with a momentary awakening of interest, which, however, died away almost as soon as it appeared. [268]

And now chance gave him a fully convincing proof of how completely she had failed to recognize him. At the very moment of his passing she made a slight stumble, her feebleness probably causing her to drag her feet. The pitcher shook upon her shoulder, and was in imminent danger of falling. Cleanor caught it with his hand, and steadied it till she had recovered herself. She looked at him with a little smile of thanks, murmured a few words of acknowledgment of his help, and passed on, in what was evidently complete ignorance of his identity.

This was proof enough for Cleanor. Looking round and hastily satisfying himself that there was no one near, he murmured "Theoxena". She started and looked at him, but still without recognition, for his voice was disguised. The art of doing this was an accomplishment in which he was almost perfect; and indeed, the most elaborate dressing up of features and figure is of but little avail without the disguised voice.

"What, mother Theoxena," he added in his natural tones, "don't you know your son?"

In a moment her face beamed with delighted recognition. Pressing his finger on his lips to enjoin silence, he stepped up to her door, which, happily, was close at hand. Had it taken her more than two or three steps to reach it she must have fallen in the street. As it was, he had almost to lift her across the threshold, and to put her in one of the two chairs which formed part of the very scanty furniture of the room. Seeing that she wanted help, he ventured to call out the name of Daphne. [269]

In a few seconds the girl appeared. She was dressing, and had been about to bind up her hair when she was startled by the sudden call. Her locks—cut short, the reader will remember, to furnish the string of a bow—had grown enough to fall over her shoulders, and were even more luxuriant and brilliant than ever. But her face was a piteous contrast to their splendour—so pale, so wasted, so worn with suffering was it. The eyes, which had haunted the young man's memory, looked larger than before, so shrunk were her cheeks, and their look was pathetic beyond expression. She seemed scarcely to observe the presence of a stranger, but flew to her mother's side and busied herself with the task of restoring her to consciousness.

When Theoxena began to revive, Cleanor put a few drops of a strong cordial wine which he carried in a flask between her lips, and had the pleasure of seeing a faint tinge of colour show itself in her cheeks. In a few minutes more she was sufficiently recovered to sit up. Cleanor would not permit her to talk.

"Not a word," he said; "you are not strong enough yet. You must be satisfied for the present with seeing me alive and well. The rest we can postpone. Do you think she could eat something?" he went on, turning to the girl. [270]

Poor Daphne's eyes filled with tears. "We have nothing in the house, sir," she said. "We had a little crust of rye-bread at noon yesterday, but she said that she was not hungry, and made me eat nearly all of it."

Cleanor was horrified. He had expected to find them in great want, but this actual starvation

was worse than he had looked for. He glanced hastily round the room. He had already noticed that it was very bare. He now saw that it had been stripped of almost everything. Daphne observed his look, and explained.

"We have had to sell nearly all the furniture for food, and oh, sir, they give so little for the things! I know that money is very scarce, and the dealers are quite besieged with people who want to sell their furniture and clothes, but I can't help thinking that they cheat me because I am a girl and cannot help myself. Six days ago I sold mother's bed for eight drachmas—I remember her telling me that it cost thirty—and the eight were only enough to buy two rye-loaves and two anchovies. Poor mother does find it so hard to eat the bread alone. These lasted us till yesterday. We should have had nothing but for the old man who lives next door. He had a grandson who used to play with our little Cephalus. The dear little boy died about a month ago, and the old man always will make us have what he calls the child's portion. It has been getting to be very small lately, for the old man's pension is not large, and money buys less and less every day. But I don't know what we should have done without it."

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"Well," said Cleanor, "you will have me to help you now. I suppose, by the way, you remember who I am?"

"Yes, sir," replied the girl; "it was you that were so kind to us about Cephalus."

"You ought to have remembered, then, to call me not 'sir' but brother; or, better still, Cleanor. But now about food. This will be better than nothing for the present."

He produced from the pack which he carried some twice-baked bread, something like what we call biscuit, and some strips of dried goat's flesh. It was pitiful to see how the girl tried to hide the eager look which would come into her eyes at the sight of the food. The elder woman had almost ceased to care for life, but youth protests against suffering and will make its voice heard.



"CLEANOR PRODUCED FROM THE PACK WHICH HE CARRIED SOME TWICE-BAKED BREAD."

The meal was not abundant. Cleanor's prudence restricted the supply, because he feared the reaction after a long period of starvation. When it was finished he said, "Now, let us see what is to be done."

"We heard you were dead," began Theoxena—"killed, too, so they said, by our own people. The gods be thanked a thousand times that it isn't true!"

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"Well," said Cleanor, "that is past and done with. We won't talk about what other people have done or tried to do. Here I am alive, and hoping to keep alive in spite of them, and I have come to see what I can do for you."

"But what do you mean?" cried the woman. "Where have you been? Where do you come from?"

"Well," replied Cleanor, "I came from Egypt last of all, and before that I was in the Roman camp, where I found, I am bound to say, very kind friends."

"But have you really come back into this doomed city—for doomed it certainly is—when you were actually safe and among friends outside?"

"Yes, I have, if you must know. And what else could I do? You don't suppose I was going to leave you to perish here while I was safe and comfortable outside?"

"But why? What claim—?"

"Do you ask me what claim? You are my mother, Daphne here is my sister. I have friends, and kind friends too, but you are all the home I have. So that is disposed of. I have come back to get you safe out of Carthage, and we must consider how that is to be done. But before I say anything more, how about the little boy?"

"I have never seen him, but I have heard several times—the last time was only four days ago—that he is well. Oh! how can I thank you enough?"

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"We'll talk about thanks another time, dear mother," said Cleanor with a smile. "We must think about the present."

"I hear," said Theoxena, "that everyone is to move into the Upper City. Hasdrubal thinks that there is no chance of defending the rest. I would as soon—I would sooner stop here and die. But you see it is not only dying that one has to fear. That would be easy enough. We must go; yet where shall we find a corner to hide ourselves in, or a crust of bread to eat?"

"Leave all that to me," said Cleanor. "If it can be done, I will do it; and I think," he added after a moment's pause, "I think that I see a way."

As he spoke there flashed through his mind the thought that he might find help where he had found it before. If the physician who had served him in the matter of the little Cephalus were still alive, no more skilful, and, he was sure, no more willing auxiliary could be discovered.

"Wait," he said to Theoxena, "you and Daphne, where you are, and don't show yourselves more than you can help. Will the provisions I have here serve you for a day or so?" And he emptied the contents of his pack upon the table.

The woman smiled. She and Daphne had contrived to live for not a few days upon far less.

"Yes, it is abundance."

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"Till to-morrow, then," cried the young man with a gaiety which he did not feel. If the physician should be unable to help, or should have died!

Happily this misfortune was spared him. Cleanor found the man, and, thanks to his knowledge of his habits, without loss of time. It was still an hour short of noon when he saw the leech coming out of a casemate in the wall, which he was accustomed to visit at that hour for the purpose of inspecting the newly wounded.

"This is a good sight," cried the physician. "What Æsculapius has brought you back from the dead? They told me that you were killed, and I feared that they had only too good reason for knowing that it was true."

"That," said the Greek, "is a long story, and will keep. As usual, I want your help."

"You are not ill?—no, I have never seen you look better. What is it?"

Cleanor told him his story.

The physician looked grave, and after a pause he said: "You are wanting for your two friends what a couple of hundred thousands of people in this city are wanting—a safe place of shelter. Yet it can be found; all things can be found, if one knows where to look for them. But it will be costly, very costly." And he looked inquisitively at the young Greek, who certainly, in his pedlar's dress, did not look as if he had the command of boundless wealth.

Cleanor understood the look, and whispered a few words in the old man's ear.

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"That is capital," he said with an admiring glance. "You are certainly a young man of business."

Cleanor had, in fact, brought with him, in view of any possible necessities that might arise, an ample supply of means in the most portable, and therefore most valuable form that wealth under the circumstances of the time could possibly bear. Gold, precious as it is, is not very portable. A really wealthy man would require a whole caravan to transport his fortune from one place to another if it were in the shape of gold. Paper money—for the ancient world did business by bills of exchange very much as we do—was not available. The commercial credit of Carthage had collapsed for ever.

The one readily available vehicle for wealth was precious stones. These had risen in Carthage to an almost incredible price. Sooner or later, everyone felt, the city would be taken. When that should happen, gold would be almost useless. The one chance of preserving it, and that but a slight one, would be to bury it. That might hide it from the enemy, but might very probably also

hide it from the owner. Jewels, on the other hand, could be carried anyhow. If a man could contrive to escape at all, he could also contrive to escape with a fortune, so invested, about him. Cleanor, accordingly, was now utilizing this part of the old king's bounty. He carried round his waist, next to his skin, a slender girdle-purse in which he had stored a number of jewels. This he was resolved not to lose except with his life. While he kept this, he felt that he could do anything that money could accomplish.

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"Come home with me," said the physician, "and talk this matter over. You are best out of sight, for someone might recognize you in spite of your disguise, and that would be very awkward indeed."

CHAPTER XXV. A REFUGE IN THE STORM.

YOU have the necessary means, I understand," said the physician to Cleanor, when the two were seated together safe from interruption. "Now for my plan. The only safe hiding-place will be one of the temples. Now, there are three temples which would answer our purpose, I mean three that would be specially suitable on account of the number of private apartments which are attached to them. There is Æsculapius in the citadel, Apollo in the arsenal, and Baal Hammon in the Upper City; but that, of course, you know. On the whole, I am inclined to Apollo in the arsenal, and I will tell you why. Æsculapius is the strongest place in Carthage, and it is there that the last stand will be made. There are some desperate men who will hold on to the last extremity, and perish rather than surrender. There are some of the old nobles who are too proud to live under the rule of Rome, and there are the deserters, who know that pardon is impossible. Hasdrubal himself gives out that he intends to cast in his lot with them, but I doubt him; he is a cur. Now, I know as a matter of fact that preparations have been made for holding Æsculapius as long as possible. And when it becomes impossible, then it will be destroyed. I know these Carthaginians. Drive them to extremities, and they will behave as the scorpion between two fires. Clearly, then, Æsculapius is not the place for non-combatants. Then at Baal Hammon there are too many priests, and they are a bad lot. That fellow whom you bribed about the little boy was very useful to you, but then he is a great scoundrel. In that matter you could trust him, because he had put his own neck in the noose; but in this you could not. You see he might easily make double gain out of it—a heavy sum from you for keeping your friends safe, and another sum for selling them to the Romans. No, you had better have nothing to do with Baal Hammon and its crew. Then there remains Apollo in the arsenal. There are only two priests there. There's the old man, who is almost in his dotage, and the son, who is a decent fellow with a really excellent wife. He is not above taking money, but he will not be extortionate. She—poor woman, she has just lost her only child—would take in your friends out of pure kindness. Anyhow, she will do her best for them. You had better leave the matter to me, for the less you are seen the better. Now, what do you say?"

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"I am only too glad," said Cleanor, "to leave the matter in your hands. How much money will be wanted, do you think?"

"It can hardly be less than two hundred gold pieces," replied the physician.

"These," said Cleanor, as he produced some rubies and emeralds, with a rose diamond, small, but of peculiarly brilliant lustre, "have been valued at a talent⁵¹ by a very good judge. Your friend the priest will get, if he wishes it, another opinion as to their value, but I feel sure that the price is not too high. That is what was actually offered me as a first bid by Raphael, the first jeweller in Alexandria, and, as you know, a man does not offer his highest price in his first bid."

"A talent!" said the physician, who was himself something of a connoisseur in precious stones, and had been examining them with obvious admiration. "A talent, indeed! Unconscionable scoundrel! He ought to have said three. This diamond alone is worth a talent, and more too. Well, I will see to the affair at once, for there is no time to be lost. You stop here, and make yourself at home."

About noon the physician reappeared. "Everything is settled," he said. "I have saved your diamond for you. It was really too much to give. The rubies and emeralds were quite sufficient. Mago—that is the younger priest's name—is a good judge of jewels, and was quite satisfied. You are to meet him to-night at the upper end of the street where your friends live, and take him to their house, and introduce him. He will take the women in charge, and conduct them to the temple. He has the means of getting them through one of the arsenal gates without any questions being asked. I am to hand over the price to-morrow, when the first part of the business shall have been finished. For the rest you must trust him. Indeed, you have no other choice; but he is not a bad fellow, and, as I said, his wife is absolutely loyal."

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By midnight Theoxena and Daphne were safely lodged in a little chamber adjoining that occupied by the priest and his wife.

The change was not effected a day too soon. Early on the following morning the Roman armies were seen to be in motion, and peremptory orders were issued that the Lower City was to be evacuated. Many of the inhabitants had anticipated it, and had found such shelter as they could in the Upper City. But thousands had lingered behind, hoping against hope that the change might be avoided, or simply paralysed by despair. Destitute as many of them were, both of means and friends, they stayed only because it was easier to stay than to move.

Even now some doggedly remained behind. The troops had instructions to drive them out by force, and they attempted for a time to carry out this order. But they were met with a passive resistance that baffled them. Some would not, some could not be stirred from the homes to which they were accustomed, and which at least afforded them a present shelter. [280]

Still, there was an overpowering rush of panic-stricken fugitives. The streets leading to the Upper City were crowded up to and beyond the utmost limit of their capacity. At the gates the press was something terrible. All night long the human stream flowed ceaselessly on; when the morning broke it was still dense and strong. Scipio, fully aware that the helpless crowd would be a source of weakness rather than strength to the besieged, had strictly forbidden pursuit. But for this fact, any number might have been killed or captured.

Still, the arsenal itself was not to remain long undisturbed. To abandon it to the besiegers was to acknowledge that the fall of the whole city was only a question of time, for this sufficient reason, if for no other, that no fresh supplies could possibly be introduced. Up to this time a certain amount of food had been brought in, as we have seen in the case of the *Sea-mew*. The supply was small and irregular, but it had been sufficient to replenish the stores of the garrison. Now and then something had been spared for the wants of the general population. All this would come to an end when the port fell into the hands of the enemy. [281]

But Hasdrubal had really no choice. He could not hope to defend the fortifications of the arsenal with the forces at his command. He had to concentrate his strength within the smaller compass of the Upper City. Accordingly, in the night following the abandonment of the Lower City, the arsenal was evacuated by its garrison. The last detachment to leave was instructed to set the stores on fire. Nor was this done an hour too soon. The necessity which constrained the Carthaginian commander to this course of action had not escaped the notice of Scipio. Lælius, the ablest of his lieutenants, was making his way into the arsenal—which he found, somewhat to his surprise, undefended—at the very time when the garrison was leaving it at the opposite end.

The physician was too busy with his work to pay much attention to military affairs, and Cleanor having accomplished, as far as was possible for the present, the purpose for which he had returned to Carthage, did not risk recognition and capture by venturing out of doors. It was with surprise, therefore, as well as dismay, that he learned what had happened. The first thing that he saw on looking out of his window the following morning was the area of the arsenal swarming with Roman soldiers. Some were endeavouring, under the direction of their officers, to quench the flames in the storehouses; not a few, it was easy to see, were busy in collecting plunder; the Temple of Apollo was evidently one of the chief objects of attraction. [282]

It was an anxious moment for Cleanor, but if he could have seen what was going on in the temple, he would almost have despaired of the safety of Theoxena and her daughter. The fact was that the Roman soldiery, for all the strictness of discipline to which it had been habituated by Scipio, was for the time completely out of hand. The siege had been long and tedious, and the perils, so far, out of all proportion to the prizes. And now, almost for the first time for three years, these men, starving, so to speak, for booty, found themselves within reach of what seemed enormous wealth.

In the centre of the temple stood a figure of Apollo, about double the size of life. It had the appearance of being of gold; in truth, it was of wood, covered with massive plates of gold. The throne on which it was seated, the lattice-work on either side, and the canopy above its head were of the same metal, and these were absolutely solid. The weight of the whole was afterwards reckoned at about two hundred and fifty of our tons. Possibly this was an exaggeration; but the treasure was unquestionably very large. So large, indeed, was it that the first impression of the soldiers when they burst into the shrine was that the whole was of some base metal gilded.

Then the discovery was made. A Roman in mere mischief aimed a blow with his sword at the trellis-work which surrounded the statue. Picking up the fragment which he had thus lopped off, more in curiosity than with any definite expectation of finding treasure, he was astonished by its weight. Then the truth dawned upon him. [283]

"By Pollux!" he cried, "it must be gold."

The scene which followed was one new to Roman experience. All Rome, it might almost be said all Italy, hardly contained so much treasure. Since the day when the soldiers of Alexander burst into the treasury of Persepolis, and saw what the wealthiest monarchy of the world had been accumulating for centuries, such a sight had never met human eyes. It overpowered the solid strength of Roman discipline; with a frantic cry the men precipitated themselves on the spoil. The centurions, who with the instinct of command endeavoured to keep them back, were thrust roughly aside. One of them, who ventured to use the vine cudgel which he carried by way of enforcing his orders, was levelled to the ground by a blow of the fist. The tribune in command of the detachment, when he ventured to interfere, met with no more respect. In less than half an hour the statue was stripped of its costly covering, and the shrine was hacked to pieces.

Then the strange passion of destruction, which seems always to follow close after any great mutinous outbreak, seized upon the men. Possibly they were carried away by a frantic desire to abolish the very scene of their offence. Anyhow, the temple was for a few minutes in the most imminent danger of being burned. A soldier thrust a torch into the fire which was burning near the great central altar, and threw it all blazing among the curtains which covered one of the walls.

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At this critical moment Scipio himself appeared upon the scene. His presence seemed to recall the frantic soldiery to themselves. His first care was to see that the fire was extinguished. With the plunder he did not at the moment attempt to deal; he reserved that matter for a cooler moment. It was one of the secrets of his success that he never strained his power. But order was restored and firmly enforced. A guard was put in charge of the building. This was to be changed at fixed intervals. It was to have, meanwhile, its full share of all prize-money that might be earned on exactly the same scale as actual combatants. After this the temple and its inmates were as safe as any place or persons could be at such a time.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE STORMING OF THE UPPER CITY.

THE actual fortifications of the Upper City did not offer any serious resistance to the assailants. They were of extreme antiquity, and were not only greatly decayed, but were inadequate to meet, even had they been in the best condition, the improved methods of attack which had been introduced since the time of their erection. Some attempt had been made to put them into repair within the last few months, but to very little purpose. Nothing short of a complete reconstruction would have been of any practical use. The Roman battering-rams had not been at work for a day before it became evident that several breaches would speedily be made in the walls. In fact, so many weak spots had been revealed, that even the most determined and powerful garrison could not have hoped to make them all good. In the course of the night the whole line was evacuated.

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Still, Carthage was not to be taken without a desperate struggle. Twice already had her mother-city Tyre defended herself with fury against assailants of overwhelming strength,⁵² and the world was to see a still more terrible scene of rage and madness some two centuries later, when the Hebrew people defended its last stronghold, Jerusalem, against the legions of Rome. The Carthaginians were now to show themselves not unworthy of these famous kinsfolk.

The Upper City was penetrated by three streets, all of them built on steep inclines, and converging on the summit of the hill. On this the citadel stood, itself crowned by the famous Temple of Æsculapius. This was built on a rock, three sides of which displayed a sheer descent of some sixty feet, while the fourth was ascended by a long flight of steps. The three streets were built to suit the oriental taste, perhaps we should rather say the oriental need, which prefers shade to the circulation of air and light. They were so narrow that the inhabitants of opposite houses—the houses commonly inclined outward—could almost shake hands from their windows. The houses were not of equal height, but they were all lofty, sometimes having as many as seven or eight stories. At the back of these main thoroughfares was a wilderness of lanes and alleys, consisting for the most part of smaller houses, with now and then a paved yard or small garden.

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Up these streets the Romans had to force their way. Almost every house was a fortress which had to be separately attacked and separately taken. The first danger that had to be encountered was a shower of tiles and bricks from the roofs and upper stories. These missiles, heavy themselves, and falling with tremendous force from the lofty buildings, would have been terribly destructive, had not the assailants protected themselves by the formation of the *testudo* or tortoise. This was made by the men ranging their shields over their heads in a close impenetrable array, under cover of which they broke down the doors of house after house. Sometimes even the *testudo* reeled under the shock of some more than usually heavy mass; more than once it was actually broken when the defending party contrived to detach and send down upon it the whole of a parapet. Whenever this happened no small loss of life was the result.

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When an entrance had been forced into the house, every storey became the scene of a fresh conflict. Driven at last to the roof, the defenders would sometimes prefer to hurl themselves down to the street below rather than fall into the hands of the enemy. Some would take a desperate leap across the space that separated them from the houses opposite; others crossed on bridges of planks or doors which they hastily made, or, in some cases, had prepared in anticipation.

It is needless to say that a conflict of such a kind was fought with the greatest ferocity. It was a struggle, for the most part, between a people and an army. The inhabitants, seldom, if ever, protected by armour, and furnished with the weapons that chance supplied, often, indeed, reduced to nothing more effective than sticks or household implements, fought desperately against well-protected, well-armed, well-disciplined men. The women were even more frenzied

than the men. Driven to bay, they flew like wild-cats at the Romans, and bit and scratched till they were slain or disabled. There was no question of quarter; it was not even asked. The assailants, as they slowly advanced, winning their way yard by yard, left a lifeless desolation behind them, with the dead lying as they had fallen, on every staircase and in every chamber.

This battle of the streets lasted with unabated fury for six days. The besiegers, of course, fought in relays; there were three detachments, and each had its regular time of service, four hours twice in the day, for of course no cessation of the attack was possible. One man allowed himself no rest, and this one man was Scipio. During the whole of the six days he never slept, or, at least, never composed himself to sleep, for nature would sometimes assert itself, untiring as was the spirit which dominated his physical frame, and he could not help a brief slumber as he sat at his meals. These he took as chance gave him the opportunity. They were hurried repasts of the simplest kind—a piece of dried flesh, a crust of bread, or a biscuit, with now and then a bunch of raisins. His drink was rigidly limited to water, for in battle he always acted on the principle which made Hector refuse the wine-cup which his mother proffered him in an interval of battle.⁵³

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At sunset on the sixth day the Upper City was practically held by the Romans. Nothing but the citadel remained to be taken, and that was so arduous an undertaking that the attack was necessarily postponed till the troops had had some rest.

But the spirit of the Carthaginians was at last broken. Just as the troops told off for the first assault had finished mustering, and before the trumpets had sounded the signal for the advance, a procession, headed by a herald who carried a flag of truce in his hand, was seen to be descending the steps that led from the temple of Æsculapius. Lost to sight for a short time as it came under cover of the outer wall of the citadel, it next became visible as it issued from one of the gates. Scipio, who was about to address his troops, went forward to meet the new-comers. Their leader, whose style and title were given by the herald as chief priest of the temple of Æsculapius, addressed him, his words being interpreted by a Roman prisoner.

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"Leader of the armies of Rome," so ran the speech, "the gods have given thy country the final victory over her rival. Four centuries ago Rome felt it to be an honour to be acknowledged by Carthage as an ally on equal terms.⁵⁴ Since then there has been continued rivalry and frequent war between the two nations. More than once it has seemed likely that the Fates had decreed that the seat of empire should be in Africa rather than in Italy. But this was not their will. We have long been convinced that we were not to rule; we now perceive that we are not even to be permitted to exist. But though it is necessary for the honour, if not for the safety, of Rome, that Carthage should be destroyed, it is not necessary that a multitude of innocent persons, whose sole offence is to have been born within the walls of a doomed city, should also perish. There are some, a few thousands out of many, who have, it is true, committed the offence of defending their country; these also implore your mercy. That they can resist your attack they acknowledge to be impossible; but they can at least claim this merit, that by a prompt surrender they will save the lives of some of your soldiers. Your nation, man of Rome, has been ready beyond all others to show mercy to the conquered, and your family, Scipio, has been conspicuous in this as in all other virtues. Be worthy, we beseech you, of your country, your house, and yourself."

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It was without a moment's hesitation that Scipio replied to this harangue. Nor had he to use the services of an interpreter. With that indefatigable energy which distinguished him he had employed the scanty leisure allowed by his duties to learn the Carthaginian language, of which at the beginning of the siege he had been as ignorant as were the rest of his countrymen.

"I will not use many words, for time presses, and there is much to be done. The multitude of unarmed persons may come forth without fear. Their lives are assured to them. Nor do we bear any enmity against brave men who have fought against us. They shall not be harmed. I except only from my offer of mercy those who have betrayed their country by deserting it."

The answer had scarcely been spoken before a huge multitude, to whom its purport had probably been communicated by some preconcerted signal, poured out from the gates. Seldom has a more piteous sight been seen. With faces wan with famine, and clothed, for the most part, in squalid rags, the long lines of old men, women, and children defiled before the Roman general as he stood surrounded by his staff. True to his gentle and kindly nature, he busied himself in making provision for their immediate wants. The whole number—there were fifty thousand in all, a great crowd, it is true, but pitifully small in comparison with the supposed total of non-combatants when the siege began—was divided into companies, each of which was assigned to the commissariat department of one or other of the legions. At the same time instructions were given to the officers in charge of the stores that their immediate necessities—and many of them were actually starving—should be relieved.

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The non-combatants thus disposed of, the soldiers that had surrendered followed. There may have been some six thousand in all, of whom five-sixths were mercenaries, one-sixth only native Carthaginians. They were in much better case than the rest of the population; in fact, as far as provisions were concerned, they had not been subjected to any hardship. The mercenaries had, for the most part, an indifferent look. It was depressing, doubtless, to have been serving for now three years an unsuccessful master, and to have missed the good pay which they might have earned elsewhere. But this was one of the chances of their profession, and they might hope to recoup themselves for their loss by another and more fortunate speculation. The Carthaginian minority were in a different temper. There was no future for them. Their country was gone, and if the love of life, which asserts itself even over the fiercest and bitterest pride, had bent their

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haughty temper to supplicate for mercy, it could do nothing more. Each man as he passed in front of the general laid down his arms upon the ground. These, again, were piled in heaps, to be carried off in due time to the stores in the Roman camp.

This business was just completed when a solitary figure was seen to issue from one of the gates in the citadel walls, and hurriedly to approach the Roman lines. As he ran he was struck by a missile from the walls. The blow levelled him to the ground, but he regained his feet in the course of one or two minutes, and hastened on, though with a somewhat limping gait. It was observed that he was dressed as a slave, and, as he came nearer, that his face was so closely muffled that his features could not be recognized. Nevertheless, his figure, which was short and corpulent, seemed to many to be familiar. Reaching the Roman lines, he threw himself at Scipio's feet, caught him by the knees, and in broken Greek begged for his life. The general, stretching forth his hand, raised him from the ground. It was Hasdrubal, the commander-in-chief of the armies of Carthage. [293]

A murmur of disgust at his poltroonery ran through the ranks. Here and there the kinsmen or comrades of the unhappy prisoners whom he had done to death in so barbarous a fashion a few months before gave vent to more menacing expressions of anger. Scipio silenced these manifestations of feeling by an imperative gesture of command.

"Your life is spared," he said. "See that you make a due return for the boon."

It must not be supposed that the Roman general was disposed to regard with any kind of leniency Hasdrubal's baseness and barbarity. It was from policy that he spared the miserable creature's life. In the first place, it was the custom, from which it would be injudicious to depart, to make the king or chief general of a conquered people an essential part of the triumph which would celebrate the victory. Secondly, he was aware that the prisoner would be useful in many ways, that there were important matters about which he could give the best, or, it might be, the only available information.

As to the boon of life, it seemed to his own noble nature to be a very small thing indeed. For himself he felt that, had such a situation been possible, he would far sooner have died than survive to face such shame and ignominy: the craven clinging to life which dominates such mean natures as Hasdrubal's was simply incomprehensible to Scipio. But if he despised Hasdrubal while he spared him, there were others among the Carthaginian leaders for whom he felt a genuine admiration and respect, and to whom he was willing to offer honourable terms of surrender. [294]

"Where," he asked Hasdrubal, "are your colleagues in command, and the chief magistrates?"

"They are in the temple of Æsculapius," replied the Carthaginian.

"Think you that they will be willing to surrender? They are brave men, and have done their best, and they shall be honourably treated."

"I know not what they intend," muttered the fugitive, with as much shame as it was in his nature to feel.

"I will at least try them," said Scipio, and he advanced towards the citadel, followed by some of his staff. Hasdrubal, much against his will, was constrained to accompany them.

A number of figures could be seen on the roof of the temple, which, as has been explained, formed the summit of the citadel. As soon as he came within ear-shot of the place he bade one of the prisoners step forward and communicate his *ultimatum* to what may be called the garrison of the temple.

"*Scipio offers to all freeborn Carthaginian citizens, life on honourable terms. To all those who have deserted he promises a fair trial, so that if they can show any just cause for having left their country, even they may not despair of safety.*" [295]

To this appeal no answer was made. After a while, as Scipio and his attendants waited for a reply, thin curls of smoke were seen to rise from the temple. Next a woman, leading a young boy by either hand, approached the edge of the roof. She was clothed in a flowing robe of crimson, confined at the waist by a broad golden girdle. Her long hair, which streamed far below her waist, was bound round her temples by a circlet of diamonds that flashed splendidly in the sun.

"By Baal," cried the Carthaginian prisoner who delivered Scipio's message, "it is the Lady Salamo herself."

"Who is it, say you?" asked Scipio.

"The Lady Salamo," answered the man, "the wife of my lord the general."

It was indeed the wife of Hasdrubal.

"Man of Rome," she began in a clear, penetrating voice, which made itself heard far and wide, addressing herself to Scipio, who was conspicuous in the scarlet cloak worn by generals commanding armies, "man of Rome, to thee there comes no blame from gods or men. Carthage was the enemy of your country, and thou hast conquered it. But on this Hasdrubal, this traitor who hath been false to his fatherland, to his gods, to me,—whose shame it is to have been his wife,—and to his children, may the gods of Carthage wreak their vengeance! And thou, Scipio, I [296]

charge thee, fail not to be their instrument."



THE LADY SALAMO DEFIES THE ROMANS FROM THE WALLS OF CARTHAGE.

She then turned to Hasdrubal.

"Villain," she cried, "and liar, and coward, as for me and these children, we shall find a fit burial in this fire;" and as she spoke a great flame sprung up for a moment among the gathering clouds of smoke; "but thou, that wast the chiefest man in Carthage, what dishonourable grave wilt thou find? This only I know, that neither thy children nor I will live to see thy disgrace."

Turning from the wretched man with a gesture of contempt, she drew a dagger from her girdle and plunged it into the heart first of one then of the other of the two children who stood at her side. Then flinging the bloody weapon from her, she leapt into the midst of the flames, which by this time were rapidly gaining the mastery over the whole building. All her companions shared her fate. The Carthaginian nobles were too proud to live under the sway of Rome; the deserters were conscious of their guilt, or distrusted the justice of a Roman tribunal. Anyhow, not a single individual out of the desperate band to which Scipio had addressed his appeal availed himself of the opportunity. The temple of Æsculapius perished with all its inmates; and along with it was lost to Rome and to the world a vast treasury of wealth.

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CHAPTER XXVII. A PRECIOUS BOOK.

IT is time to explain what had happened to Cleanor while the events recorded in the last chapter were proceeding. He had remained within the physician's house during the six days' fighting in the streets. The house had been turned into something like a hospital, and the young Greek found plenty of employment in doing such services as a lay hand could render to his host's patients. The physician was naturally one of the deputation which, as has been described, waited on the conqueror on the morning of the seventh day, and he took his guest with him in the character of his assistant. Nor could Cleanor escape an emotion of relief to find himself again under Roman protection. It was a curious change from the feelings that had dominated him a few months before, but the constraining power of circumstances had been too much for him. His first care was to ascertain the fate of Theoxena and her daughter. Here it was necessary to proceed with caution. It would not be wise to make inquiries at random. The person whom he could most safely

trust was Scipio, the young officer, whom he was, of course, anxious to see for other reasons. To his great delight he found that his friend was the officer in command of the guard to which the safety of the temple of Apollo in the arsenal had been committed. He found an opportunity of sending a message by a soldier who happened to be off duty for the time. Hardly an hour had elapsed when he received an answer. It ran thus:

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"A thousand congratulations. We had almost given you up for lost, only that the gods are manifestly determined to make up to you for some part at least of what you have suffered. Come at once: I have much to say to you!"

The meeting between the two friends was very affectionate. Cleanor, postponing the narrative of his own adventures to some future opportunity, at once took the young Roman officer into his confidence.

"You may rest assured that your friends are safe. There has been a guard over the private apartments attached to the temple; and I have taken care to have trustworthy men, as I always should in such a case. But I can tell you that your friends have had a very narrow escape. If the general had not arrived just at the right time, the whole building would have been reduced to ashes."

He then proceeded to relate the story which the reader has already heard. Cleanor listened with emotion that he could hardly conceal. How nearly had all his efforts been in vain! How narrowly had these two—who were all that remained to him of his old life—escaped destruction!

Young Scipio's narrative was hardly finished when the conversation of the friends was interrupted by the arrival of an orderly bringing a message from the general. The official despatch, accompanied by a letter expressed in more familiar terms, ran thus:

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"I have learnt that a manuscript of the very highest value, which I have a special charge from the Senate and People of Rome to preserve, to wit, the Treatise of Hanno on Agriculture, has always been and is now in the custody of the priests of Apollo in the arsenal. I commission you, therefore, as officer commanding the guard of the said temple, to make inquiries of these same priests, and to take the book into your keeping, for which this present writing shall be your authority."

The private letter was to this effect:

"I have just learnt from Hasdrubal—and the information is so valuable that it almost reconciles me to having had to spare the villain's life—that the precious book on Agriculture is to be found in the temple of which you have charge. Lose no time in getting it into your possession. It is supposed to contain secrets of the very greatest value. Anyhow, the authorities at home attach great importance to its preservation. To lose it would be a disaster. I can rely, I know, on your prudence and energy."

"Cleanor, can you throw any light on this matter?" asked the Roman.

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"No," was the answer, "except to tell you what I know about the priests. There are two attached to the temple. One is an old man—almost, as I understand, in his dotage—whom I did not see; the other, his son, middle-aged, with whom I negotiated the affair of which I told you. That is absolutely all that I know, except that my friend the physician described the son as being on the whole an honourable man, who could be trusted the more implicitly the more one made it worth his while to be true."

"That," said young Scipio, "is the man whom I saw the day that I took charge of the temple. He came to thank me. Since then he has never appeared. The services have been intermitted. They could hardly, indeed, have been carried on with all these soldiers in the place. He is the first person of whom to make inquiries."

Scipio then summoned the centurion, who was nominally his second in command. The man was a veteran who had seen more than twenty campaigns—his first experience of war had been at Pydna under the great Æmilius Paullus—an excellent soldier in his way, but without much judgment in matters outside his own narrow sphere of experience.

"Convey," young Scipio said to this officer, "a respectful request to the priest of the temple that he will favour me with an interview."

In due course the priest appeared. It had been arranged between the friends that no reference should be made to the shelter given to the women.

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"I am informed," said Scipio, "that you have charge, as priest of this temple, of a certain book relating to agriculture."

"You are right, sir," replied the man, "so far as this: there is such a book, and it is kept in this place; but it is not in my charge. My father is the priest, and it is in his custody."

"Let me see your father, then," said the young officer.

"Unhappily, sir," replied the man, "he is incapable of answering or even of hearing a question. He has been failing in mind for some time, and the events of the last few days have greatly affected him. This morning he had a stroke of paralysis, and has been unconscious ever since."

"But you know," said Scipio, "where the book is?"

"As a matter of fact," the priest answered, "I know, or, to put the matter more strictly, I believe that I know. But the secret has been very jealously guarded. It has been usual for the priest to hand over the charge formally to his successor when he felt himself failing. To meet the case that the priest might die suddenly, or fail for some other reason to communicate the secret in due course, the Shophetim were also in possession of it. They have also another copy of the treatise."

"And where was that kept?" asked Scipio.

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"In the temple of Æsculapius, but in what part of the temple of course I know not."

"If it was there it must have perished," said the Roman. "Nothing could have been left after the tremendous fire of yesterday. Lead the way and show us the place that you have in your mind."

"It shall be done, sir," said the man. "But let me first see how it fares with my father. It is possible that he may yet revive."

Permission was, of course, granted, and he went. Before many minutes he returned.

"My father has passed away," he said in a low voice, "and without becoming conscious even for a moment; so the woman that was in attendance told me. Follow me, sir."

He led the way down a flight of steps, and then along a passage to the chamber in which it terminated. The door was carefully concealed in the wall, with the surface of which it was entirely uniform. The priest, however, had no difficulty in opening it. He pressed a secret spring, and it opened.

"This," he said, as they entered a small lofty room lighted from above, "is the priest's private chamber. The book should be somewhere here. But at this point my knowledge comes to an end."

"If I might hazard a guess," said Cleanor, "the hiding-place is somewhere in the floor. One would naturally, perhaps, look for another secret door in the wall, hence it is likely that some other way of concealing it would be tried. Anyhow, let us begin with the floor."

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The place was easily, as it will be seen, too easily found. As soon as the matting which covered the floor was removed, it became evident that a part of the boarding had been recently moved.

"That is it," exclaimed the four men—the centurion had accompanied the party—almost in the same breath.

"I don't like the look of this," added Cleanor, whose quick Greek intelligence had promptly taken in the situation. "It has been taken."

He was right. When the boarding was lifted, it revealed an empty space. All that remained was a wrapper of silk, which might very well have served—for there was nothing on it that absolutely indicated the fact—for a covering to the volume.

"What is to be done now?" said Scipio, as the four looked at each other with faces full of blank disappointment.

"My father," said the priest, after a short pause of reflection, "must have taken it away. He evidently did it in a hurry without carefully replacing the boards. He might have concealed the joining so well that it would have been very hard to find. See," and he put the covering back in such a way that the spot was absolutely undistinguishable from the rest of the floor. "This makes me sure that it has been done quite recently, and when he was not quite himself."

"I wonder," said Cleanor, "whether by chance your guests could tell us anything about it?"

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"My guests!" cried the priest, vainly endeavouring to conceal his dismay.

"Don't trouble yourself, my good friend," said Scipio with a smile. "My friend Cleanor has taken me into his confidence, and I think you have done very well in helping him in this matter. It is just possible that, as he suggests, the women may have seen something,—enough to give us a clue."

"Possibly," said the priest. "The book was far too bulky to be easily destroyed. That I know, though I have never had it in my hands. But it may have been put away where it will be hard to find."

"Cleanor," said Scipio, after a brief reflection, "will you go and see what you can find out? The priest will show you the way."

Cleanor accordingly followed the priest to the apartment which had been assigned to Theoxena and her daughter. Only the elder woman was visible. Daphne, she assured Cleanor, after an exchange of affectionate greetings, was quite well, but was busy at the moment with some needlework. When questioned about the old priest and his movements, she had no information of any importance to give. He had been very strange in manner, constantly muttering, but so indistinctly that she could not catch more than a word or two here and there. She had, it is true, caught the word "treasure" once or twice. She had certainly not seen him with anything in his hands. Daphne, however, might have more to say. The old man had seemed to

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take a fancy to her, and had talked to her a good deal.

Daphne accordingly was fetched by her mother, and came in covered with a charming confusion, which, in the young Greek's eyes, added not a little to her beauty. It was the fact, indeed, that the few days of peace which she had enjoyed with her mother in their place of refuge had made a marvellous change for the better in her looks. The hunted expression had gone out of her eyes, which, deep as ever, were now limpid and calm. The cheeks which, when Cleanor had last seen them, were wan and worn, were already rounded, and touched with the delicate tint of returning health. Cleanor did not fail to note all this with the greatest satisfaction, but for the time he was absorbed by the interest of the story which she had to tell about the old priest.

"I saw the old man," she said, "on the first day of our coming here. He seemed to take me for someone else. In fact, once or twice he called me by some name which sounded like Judith, but I could not catch it distinctly. Commonly he spoke to me as his daughter. He had no son, he said, I was all that he had left. He had evidently something on his mind that troubled him greatly. He would talk about 'a treasure' which he had in his keeping, and which he must hand over to the right person, only that he did not know where this person was. 'Anyhow,' and when he said this his voice seemed to grow stronger, and his eyes to lighten up, 'anyhow, the enemy must not be allowed to get it.' After the uproar that took place in the temple one day—we did not know what had happened, but we guessed that the Romans had made their way in, and we were very much frightened—he was much worse. That same evening he said to me, 'Daughter, I want you to help me. Come with me.' He took me down a flight of steps, and then along a passage which seemed to end in a wall. When we were almost at the end, he said, 'Now, turn round and shut your eyes. You must not see what I am going to do.' I did what he told me, and waited. In about half an hour he came back, panting very much and breathing hard. He carried a great roll in his arms. I could not see what it was."

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"Did it look like a book?" asked Cleanor.

"Yes," replied the girl, "it might have been a book. I asked him whether I should carry it for him. 'No,' he said, 'no woman has ever touched it. Indeed, no woman has ever seen it before. I hope that I have not done wrong. But what was I to do? I had no one else to help me. And anyhow, the enemy must never have it.' We went up the passage, and down another, till we came to a place where one of the stones in the pavement had a ring in it. 'Now you must help me,' he said. 'I have got to take that stone up.' We both pulled away at the stone as hard as we could. For some time we seemed to make no impression at all. Then he went away and came in a few minutes with a lantern, for by this time it was getting quite dark, and a chisel. 'Work the mortar away from the edges,' he said, 'my eyes are too old to see.' So I worked the mortar out, and then we pulled again. I don't think that I did very much, but he seemed to get wonderfully strong with the excitement. At last we felt that it was beginning to give, and in the end we pulled it quite away. I heard what sounded like the lapping of water a long way below. Then the old man took the roll and dropped it into the hole. After that we put the stone back into its place."

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"And you can take us to the place?" asked Cleanor.

"Certainly," replied the girl.

"I must tell my friends," said Cleanor, "what I have heard. Wait while I go."

In the course of a few minutes he returned with Scipio and the centurion. At the latter's suggestion the party provided themselves with torches, and then proceeded, under Daphne's guidance, to the indicated spot. The stone was removed from its place, an operation which required so great an exertion of strength that there was something almost miraculous in its having been accomplished before by a decrepit old man and a girl. The priest, it was clear, must have worked with frantic energy.

The first thing was to lower a burning torch. The light revealed a depth which might be estimated at some sixty or seventy feet. At the bottom there was a stream which seemed, as far as could be estimated from the sound, to be moving with some rapidity. Judging from the height of the temple above the level of the harbour, the water seemed to be a land-spring which flowed into it some way below the surface. The chance of recovering anything dropped into such a place seemed remote, without reckoning the very considerable chance of its being irretrievably damaged.

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Scipio was discussing with Cleanor and the centurion the best method of proceeding, when Daphne's keen eyes discovered that something seemed to be resting on a ledge that projected from the side of the well some twenty feet below the surface. What it was could not be seen, but it was obviously worth investigating. The only way of doing this was to lower someone with ropes, and Cleanor, who was lighter than either of the Romans, volunteered for the service. After some delay ropes of adequate strength were obtained, Cleanor was lowered to the spot, and the missing treasure, for the object which Daphne had described was nothing less, was recovered.

"The Roman Commonwealth," said Scipio, making a polite obeisance, "owes very much to this young lady."

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE END OF CARTHAGE.

THE younger Scipio lost no time in handing over the precious volume which had been so nearly lost, and so fortunately recovered, to the general, reporting, of course, the circumstances of its rescue. At the same time he described the relation in which Daphne and her mother stood to Cleanor, and hinted that his friend seemed to have a keener interest in the girl than a young man would ordinarily feel for his foster-sister.

"This is not the place for women," said the elder Scipio, "and the sooner these two are out of it, the better. Now, what is to be done?"

"Would not my Aunt Cornelia⁵⁵ receive them for a time if you could contrive to send them to her?"

"An excellent idea, my Lucius!" cried the general. "It shall be done, and by good luck, there is opportunity this very day. I am sending off a galley with despatches for the Senate, and some private letters of my own. Lollius is in command, and there is not a more trustworthy man in the fleet. I will put the women into his charge. And I will write to my mother—she will still be in Rome when the galley arrives—and ask her to give them hospitality. We must hope that my cousin, Tiberius, will not fall in love with the damsel. Is she beautiful?"

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"As beautiful a girl as ever I saw. But you need not be alarmed. I am pretty sure that the young lady will not have a look or a thought for anyone in Italy."

"I will send an orderly to Cleanor to explain, and leave him to arrange the business. So that is settled. Now for public matters. Yesterday I opened the sealed instructions which I brought with me when I left Rome, and which I was not to read till Carthage was taken. They are, as I feared, to the effect that the city is to be razed to the ground. Now, I make no secret to anybody—in any case I should speak openly to you—that this policy is not to my liking. I don't like the principle of it. If it were being done with a view to the future safety of Rome, I should still hesitate, thinking it to be, even in that view, a policy of doubtful advantage. But this is not the motive. It is the doing of the capitalists and the traders. They want to destroy every port but those which they can dominate themselves, and so to get all the trade of the world into their own hands. We shall see the same thing—mark my words—over again at Corinth; and Rome will have the disgrace of having destroyed, and it may be in one year, two of the great capitals of the world. I hate such doings, and I don't care who knows it. Still, the thing has to be done. But there are matters to be arranged first. One thing I have made up my mind about, and happily the Senate leaves it to my discretion. I have a free hand in dealing with the spoil, with a general proviso that I am to consult, as in my judgment may seem best, the interests of the Commonwealth. Whatever there is of real value that can be given back to its rightful owners shall be given back. Now, Carthage has for three hundred years and more been robbing the Greek cities in Sicily. She has had, at one time or other, pretty nearly every one of them, except Syracuse, in her power. The gold and silver that she has taken from them are gone beyond remedy, but the works of art remain, and can be given back. I have taken some trouble to inquire into the matter, and I have got a list here, which has been made up for me in Sicily, of some of the chief things that we may expect to find. Some may have been lost; some may have fallen into private hands and disappeared—the history of some of the specimens goes back, I hear, a long time. Well, I have appointed yourself, Lucius, and two other officers with you to enquire into this matter. See which of these things you can find, and report to me. Most of the Sicilian cities that are interested in the matter have sent envoys to the camp, as I dare say you know. If you can find the articles it will be easy enough, I do not doubt, to find claimants."

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The work of the commission proved to be one of considerable magnitude. There were, it was found, hundreds of works of art which bore in their appearance the manifest signs of a Greek origin. The Phœnician genius was not entirely barren in the province of art. In some directions, on the contrary, it was remarkably fertile. But it never attained to, it did not even attempt, except in a conventional and even grotesque fashion, the representation of the human form. Any really graceful or even natural similitude of man or woman that was found in Carthaginian temple or house was certainly the spoil of some Greek city. Many of the less important works were unknown; about some there was much doubt; their pedigree was uncertain, sometimes through accident, sometimes through fraud, for most of the impostures known to the modern world of art are inheritances from the ancient.

But there were some famous treasures about which there was no possibility of doubt. Such was the Artemis of Segesta, one of the noblest figures that ancient sculpture produced. It was colossal in size, and yet retained in a singular degree the delicacy of girlish beauty. The figure was represented with a quiver richly gilded hanging from the shoulder; the left hand carried a bow; in the right was a burning torch, which imitated, with a fidelity that would hardly have been thought possible in marble, the contours of flame. The envoys from Segesta positively wept with joy when they found themselves in possession of the long-lost treasure of their city.

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In a very different style of art, the characteristic product of a later and more reflective age, was the figure of the poet Stesichorus, carried away by the Carthaginians when they destroyed the city of Himera, and now about to be restored to the townspeople of Thermæ, which occupied

its site and inherited its traditions. The poet was represented as an old man, frail and stooping, with one hand holding a book. The whole expression was admirably suited to the serious character of his verse.

But the most celebrated of all the art treasures now about to return to their proper homes was the Bull of Agrigentum. The Agrigentines regarded this figure with a reverence that was very surprising, seeing how it recalled a time of discreditable servitude. Scipio happened to come in when the precious possession was made over to them, and could not help improving the occasion.

"This is, I understand, the monstrous invention of one of your own citizens," he said. "He made it for your tyrant Phalaris; it was to be heated from underneath, and the groans of the victims inclosed in it pleased the brutal caprice of that monster of cruelty, by imitating, as he thought, the bellowings of a bull. I do not know which was most to be condemned, the servility of the artist or the cruelty of the tyrant. Do you not think, men of Agrigentum, that you have happily exchanged the brutality of your own citizens, whom you suffered thus to lord it over you, for the justice and clemency of the Roman people?" [314]

While this business was being completed, the work of collecting the general spoil of the city had been going on briskly. Scipio had dealt liberally with the troops in this matter. Some generals in similar circumstances, whether from anxiety for their own enrichment or from zeal to make as large a profit as possible for the public purse, overreach themselves. They exact too much from the men, and thus they are habitually deceived. Scipio was personally disinterested in a remarkable degree; and he did not care to be greedy on account of the treasury. Simple and well-defined rules were laid down for the conduct of the troops. There were certain things which a man might keep for himself, if he brought other things into a common stock. At the end of seven days the fiat of destruction which had gone out against Carthage was to be executed. A body of men was detailed for the purpose. Combustibles were disposed in various parts of the city, and at a fixed time these were to be kindled.

"Well," said the young Scipio to Cleanor as they stood together after superintending the embarkation of the last cargo of statues and pictures destined for Sicily, "well, the last act of the drama is nearly over. Shall we go to see the final scene together?" [315]

"I don't know," replied the young Greek. "I feel half disposed to cover my head till it is all past."

"I can understand," said Scipio. "Still, I can't see, after what has happened, that you owe much gratitude to Carthage."

"Perhaps not," was the answer. "Yet it was all the country that I had. And, anyhow, it is an awful thing to see a city that once had her hopes, and good hopes too, of ruling the world, flare out into nothing, like a piece of wood-shaving. However, I will come. To what place are you thinking of going?"

"To the citadel, or what was the citadel. The chief told me that he should be there at sunset. I must own that I am very curious to see how he takes it. This, you must know, is not his doing. His friends fought hard in the Senate against the decree of destruction; but the majority would have it, and there was nothing for him but to carry it out."

When the two friends reached the citadel the chief was already there, surrounded by his staff, his generals of division, and the chief officers of the legions. The spectacle of the burning city was magnificently terrible. The wind was blowing from behind them, and rolled away the smoke in huge volumes towards the sea. Now and then it lulled, and then a dense cloud covered the whole place, save some tower or spire which rose here and there out of it. As the light rapidly failed, for the sun was just setting when the two friends reached the height, the heavy smoke clouds became more and more penetrated with a fiery glow, and this again grew into one universal, all-embracing blaze of light, as the flames gained a more commanding hold on the doomed city. Everything was as plainly to be seen as if it had been noonday. All the while a confused roar came up to the height where the spectators stood, varied now and then by the tremendous crash of some huge structure falling in sudden ruin to the earth. [316]

The general stood intently watching the scene, but without a word, and the group surrounding him, overawed by the solemnity of his mood, maintained a profound silence, broken only by some almost involuntary cry, when a burst of fiercer flame rose to the heavens. When the second watch was about half spent⁵⁶—for the hours had seemed to pass as minutes, so overpowering was the interest of the spectacle—he turned away. Some awful vision of the future seemed to reveal itself to his soul. He caught Polybius by the hand and said:

"Will anyone do for Rome what I have been doing for Carthage?"

And as he turned away he was heard to murmur to himself the line in which Hector, touched in the midst of his triumph by a dark prevision of the future, foretold the fall of his country, [317]

"Some day e'en holy Troy herself shall fall",⁵⁷

Then, throwing a fold of his toga over his face, Scipio burst into a passion of tears.



"SCIPIO, THROWING HIS TOGA OVER HIS FACE, BURST INTO A PASSION OF TEARS."

CHAPTER XXIX. AT DELOS.

CLEANOR gladly accepted the warm invitation of the young Scipio again to become his guest. For the present the Greek's plans were uncertain. His most definite idea was to follow Theoxena and her daughter to Italy as soon as possible. It had been arranged that the two women should depart on the following day. He would have to look for his own passage to the favour of the general; all that he could do, therefore, was to hold himself in readiness to depart as soon as the opportunity should offer.

The day was not to pass, however, without giving quite a new aspect to the future. The two friends had been exchanging experiences, and were just thinking of sleep,—when Polybius entered the tent. After greeting Cleanor—whom he had not seen since they had parted in Egypt—in the kindest way, not, however, without a smiling rebuke for the trick which he had played, he explained his errand.

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"I am going," he said, "as soon as is possible to Greece, where things are in a critical condition, and I want you to go with me. I come direct from the general, who has put a ship of war at my service, and who fully approves of your accompanying me. I was, he said, to tell you this from him. He also gave me another message for you. He wants you to give what help you can in the translation of this great book on Agriculture. There will be a committee appointed to carry it out, and you are to be on it if it pleases you. But that will wait, anyhow for a few months. The affair in Greece will not wait; the sooner we get there the better, if we are to do any good."

Nothing could have been more to Cleanor's mind than this proposal, and he promised to be ready to depart as soon as he was wanted. Accordingly the very next day, after bidding Theoxena and her daughter an affectionate farewell in the morning, he himself embarked about sunset with Polybius. For some time the voyage was fairly prosperous, if not very rapid. The wind came mostly from the north, with a touch of east in it. The ship had but a poor crew of rowers, and its sailing capacities were small. If the wind had more than one point from the east the sails had to be hauled down and the oars resorted to.

On the tenth day there came a change in the weather. The wind shifted suddenly to the south-west. This change was at first hailed with delight by everyone on board; by the rowers, who were rejoiced to be set free from their toil, by the passengers, who were beginning to be impatient of their tedious progress. But a wind from the south-west has always something dangerous about it.

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At daybreak a steady breeze, it grew before night into something like a gale, and it was accompanied by weather so thick that, failing any observation of either sun or stars, the captain lost his reckoning entirely.

After two days of this alarming uncertainty the weather cleared only just in time, as everyone on board saw plainly enough, to save the ship from a catastrophe. About three miles to the north the cliffs of Malia⁵⁸ could be seen, crowned by the famous temple of Apollo, whose gilded roof showed itself when it was touched, from time to time, by some passing gleam of sunshine. On their right the cliffs of Cythera were visible. This was satisfactory in a way, but the plan of the voyage, which was to make for the western end of the Corinthian Gulf, had failed. The wind was blowing far too strongly to allow the captain to attempt a north-western course. He had, therefore, no alternative but to let it carry him up the Ægean. What had been lost was the safe and easy passage up the quiet landlocked waters of the gulf, and with it the certainty of reaching Corinth at or near the appointed time. [320]

After a few hours the weather again changed for the worse. The clouds came lower, the wind rose. When night came all that the captain and the crew knew of their whereabouts was that they were not far from Melos, of which they had just caught a glimpse, in dangerous proximity, on their larboard bow. Melos, they knew, was not by any means on their straight course to Corinth. They were, indeed, being blown out of this more and more as time went on. The best they could hope for was that they might not be dashed on one of the rugged and inhospitable islands and islets with which the south-western Ægean was so thickly studded.

All night they scudded before the wind under one small sail, just enough to give some steering power to the rudder. More than once they heard the crash of unseen breakers on some unseen shore, and turned their course away from the warning sound. With the morning came another welcome change of weather. The wind dropped almost instantaneously; the sky cleared till not a cloud could be seen, and the sea, though the long rollers witnessed to its recent agitation, settled rapidly into calm.

About two miles to the north, yet seen so distinctly through the clear atmosphere of early spring that it seemed almost within a stone's-throw, lay a small island which Cleanor recognized at the first glance. Only one place in the world brought together so closely, within so small a space yet on a scale so magnificent, the two great elements of Greek life, commerce and religion. On the low-lying land of the west coast was to be seen the town of Delos, with its thickly-clustered dwellings. Almost, as it seemed, among these rose a forest of masts, for Delos was a mart of exchange for the trade of the Mediterranean, and the trade of the Mediterranean was practically the trade of the civilized world. Close behind the town, in all the splendour of its white Parian marble, rose the famous temple of the tutelary god of the isle, Phœbus Apollo, while nestling beside it were the smaller shrines of his twin sister Phœbe or Artemis and of Aphrodite. Behind these again was the hill of Cynthus, its steep declivity clothed with trees, among which gleamed here and there the white shining walls of buildings both sacred and secular. [321]

"Delos!" cried the captain; "well, it might have been worse, and if we can only get out of the harbour as easily and quickly as it seems likely we shall get into it, we shall have nothing to complain of."

"Here," cried Cleanor to Polybius as they stood side by side on the galley's deck, "here is one of my dreams come to pass! I have always desired to see Delos, and here it is. Truly, here Greece is still to be seen in all its glory."

Polybius smiled somewhat bitterly. "There is very little of Greece, I fear, about Delos nowadays."

"But it belongs to Athens surely," broke in the young Greek, "just as it did in the best times of Greece." [322]

"Yes, it belongs to Athens," replied his friend; "if that means that Athenian coin is circulated there, and the government is carried on in the name of the Athenian people. But Delos is Roman for all practical purposes. As for the Delians themselves, they were all deported twenty years ago, and this time unfortunately Apollo did not interfere."⁵⁹ No, my dear friend, it is only the past of Delos that belongs to Greece, and that happily no power on earth can take from her. That, thank the gods, we can still enjoy."

Some hours were pleasantly spent by the two friends in examining the sights of the place. Polybius had been there two or three times before; Cleanor, who knew every reference to the sacred island,—from the young palm-tree to which Ulysses compared the fair Nausicaa onwards,—was prepared thoroughly to enjoy the guidance of so intelligent a companion. Later on in the day they strolled through the business town. Evidently it was a thriving place. The docks were crowded with ships, the wharves covered with merchandise of every kind, from the spices of the East to the ivory brought by African hunters from the great forests of the South. But there was little or nothing Greek about it. Two out of three among the huge factories which lined the harbour-side belonged to Roman traders. The others belonged to merchants of Tyre, of Antioch, of Joppa, of Alexandria, but it was the exception to find a Greek name among them. Cleanor could not help confessing to himself that another illusion was gone. The most famous seat of Greek life, whether sacred or secular, had passed into the power of the stranger. [323]

The anxiety of the travellers to get to their journey's end was increased by all that they heard

in the island. It was clear, by all accounts, that the fate of Corinth was imminent. But, much against their wills, their stay was prolonged. The ship had received so severe a buffeting during its voyage from Carthage that it could not be said to be seaworthy. It had to be laid up in dock and repaired. And then, when it was pronounced ready for sea, the weather made it absolutely impossible to start. The captain had been only too prescient when he doubted whether they should be able to get out of the harbour as easily as they got in.

There was, indeed, much to be seen in Delos, which was then at the height of its prosperity, and adorned with the offerings which the piety of more than five hundred years had heaped upon it. But Polybius and his companion were so impatient to reach their destination that the time seemed to hang heavily on their hands. Disturbing rumours, too, were current about the policy which Rome was likely to pursue at Corinth. That the city would speedily be captured was considered certain, and there were ominous conjectures as to its probable fate. One day the friends had accepted an invitation to dinner from Diagoras, the Athenian governor of the island, and Corinth was naturally the principal subject of conversation. What Diagoras had to say was alarming in the extreme.

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"You have come from Carthage," he said. "Well, what you have seen there you will see again at Corinth. The capitalists and the commercial party have it all their own way at Rome now, and their policy is, of course, monopoly. Every trade rival must be put out of the way. Carthage has been destroyed. That was not, as you know, the doing of the nobles. Scipio and his friends were strongly against it. The capitalists carried it in the Senate, partly by their own votes, partly by the votes which they practically bought. I could tell you the men—and some of their names would surprise you—whose votes were purchased, and I could tell you the price that was paid for them. The same thing has happened over and over again. Listen to this. I must not tell you the name of my correspondent, but his authority is beyond all doubt:

"The vote has gone as I expected. Corinth is to perish. The division was closer than in the Carthage affair, for the crime—I can call it nothing less—is more scandalous and more unprovoked. Carthage was once formidable, though she has long ceased to be so; Corinth never could have caused a moment's fear to Rome. It is simply the case of a trader burning down a rival's warehouse."

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"This letter I received last night," the governor continued, "and it appears to have been delayed on the way. The Senate's instructions to Mummius—it is he that is in command at Corinth, and a very different man from your Scipio, I fancy—must have reached him by this time."

"Then we are too late," said Polybius with a groan.

"Yes," replied the governor, "though I do not see what you could have done even if you had not been delayed. All that will be in your power will be to help individuals. I should recommend you, by the way, to go to Athens first, and get a safe-conduct and letters of introduction from the Roman agent there. These will make your task easier."

Two or three days after this conversation the travellers were able to make a start. A gentle breeze from the east carried them out of the harbour, and took them quickly to their journey's end.

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CHAPTER XXX.

CORINTH.

THE news that met the travellers when they arrived at Athens was as bad as their worst fears had anticipated. The whole city was in mourning. One of her sister states—after herself the most splendid, and wealthy beyond anything to which she could pretend—had perished, and Athens, more generous than her rival had been in former days, grieved unfeignedly for her fate.⁶⁰ It was a lamentable story of rashness, incapacity, and cowardice that Polybius and Cleanor had to listen to, and they heard it in full detail from a young soldier who had himself taken part in the campaign. At first the young man could hardly be persuaded to speak, so heartily ashamed was he of the conduct of his countrymen. At last, assured of the sympathetic temper of his hearers, he related a narrative, of which it will be sufficient for me to give an outline.

"I was one of the *aides-de-camp* to the general of the year, Critolaüs. Did you know him?"

"Yes," said Polybius, "only too well; a more incompetent fool never ruined the affairs of a state."

"Well," said the young soldier, "he has paid for his folly. Early in this year we marched out of our winter-quarters near Corinth to attack Heraclea in Thessaly, which had declared itself out of the League.⁶¹ We had just sat down before the town when news came that the Roman army was approaching. Immediately there was a scuttle. The general did not wait to hear what was the

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force of the enemy, but was off at once. Some of his officers begged him to make a stand at Thermopylæ. We were not all of us such curs as he. There really was a chance of holding the pass till we could get any help that might be forthcoming. Anyhow, it was a place where a Greek might fight with the best hope, and die with the most honour. But the general had no wish to fight, much less to die. He hurried through Thermopylæ, thinking to get back to the entrenched camp at Corinth in which we had wintered; but Metellus—he was in command of the Romans—was too quick for us. He overtook us when we had got about twenty miles from Thermopylæ, and there was a battle,—if you may call it a battle, when one side charges and the other runs away. The Thebans, it is true, held their ground. They may call the Thebans stupid, but they are wonderfully good soldiers. Yet what was the good of one corps standing firm when there was no one to back it up? As for Critolaüs, no one knows what became of him. He galloped off as soon as the Roman troops came in sight, and he has never been seen from that day to this.

"Well, nothing was left of the army but a few scattered troops and companies, and many of these were cut up, or taken prisoners one by one. I am bound to say that the Romans behaved very well. They offered quarter to anyone who would lay down his arms, and safety to every state that would submit. It was more than could be expected, for really they could have imposed any terms that they pleased. But our chiefs, led by Diæus, who had succeeded Critolaüs, were bent on securing their own lives. They were afraid that on some pretext they would be excepted in any amnesty that might be offered, and so they went on fighting. Diæus made a levy *en masse* of the whole population, and, besides, armed twelve thousand slaves, if you may call it arming a man to give him a blunt sword and a spear with a cracked shaft. Money he raised in any way he could; first he confiscated the property of all who belonged to the peace party, and made up what was wanting—and a good deal was wanting—by robbing his own friends. He took up his position on the Isthmus, close to what is left of the wall built in the Persian time.⁶² Everything went badly from the first. Our vanguard was near Megara, and, of course, we expected that it would make a stand, so as to give us a little time. It had a strong position which it might have held for at least three or four days. Well, it fled without so much as striking a blow.

"After this Metellus, who really behaved in the most moderate way, gave Diæus a chance. He sent envoys to offer terms, really liberal terms, too, which it would have been no dishonour for people much better off than we were to accept. To make them more acceptable, as he thought, these envoys were Greeks, men of the highest character. But our general would not listen to them. Not only that, but he charged them in the public assembly with being traitors, and they were all but killed in the riot that followed. Then we had yet another chance. Philo the Thessalian, than whom there is no man more honoured in Greece, came with conditions for an arrangement. Some of the general's own party were convinced. Old Stratius, who has never been a friend to Rome, as you know, actually grovelled on the ground, and caught Diæus by the knees, entreating him to give way. But it was all of no use. Philo had to go away without accomplishing anything. In fact, all this seemed only to make the man more furious. He had some of his own officers brought before a court-martial on the charge of being in communication with the enemy. Their real fault was that they had been imprudent enough to show that they were in favour of peace. One of them was found guilty and put to the torture. He bore it, I was told, without saying a word. Two others escaped with their lives, but only by paying a bribe—one a talent, the other forty minæ, for the man was as greedy as he was cruel, and he went on robbing and murdering with the sword within a foot of his own neck.

"Then we had another reprieve. There was a change of generals in the Roman army. Mummius, who had crossed from Italy, took over the command from Metellus. While new arrangements were being made the Romans sat still, and Diæus took the notion into his head that they were beginning to be afraid of us. Then there happened some small affair of outposts in which our cavalry got the best of it. It was but a trifle, not more than half a dozen men killed or wounded on either side, but it elated our chief beyond all measure. First he sent envoys to offer terms to the Romans. They were to evacuate Greece, and give hostages as guarantee that they would not return. If they did this, Diæus would allow them to depart in safety. It was the act of a madman, and, of course, Mummius did not even condescend to send back an answer.

"But it was a good thing for me. I, you see, was one of the envoys, and I did not go back with them. It was quite enough for me to go through the Roman camp, and see the admirable order and discipline, not to speak of the number of the men, to feel sure that we had not the shadow of a chance. I frankly told the Roman general, who seems a kind-hearted man, though somewhat of a boor, how I was situated. I was really serving under compulsion, a sort of hostage for my father, who is a leader of the peace party, and as he was out of danger now, living as he did in Northern Greece, and so not within reach of the League, I felt free to leave, without having to feel myself a deserter. The general was very kind, and advised me to leave the seat of war, where, indeed, it would have been painful for me to stay, whatever might happen. Accordingly I came to Athens; that is why I have the pleasure of seeing you to-day."

"And what has happened since?" asked Polybius.

"A despatch came in yesterday. Everything has gone as I expected. The League generals were as rash at the end as they were timorous at the beginning. They offered battle to the Romans though these were twice as strong in actual numbers, not to speak of being vastly superior in discipline and quality generally. The cavalry turned and fled without waiting to cross swords with the enemy. The infantry, who were mostly Thebans, behaved better, but the number of the enemy told against them. They were outflanked and broken. After that, of course, all was over. The general wrote that he held back his troops from the pursuit."

"And Diæus, what of him?" asked Polybius. "I hope the villain has had his deserts. How has Greece sinned against the gods that she should be cursed with having such fellows put in authority over her?"

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"Nothing was known of what happened to him. But his body was not found among the dead."

Polybius and his companion were kept for three days longer in Athens, the Roman commissioner refusing them a permit to pass to the front. Mummius was still before the city. Till he had entered it the presence of strangers in the camp was considered to be inconvenient. Late in the evening of the third day a despatch arrived from him, dated from the citadel of Corinth. He explained that no resistance had been offered by the Greek army; but that, finding it difficult to believe that so strong a place could be given up without some attempt at defence, he had waited till he could be sure that no stratagem was intended. The city, he added, was perfectly quiet; all the leaders of the hostile army had either fallen in battle or were prisoners in his hands. Diæus was reported to have fled into Arcadia, and to have there committed suicide along with his wife, but the report was not at present confirmed.

The Roman commissioner immediately on receiving this news sent the desired permission to Polybius, and the two friends, who had everything in readiness for their journey, started at once. Travelling all night they reached Corinth, which was not more than thirty miles from Athens, shortly after dawn. The city presented a most lamentable appearance. The great market-place, and all the other squares and open spaces, were thronged with a helpless and miserable crowd of men, women, and children, of all ages and all ranks, doomed to the cruellest lot that humanity can endure. The Senate and People of Rome, provoked, it must be allowed, to the utmost by the insolence and folly of the Corinthians, had passed the savage decree that the whole population of the city should be sent to the slave-market.

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The horrible business had already begun. The wretched victims had been divided into lots according to sex and age. The quæstor's clerks—the quæstor, it may be explained, was the officer who had charge of finance—were busy noting down particulars, and the loathsome crew of slave-dealers and their assistants, foul creatures that always followed close on the track of a Roman army, were appraising the goods which were soon to be offered for competition. Nobles of ancient houses, merchants, who but a month before could have matched their riches with the wealthiest capitalists of Rome, the golden youth of the most luxurious city of the world, and, saddest of all, delicate women, whose beauty had been jealously guarded even from sun and wind, stood helplessly exposed to the brutal gaze and yet more brutal handling of Egyptian and Syrian slave-dealers, barbarians to whom, in the haughty pride of their Hellenism, they would scarcely have conceded the title of man.

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A CORINTHIAN NOBLEMAN BEING SOLD AS A SLAVE IN THE MARKET-PLACE.

Cleanor recognized among the victims several whose acquaintance he had made during his brief sojourn in Corinth during the previous year. The contrast between their present

degradation and the almost insolent pride of their prosperous days touched him to the heart. The emotion of Polybius was even more profound. Some of these men were lifelong friends. He had sat by their side at the council; he had been a guest at their hospitable tables. Some of them bore names associated with the greatest glories of Greece. To see them exposed for sale like so many sheep or oxen was a thing more strange and more horrible than he could have conceived to be possible.

Not less strange, if less harrowing, was the spectacle which presented itself to the two friends when they reached that quarter of the city in which the Roman soldiery had bivouacked. One of the first things that they saw was a group of soldiers off duty busy with a game of hazard. For the convenience of having a level surface on which to throw the dice they had stretched a canvas on the ground. Polybius, whose eye was caught by what looked like a figure on this improvised dice-table, approached and looked over the shoulder of one of the players to examine it more closely. He started back in amazement and horror.

"Great Zeus!" he cried, "what do you think it is, Cleanor, that these fellows have laid there to throw their dice upon? Why, it is one of the finest pictures in the world! It is the 'Dionysus' of Aristides! The city, I have been told, gave twenty talents for it to the artist, and, to my certain knowledge, might have sold it over and over again for twice as much if not more. Look at it. Did you ever see anything finer? See how the god is flinging himself from his car! See with what surprise Ariadne is turning to look at him! And the throng of nymphs and satyrs, did you ever behold such variety, such energy, such grace? And these barbarians are using it for a dice-table!"

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"Hush!" said Cleanor warningly. "They may be barbarians, but they are our masters, and it is prudent to be civil."

Close by was another group which was amusing itself in precisely the same way. The picture was not, it is true, so famous a master-piece as the "Dionysus"—it was the "Hercules" of Polygnotus, but it was a work of art which meant a modest fortune to anyone who had had the luck to possess himself of it. As for the purpose which it was then serving, a table of gold would not have been so inappropriately costly. Anomalies of the same kind could be seen everywhere. Coverlets of the richest Tyrian purple, tapestries worked with figures as graceful and delicate as the most skilful brush of the painter could make them, embroidered robes that Pallas might have worked or Aphrodite worn, the treasures brought from the harems of Eastern kings, lay about to be trampled under the feet of Apulian herdsmen, Sabine ploughmen, and Campanian vine-dressers. To these sturdy peasants, ignorant of all arts but the soldiers, they were but gaudy-coloured cloths which might be put, in default of something more convenient, to the meanest purposes.

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"Great Zeus!" cried Polybius, as he looked on the scene, "what a waste! It is better that anyone should have these treasures than that they should be wasted in this fashion. Let us see Mummius and give him an idea of what is going on."

CHAPTER XXXI.

MUMMIUS.

SCIPIO had furnished Polybius with a letter addressed to Mummius, who, as one of the consuls of the year, was likely, sooner or later, to take command of the forces that were to operate against Corinth. Thanks to this he found no difficulty in obtaining for himself and Cleanor access to the great man. He had also the advantage of having made the consul's acquaintance during his sojourn in Italy. Mummius was a "new man",⁶³ one of the class which their enemies describe as upstarts, their friends as "self-made men". He was rude and uncultured, with just so much education as enabled him to spell through a state document and sign his name. But if he was ignorant and unrefined, on the other hand he was honest, a plain man who did his duty up to his light, not given either to self-indulgence or greed, and humane at least up to the Roman average.

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The friends found him immersed in business, a kind of business, too, with which he was wholly unfitted to deal. This, however, did not prevent him greeting Polybius in friendly fashion, and speaking a few words of welcome to Cleanor.

"What can I do for you, gentlemen?" he asked, when these salutations had been exchanged.

Polybius briefly described what he had seen, and suggested that some steps should be taken to put a stop to this waste of valuable property.

"This sort of thing is quite beyond me," exclaimed the consul in some irritation. "I don't understand what you mean by these treasures of art. However, I will see to it. But I have done a good stroke of business for the treasury. There are hundreds of statues about the city, which, indeed, is fairly blocked up with them. What they could want with so many I can't conceive. As for being statues of great men, as they tell me, I can hardly believe it. Why, the whole country is not

a quarter of the size of Italy, and we haven't a half or anything like a half. But as to the statues. The agents of King Eumenes of Pergamus were here yesterday, and gave me five thousand sesterces apiece for the pick of a hundred statues. That makes a fine sum of money, more than a knight's qualification, as you know."⁶⁴

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"Five thousand apiece! is that all?" cried Polybius. "I don't know, of course, what the statues were, but I am pretty sure that King Eumenes would send an agent who knew what he was about. And if he had the first pick, I should say that the king has made the best bargain that he ever made in his life. Five thousand, indeed! It would not have been a bad stroke of business, I should say, if he had paid fifty thousand. I know that he gave double that to Diagoras of Rhodes for Myron's Dancing Faun."

"You astonish me," said Mummius. "I never dreamt of such sums. Why, at Interamna—my native place, you know—they put up a statue of my father, twice the size of life, and the sculptor thought himself very well paid with five thousand sesterces, the town finding the stone. But I suppose you know all about these things. However, I have passed my word, and I can't go back from my bargain. But the king didn't get quite the pick, as you call it. I sent Duilius my quæstor round the city to look about him and choose a cargo of specimens to send over to Rome. He told me that he knew something about these matters. And he can speak Greek, which is something."

At this point of the conversation one of the consul's lictors knocked at the door and announced that the transport contractors had called by appointment.

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Polybius and his companion offered to go away. "No," said Mummius, "there is nothing private, and I have something else to say to you afterwards. Bring them in," he went on, speaking to the lictor.

The contractors were three in number, the owners of as many transport ships. They had undertaken to convey three ship-loads of statues to Rome. One of them had a catalogue of these works of art, which he handed to the consul. Mummius had another copy.

"Would you be good enough," he said to Polybius, "to go over the list with these gentlemen. You will tell me whether it is all right, and you will see what sort of choice Duilius has made."

The list contained some two hundred items in all, and there was scarcely one of them which Polybius did not know or had not heard as being a master-piece in its way. There were works amongst them of all the famous sculptors of Greece, from Phidias downwards—Polyclitus, Myron, Praxiteles, and the masters of the Rhodian and the Pergamene schools.

"Well," said the historian, when the list had been carefully gone through, "Duilius has done his business very well. He has got the pick of the treasures of Corinth. And King Eumenes, though he has done exceedingly well, can hardly have made the extravagantly good bargain that I thought. Yes, this is a very fine list indeed."

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The consul's face grew visibly brighter.

"That is good hearing," he cried. "I sha'n't have done so badly after all; but I wish very much that I had seen you a little sooner. Now, my friends," he went on, addressing himself to the contractors, "you hear what this gentleman says. He is a friend of mine, and knows all about these matters. You understand that you have a very valuable cargo. Are your transports water-tight and seaworthy in every way?"

"Certainly, sir," said the spokesman of the three. "I don't believe you could find better ships between the Pillars and Tyre."

"Well, I hope they are what you say. But mind this, you are answerable for the cargo. I paid your price, and I expect you to do your work. Mind this, if you lose them, you will replace them with others just as good. Isn't that fair, Polybius?"

"Certainly, sir," said the Greek, preserving a quite masterly command of his countenance.

This business concluded, the consul went on:

"You have done me, or tried to do me, a good turn; I only wish that you had come a few hours sooner. Now I should like to show you that I am grateful. You have heard, I suppose, of Diæus?"

"Not a word, sir," replied the historian, "except that he disappeared after the battle."

"Well," said Mummius, "he is dead. He poisoned himself at some place in Arcadia. His property, of course, is confiscated. I am told that there are about thirty talents of silver and half a talent of gold. Whatever the amount, half of it is at your service."

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"I thank you, sir," returned Polybius, "but I don't care to enrich myself with what has belonged to a countryman. Diæus was no friend of mine, but I should not like it to be said that I have been a gainer by his death."

"You are an honest man," cried the consul, "and I wish that there were more like you here, and, for the matter of that, at Rome. But can I do anything for you?"

"Yes, sir, you can," said Polybius. "Let me use this money to redeem some of these poor creatures who are to be sold. I know many of them; some I may almost call friends. It is heart-rending for one who has seen them as they were to see them as they are now."

"Good!" answered Mummius, "you shall have the whole of the money, and I will tell the quæstor to see that it goes as far as possible. There shall be no bidding against you. And now farewell; but you and your young friend must dine with me to-day."

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CHAPTER XXXII. THE SLAVE-DEALER.

THE entertainment which the consul provided for his guests was of the simplest and most frugal kind, in curious contrast with the costly plate on which it was served. His cook knew his tastes, which were those of the Sabine farming folk from whom he came, and catered for him accordingly; but the furnishing of the table was naturally that of the place where he was quartered, the official residence of the chief magistrate of Corinth, and this was filled with the finest specimens of the city's famous ware.⁶⁵

The repast ended, the quæstor, who had been one of the guests, explained to Polybius what Mummius had instructed him to do. "The consul," he said, "has commissioned me to use forty talents of silver⁶⁶ in redeeming slaves. You are to draw up a list, and as the sale begins the day after to-morrow, you should lose no time in doing so. As to the price, he has instructed the official agent to value the persons selected, so they will not be actually put up for sale. More than this the consul did not feel he could do. 'If I were to interfere with the prices,' he said, 'I should be making a very dangerous precedent. It must all be done on strict business principles.' A more scrupulously honourable man than Lucius Mummius does not live, though it must be allowed that he does not know much about art. However, you will have fairly easy terms, I don't doubt."

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"I am greatly obliged to you," said Polybius. "And now there is another thing in which you can help me. My young friend here and I have been talking the matter over, and we are agreed in wanting to do something more in the same direction. He has been actually under the spear,⁶⁷ and I, though I have never gone through that experience, know something of the bitterness of being at another man's bidding. Well, fate has dealt kindly with both of us, and we both want to show our gratitude. Between us we can raise another forty talents, and we want to use it in the same way. Our idea is this. The money that comes from Diæus' estate should, we think, be used on the public account. Our own we should employ as our private feelings may suggest. In the list that I shall draw up for the official agent I shall put the names of men whose official standing, or services to their country, or any other public reason, seem to call for their selection. In regard to our own money, we shall consider private friendship or acquaintance. Now, can you help us in laying this out to the best advantage?"

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The quæstor reflected. "You must not go," he said after a pause, "to the agent. I feel quite sure that the consul would not like it. I do not see that you can do anything better, or, indeed, anything else than approach one of the slave-dealers. The way of these sales, I may say of all sales, is pretty much the same everywhere. There is a regular gang which has it all its own way. The members of it don't bid against each other, except where they have a commission to purchase this or that lot. But when an outsider tries to get anything for himself, they agree to run him up to a most extravagant price. Yes, you must get one of the dealers to take a friendly interest in you."

"And whom do you recommend?" asked Polybius.

"That is not so easy to say," replied the quæstor. "They are not a nice lot, as I dare say you know. Most of them would sell their own fathers and mothers. It is not an improving occupation. But, on the whole, I should recommend Judas the Jew. He has principles; very queer principles they are, but still they are something. Yes, Judas is your man. One of my orderlies shall bring him to you early to-morrow."

Early the next day, accordingly, Judas presented himself, showing a curious contrast, with his slight, wiry figure and keen intelligent face, to the stoutly-built, stolid-looking soldier who accompanied him.

"Well, gentlemen, what can I do for you?" he began. "There will be some bargains to be picked up, I dare say. But the really good things always fetch their price. There is never a glut of them."

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Polybius had drawn up a list, which he proceeded to hand to the Jew. He had put down the names, and, as far as he knew or could guess them, the ages of the persons whom he wished to purchase. The Jew's eyes opened wider and wider as he read it.

"But what," he asked, his astonishment overcoming for the moment his usual somewhat servile civility, "what do you want with all these old men and women? They can't all be your fathers and mothers, and uncles and aunts. Excuse me, gentlemen," he added, recovering himself, "but this is not the sort of commission I am in the habit of getting from my customers."

Polybius explained, to the best of his power, his own and his friend's motives. As the Jew listened a gentler expression came into his face. "By the God of my fathers," he exclaimed when the historian had finished, "I have never come across such a thing in my life! I don't mean that I haven't known of sons buying back fathers and mothers and that sort of thing, but this is quite outside my experience. Well," he went on with a smile, "you will at all events find that your fancy won't cost you very dear. How much do you propose to spend?"

Polybius named the sum. "But of course," he added, "we must consider your commission. What will that be on this amount?" [346]

Judas meditated a while. "By Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," he broke out after a time, "I won't take a drachma. I have been about the world in this line of business for thirty years, and I have never seen anything like it. I should not have supposed it possible," he muttered to himself in his own language, "that these Gentile dogs should have thought of such a thing. Well, I must not shame Father Abraham by behaving worse than they do. No, gentlemen," he went on, "I shall not charge anything for commission. This is a quite uncommon piece of business, and you must let me please myself by managing it in my own way. Well, you can get a whole ship-load of the old people for this money. Some of the young men will be more expensive. But the really costly articles are the young women, and I don't see one on your list. Depend upon it, you shall have your money's worth. There are some of the meanest scoundrels in the world in Corinth at this moment, but they know better than to bid against Judas."

When sundry details of business had been disposed of, the old Jew grew very communicative about his occupation. He had been a slave himself, carried away by some Syrian marauders in his childhood from a village of Galilee. Bought by a soldier, a captain in the army of the third Antiochus, he had regained his liberty in the rout which followed the victory of Magnesia. After this had come a period of service in the patriot armies raised by the Maccabee brothers. In this he gained some distinction, but he found himself destitute when a severe wound received at the battle of Elaim compelled him to give up the profession of arms. He had no relative in the world; his native place had absolutely perished. A countryman offered him a clerk's place. When he found that his new employer was a dealer in slaves he felt a strange thrill of pleasure. He was to make his living out of the miseries of these heathen who had marred his own life. To his own people he never ceased to be tender and generous. To the rest of the world he seemed to be absolutely callous and heartless. On this occasion he related to his hearers experiences so horrible that their blood ran cold at hearing them. His comments on these were often curiously cynical. "What a piece of folly it was that Flaminius committed at Chelys!" he remarked when some chance had brought the conversation round to that subject. Cleanor listened, we may be sure, with all his ears, when he caught the name. "In a fit of stupid passion he threw away at least fifty talents of good money. Imagine the absolute idiocy of a man who kills some scores of able-bodied men when he might have sold them! What did he do it for? For revenge? Didn't he know that nine out of ten would far sooner have been killed than made slaves of? Why, I always have to watch any spirited young fellow for the first month or so lest he should slip out of my hands. After that they seem to lose heart, and can't even pluck up spirit enough to stab themselves. Of course the order to kill is never really carried out. The soldiers have a knack of stunning those whom they seem to kill. I have had some pretty cargoes of corpses who came to life again when they were safely out of the way. You give a soldier a hundred sesterces,⁶⁸ and you get a stout young fellow whom you can sell for five thousand." [347]

Polybius and Cleanor had the satisfaction of seeing their efforts crowned with even more success than they could have expected. The public agent had taken a very liberal view of his duties, and the Jew dealer had carried out his part of the business with great success. Nearly seven hundred of the oldest and most helpless victims of the siege were restored to freedom. It was but a small fraction of the miserable whole, but it was something to have done. None of the rescued captives knew the names of their benefactors, though somehow the secret leaked out afterwards, but the friends felt that their pains had been well bestowed and well rewarded when they stood by and marked, unmarked themselves, the happiness which they had been able to secure to their unfortunate compatriots. [348]

If in this respect Polybius went, and was content to go, without the praises of his countrymen, there was another matter in the conduct of which he deservedly won almost universal applause. Some miserable sycophants—and sycophants were only too common among the Greeks of the time—proposed to Mummius that the statues of Philopœmen should be thrown down. He had been always, they alleged, an energetic opponent of Rome, and it was a contradiction that monuments erected in his honour should be permitted to stand now that Rome had finally triumphed. The consul, who, to tell the truth, had but the slightest acquaintance with even recent history, was at first impressed by the argument. This Philopœmen had been the chief of the Achæan League, and it was the Achæan League that had defended, or tried to defend, Corinth against him. [349]

Polybius, who, of course, knew what was meditated, begged to be allowed to defend the departed patriot, and Mummius consented to hear him. A kind of impromptu court was constituted. The consul and his quæstor, with the legates or generals of division, formed the bench of judges. Polybius, who spoke with a depth of personal feeling that touched the hearts of all who heard him, delivered a most eloquent and convincing apology for the venerable man whom he had once been privileged to call his friend. He allowed that Philopœmen had struggled for the independence of Greece as long as that independence was possible. What honest Greek, he asked, could have done less? But he had always been an honourable enemy, and as soon as he [350]

saw that the true interests of his country demanded it he had always been a loyal ally. The judges gave an unanimous verdict in his favour.

"He was an honest man," said the consul with emphasis. "His statue shall remain standing here and everywhere, whatever may be thrown down, and as honest men are not too common, it shall be set up in every city of Greece."

It was now time for the friends to part. Polybius had received a commission from Rome to arrange the affairs of the other cities of the Peloponnese, and he would gladly have taken his young friend with him in the capacity of secretary. But Cleanor felt irresistibly called, and by more motives than one, to Italy. There awaited him there an honourable and lucrative employment, which would be all the more welcome because it was wholly remote from the scenes, so full of painful associations, through which he had passed during the last two years of his life. This, as my readers will remember, was the translation of the famous treatise on Agriculture. And he never forgot for a moment that Italy now contained the two beings who were dearest to him in the world. Corinth, which the savage decree of the Senate had doomed to the flames, both were anxious to leave without delay. They parted on the deck of the *Ino*, the ship which carried Polybius to Sicyon, the first city which he was to visit in his official capacity, and which was to take Cleanor further westward to Rome. "Farewell!" said Polybius. "I shall be busy with my history when these affairs are settled. Remember that you have promised to criticise it. I shall not like to give it to the world till it has had your approval."

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CHAPTER XXXIII. TO ITALY.

THE *Ino* had a quick and prosperous voyage. But though Cleanor arrived safely at his destination, he learned, not without astonishment, that he had been running a very considerable danger of having a different ending to his travels. The Roman Republic was extending her borders in every direction, and was levelling to the dust the cities which had disputed with her the empire of the world, but she suffered herself to be insulted and her citizens and allies to be maltreated by insignificant enemies. While her legions and fleets were winning great victories abroad, her own coasts were harried by pirates. Near Ithaca the *Ino* picked up a boat in which were three sailors reduced to the last stage of exhaustion by hunger and thirst. The poor fellows, who were almost unconscious when they were taken on board, had a piteous story to tell when they had recovered sufficient strength to speak. They had been drifting about for nine days, and were the survivors of a company of nine, the crew of a trader of Patræ which was bound with a cargo of wine for Tarentum.

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"We were overhauled," said the captain, who was one of the three, "when we had accomplished half our voyage by a Cilician pirate galley. They took what they wanted of my cargo, scuttled my ship, and being, for some reason or other, in high good-humour, instead of making us walk the plank, as is their common custom, let us take our chance in our boat, and even gave us a keg of water and a bag of biscuits. This was my first venture on my own account," said the man, with tears in his eyes, "and I have lost everything I had in the world. We pay taxes to the Romans; why don't they keep the seas safe for us?"

"Why, indeed?" said the captain of the *Ino*. "Things are far worse now," he continued, addressing himself to Cleanor, "than they were when I first began to sail these seas some thirty years ago. They used to be fairly well kept in those days by the Rhodian ships. It was very seldom that the pirates ever came west of Cyprus. But then Rhodes began to go down the hill. She was ruined by Delos being made a free port, and could not afford to keep up her fleet. Since then things have been going from bad to worse. You wouldn't believe, sir, the things that have happened almost in the sight of Rome. Two years ago half of a prætor's establishment was carried off as it was on its way along the coast-road from Barium to Brundisium, and it was only by good luck that they did not lay hands upon the great man himself. He happened to have gone on in advance instead of being behind, as was usual. Perhaps if they had caught him something might have been done. As it is, nobody seems to care."

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The next day the *Ino* herself had what looked like a narrow escape. At daybreak the look-out man descried in the offing a craft of suspicious-looking build, long, and low in the water. It was then almost a dead calm, and if the stranger was a pirate, as seemed only too likely, her long sweeps would soon bring her dangerously near. "We will have a fight for it," said the captain, as he inspected his stock of arms.

Happily the occasion to use them never arrived. A brisk breeze sprang up as the sun rose higher, and the *Ino*, which was an excellent sailer, soon left the strange ship far behind. The same evening she was moored to one of the quays in the harbour of Brundisium. By noon next day Cleanor was well on his way along the great Appian Road to Rome.

It was yet early in the autumn, the unhealthiest time of the year, then as now, for the Italian capital, and the city was empty, as far at least as its wealthier inhabitants were concerned. The translation committee, however, was about to commence its work, which was considered to be urgent. Scipio, with the thoughtful kindness which was characteristic of him, had placed a villa of his own near Ostia at the disposal of the members, and they were able to devote themselves to their task under favourable conditions of health and quiet. Under these pleasant circumstances the work progressed rapidly. Cleanor's assistance was found to be of the greatest value. He was now equally familiar with the three languages, Carthaginian, Greek, and Latin. The first two had been spoken almost indifferently in his native town; the third he had learned grammatically in his childhood, and he had since acquired the colloquial use of it. It is easy to understand how useful an educated man, who had had these unusual advantages, could be in dealing with a book which was largely concerned with common things and the affairs of everyday life. Not one of his colleagues united in himself so many qualifications.

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The time, taken up as it was with this occupation, passed quickly, and, on the whole, pleasantly enough. Still, the continuous labour, and the sedentary life, so unlike the continuous activity in which he had spent the preceding months, began to tell upon his health and spirits, and he was glad when the approach of the Holidays of Saturn⁶⁹ promised an interval of rest and, possibly, a change of scene. It was with no small delight that early in December he received a letter from the younger Scipio. It was as follows:—

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L. Cornelius Scipio to his friend Cleanor, heartily greeting.

This is but the third day since I arrived in Italy, and I hasten to make sure that we should meet as soon as possible. My aunt Cornelia, from whose villa at Misenum I am now writing, invites you, as I write at her request, to spend here the approaching holiday. She desires me to say that she now hears for the first time where you are and what you are doing. Other things concerning you have been told her, not without much praise, by some whose names I need not mention. Come, therefore, as soon as circumstances permit. That you will come welcome to many, and especially to me, be assured. Farewell!

CHAPTER XXXIV. AT MISENUM.

CORNELIA, the "Mother of the Gracchi", was at this time not far from fifty years of age, but retained by favour of nature, often so capricious in what she gives or takes away, much of the beauty of youth. Left a widow with a numerous family—she had borne twelve children to her husband, but all had not survived—she had found a royal suitor in Ptolemy, king of Egypt. This suit it had probably not caused her any effort to decline. A daughter of the great Cornelian house would have disdained in any case an alliance with so doubtful a race as the Ptolemies, and this particular Ptolemy, whose bloated appearance had earned him the name of Physcon, was a degenerate scion of it. But Cornelia had had serious troubles. Of her twelve children two only were now alive, Tiberius, now a lad of seventeen, and Caius, a child of five. Both, indeed, gave the fairest promise; the elder, though he had but lately assumed the manly gown, had exhausted such education as Roman teachers could then supply, and was already an accomplished rhetorician; the younger was a boy of singular beauty and intelligence. But Cornelia, a remarkably clear-sighted woman, had already begun to view with alarm the rapid development of Tiberius's character. The young man's political tendencies were strongly marked, and they seemed likely to bring him into dangerous collision with the aristocratic traditions of his mother's house. As for Caius, he was self-willed and imperious to an extraordinary degree. Still, no mother could have been prouder of her children, as none certainly could have been more devoted to them.

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At this particular time, however, when Cleanor paid his first visit to the villa at Misenum, all was brightness and gaiety. Theoxena and her daughter had learned by this time to feel themselves thoroughly at home in Cornelia's hospitable house. The elder woman had suffered so much in the past that the best happiness which could be hoped for her was peace; but Daphne had blossomed out into a most attractive personality. There was a peculiar radiance about her beauty, which had all the greater charm because the girl's own disposition and the gracious example of her hostess, a very pearl among women, tempered it with a certain air of virginal reserve. Cleanor she met at first with her old sisterly frankness, but there was an ardour in the young man's glance, and a thrill in his voice—though he vainly attempted to subdue them into the greeting of a respectful affection—which seemed to alarm her. As for Cleanor, after the first day spent in her company, he could doubt no longer as to the real nature of his feelings. Daphne would be thenceforward the one woman in the world for him.

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The holiday, which was prolonged to the beginning of the new year, passed only too quickly.

The days were spent either in hare-hunting—larger game was not to be found in a region already thickly populated—or in excursions on the water, which were favoured by weather that, though it was the depth of winter, was remarkably calm and warm. Possibly the most delightful expedition of the season was the ascent of Vesuvius, then clothed almost to the summit with lovely woods, and giving no sign of the hidden forces which, two centuries later, were to spread desolation over the fairest region of Italy.

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The evenings were begun by a meal, simply yet elegantly served, at which the whole party assembled, even the little Caius being allowed to be present for at least a time. The meal over, there was no lack of entertainment. Tiberius was an accomplished reciter, and could give one of Terence's comedies with an artistic variety of voice and emphasis. Cleanor charmed the company with a passage from Homer, from Pindar, or from one of the great Athenian dramatists. Sometimes, by special request, he would dance the Pyrrhic dance, a pastime which in sterner Roman society would have more than savoured of frivolity. And now and then Daphne was persuaded to sing to the lute an exquisite little lyric from Stesichorus.

The last day of the year, which was also to be the last of the most delightful of visits, Cleanor determined to make as long as possible. Rising as soon as the first streaks of dawn began to show themselves in the sky, he began to explore more thoroughly than he had before an opportunity of doing, the beautifully ordered gardens which surrounded the villa. Following a path of velvet sward, sheltered on either side by shrubberies of box-wood, he came to a spot which gave him a wide prospect over the lovely bay of Naples. He noticed, but in the most casual way, the figure of a gardener, who was busy, as it seemed, in trimming the surrounding shrubs, the whole spot, except on that side which fronted the sea, being protected from the wind by a dense growth of box and laurel, arbutus and bay.

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He threw himself down on a rustic bench and gazed on the scene before him. He was looking westward, and the sea at his feet lay in shadow, a dark purple in colour. In the distance the sun was just touching with golden light the crags of Prochyta and of the more remote Inarimé. For a time the beauty of the scene wholly occupied him, for nature stirred the hearts of the men of those days even as it stirs ours, though they had only begun to give their feelings articulate expression.

Then his thoughts recurred to what was the dominant emotion of the time with him, his love for Daphne. How, he asked himself, how should he make it known? How should he approach her? To speak directly, at least in the first instance, was not the custom of his race, though doubtless love, there as elsewhere, made exceptions of his own to the severest rule. Through her mother? But Theoxena was, he knew, only too thoroughly devoted to him. To her his wish would be a command; she would make it a matter of filial obedience with her daughter, and he wanted the voluntary submission that was wholly free. Through Cornelia? But would she favour such an alliance? She was a noble of the nobles, filled with the keenest sympathy for the people, but profoundly conscious of the social difference between her class and them, and with her own class she would certainly rank the well-born Cleanor.

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Well, he said to himself, after a pause of reflection, which did not seem to make the matter clearer, "these things will settle themselves. I love her, and I think she loves me, so that nothing will keep us apart." And he broke into the beautiful choric song of the *Antigone*—for it was his habit, as it is the habit of all true lovers of poetry, thus to interrupt his solitary musings—

"O love invincible!"

After this came a stave of Alcæus, and after this again a piece of melodious tenderness from Sappho.

As he turned to retrace his steps to the house, for he had risen early, and the keen morning air made him feel that he had fasted long, he was startled to hear his name called from behind him, not the name by which he was known to the world, but the pet family name, which he had not heard since the home of his childhood had vanished in fire and blood.

"Cle," said the voice, and its tones seemed to be strangely familiar. He turned; no one was within sight but the gardener. The man had dropped the shears, and stood with his hands stretched out in a supplicating gesture.

"What is it?" he cried; "what or whom do you want?" He took two or three steps forward, and as he approached there seemed to be something strangely familiar in the figure before him.

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"Yes, it is—" and the speaker swayed to and fro for a moment, and then fell unconscious to the ground. The wide-brimmed hat, which had been drawn down low over the face, to conceal, as it seemed, the features, was displaced by the fall, and revealed the graceful contour of the forehead, and the shapely head covered with short curls of sunny gold.

"Great Zeus!" cried Cleanor, as he lifted the prostrate figure from the ground. "Great Zeus! if I am not mad or dreaming, this is Cleoné come to life again."

Close by a tiny spring trickled down from a rock. Cleanor held his cap beneath it till it was half full, and dashed the water in his sister's face. She drew two or three deep breaths, and then opened her eyes. Vacant at first, for she could not remember where she was or what had happened, they soon became radiant with happy light.

"Dearest brother," she murmured, "have I found you again? But come to my little hut—it is

close by. There you shall hear my story, and we will consider what is to be done."

Briefly put, for in the actual telling it was interrupted, as may be supposed, with numberless exclamations and questions, Cleoné's story was this:—

"I remember nothing after I was struck down by a blow from a soldier's sword in the marketplace of Chelys, till I found myself in the hold of a ship at sea." [362]

"Then you were not killed?" cried Cleanor.

"It seems not," said the girl with a merry laugh, "for even were I an Eurydice there was no Orpheus to bring me back from the house of Hades."

"Ah!" said the young man, "now I begin to understand what old Judas meant. He said, you must know, that they bribed the soldiers not to kill the prisoners, but to stun them."

"Well, as I was saying, I found myself in the hold of a ship which was evidently making very bad weather. I was lying with my head close to the deck, and I could hear two men talking just over me. There was such a roaring of the wind, and such a creaking of timbers, that I lost a good deal of what they said. Still I could make out something. Someone—I supposed it was the captain—was cursing his ill-luck. 'Here,' he said, 'is a bit of cursed spite—as good a speculation as ever I made in my life all comes to nothing. There are fifty as likely young fellows as I have had the handling of since I went into the business five-and-twenty years ago down there, and what is going to become of them? They are worth two hundred thousand sesterces if they are worth one, and now the whole lot is going to the bottom.' 'What is the odds?' growled the other, whom I took to be the steersman. 'What is the odds if you are going too?' 'I tell you what,' said the other again after a pause, 'you should give the fellows a chance. Open the hatches, and let them get to land if they can.' 'What is the good?' answered the captain sulkily; 'they may drown for all I care.' 'Nay, but you talk like a fool. If they live, they are still yours, and you may get hold of them, or, at least, of some of them again.' 'True,' said the owner, 'that is so. They shall have a chance.' A minute or two afterwards the hatches were opened, and the fellow cried, 'Up with you as quick as you can! The ship hasn't many minutes to float, and if you don't want to go to the bottom with her, now is your time.' About two score out of the fifty clambered upon deck. Some had never recovered from the blow which had stunned them—it can't be an easy thing to give just the right sort of stroke—and some, I take it, were so far gone with sea-sickness that they did not care to move. As for me, I felt a little dazed; sea-sickness never troubles me, as you know. We got up on deck only just in time, the ship was already close upon the rocks. The next minute she struck. What happened to the crew and to my companions is more than I can say; all I know is that I have never seen one of them since, except, indeed, some dead bodies that I found on the shore next morning. I had a desperate struggle to get to land, and, indeed, I never should have done it, though, as you know, I am no bad swimmer, but that an extra big wave threw me up almost high and dry, and I had just strength enough to crawl away out of reach of the sea. The rest of the night—it was about the middle of the third watch, as near as I could guess, when this happened—I passed in a thicket in a bed of dry leaves, where I slept as soundly as ever I did in my life. The next day I rigged myself out with clothes that I took from the dead men on the shore—it was no robbery, I thought, poor fellows! I found some money, too, in their pockets. Following a road which led inland, I came to a village where there was a tavern. Here I got some bread and a draught of sour wine. I thought it safest, I should tell you, to pretend to be deaf and dumb, and made them to understand by signs that I wanted something to eat and drink. I paid for what I had, but was careful to let the people know that I had very little, for I made up the few coppers that were wanted from one place and another. Then I got them to understand that I wanted to work for my living. First I made as if I were digging, then as if I were sawing wood. They happened to want someone, for it was a busy time of the year, and they saw that they could get the work done very cheaply, for they gave me no pay besides my food and lodging in an outhouse, which, happily, I had to myself. Here I stopped for about a month. Then I overheard some people talking of a great lady who lived in the neighbourhood. She was a widow, they said, and managed everything—house and garden and farm—all by herself. That, I thought to myself, is the place for me. Perhaps some day I shall be able to tell her my story. However, the day has never come. I got employment just in the same way as I did at the tavern, and I have the little hut to myself, where I look after some fowls and pigeons. But, somehow, I could never summon up courage to speak. However, I always went on hoping and hoping, and now, dearest Cleanor, that you are come, all will be right." [363]

"Yes," said the young man, "and the first thing, my dear Cleoné, will be to get you some proper clothes." [364]

The girl blushed.

"By Castor!" she said, "I had almost forgotten that I was dressed as a man. But how will you manage it?" [365]

"Easily enough," replied her brother. "The lady Cornelia has an excellent housekeeper with whom I am in high favour; I don't doubt that she will let me have everything I want. But I must go; the sooner we manage this the better."

Poor Cleoné, woman-like, felt the courage which had never failed before desert her when she had to part even for half an hour with her long-lost brother. She clung to him, and wept piteously. "Don't leave me," she sobbed.

The young man, to whom this sort of thing was quite a new experience, looked at her with

"Yes," she said, smiling through her tears, "I am a fool. And besides," she went on, looking at her dirty and ragged garments, "I do want some decent clothes."

The good Pollia, who acted as wardrobe-keeper, mother-of-the-maids, and housekeeper in general to Cornelia, was not a little astonished when Cleanor asked her to supply him with the various articles of a young lady's toilet, not so numerous in those days, it should be mentioned, as they are now. He was a great favourite, however, and she asked no questions, probably thinking that some joke was being meditated. She searched accordingly among the treasures in her charge, and had no difficulty in finding all that was wanted.

Fashions did not change in those days as they change under the vagaries of modern taste. Women were careful, indeed perhaps more careful than they are now, to suit their dress to their age. But what the mother had worn at twenty, the daughter, reaching the same years, might wear without even the suspicion of oddity, and the garments might be handed down, if they were of the quality that was suited to so long a life, to yet another generation.

Cleanor was soon making his way with an armful of suitable apparel to the gardener's hut. Cleoné, who seemed to be bent on making up as quickly as possible for her enforced separation from all feminine vanities, received the precious burden with a shriek of delight. When she emerged, half an hour afterwards, from her hut it would have passed all human skill to recognize in the brilliant young beauty who held Cleanor's hand the shabby deaf-mute who for many months past had plied his solitary task in Cornelia's gardens.



"HALF AN HOUR AFTERWARDS CLEONÉ EMERGED AS
A BRILLIANT YOUNG BEAUTY."

All these confidences and preparations had taken time, and the house party had just assembled for the mid-day meal when the pair walked into the dining-room. Never since Misenum got its name had the place seen a more startling sight. At first it seemed as if Cleanor had found his double, for brother and sister were curiously alike. But the time that had passed since they were so tragically parted had changed them not a little. The young man had grown in height, and his frame, knit by the continual activities of an adventurous life, had developed the ampler proportions that became his sex. The girl was his very image, but now on a somewhat smaller scale. A fairer couple had never been seen in Italy.

"Cleanor has turned into Apollo," cried the little Caius, "and he has brought Diana with him."

As for the rest of the company, they gazed with an astonishment that was almost stupefaction on the scene. Cornelia was the first to recover herself. She advanced to greet the new-comer. "You are welcome," she said, "for your brothers sake—for Cleanor must surely be your brother—and, I am sure, for your own." Then Theoxena threw herself at the girl's feet and clasped her knees. "It is Cleoné," she cried. "The gods have nothing more to give me." Little Cephalus kissed her hand, and Daphne, somewhat shy at first of the splendid stranger, was not long behind with

an affectionate greeting.

"Not a word," said Cornelia, "till you have eaten and drunk. For the present," she said, smiling at the little Caius, "they will have to be content without ambrosia and nectar."

The meal ended, Cornelia heard the whole story. Her mind, always eminently practical, discerned at once the first thing that had to be done.

"We must assure without delay," she said, "this young lady's civil *status*. At present it would be very perplexing to say who or what she is."

A message was immediately despatched to the nearest town with a letter requiring the immediate presence of the resident notary. He arrived before sunset, and by a formal act of emancipation Cleoné, slave of Cornelia, was made free.

"Pardon me, my daughter," she said, "if I speak of you as my slave. And indeed my title is a very weak one; no one, however, is likely to make out a better. Meanwhile, as far as I can secure your freedom, you are free."

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CHAPTER XXXV. THE WORLD WELL LOST.

CLEANOR had been back in Rome some four months, and had nearly completed his work with the committee of translation, when he received a visit from the young Scipio. The latter had not been one of the party at Misenum during the holidays of Saturn, having been summoned to Sicily to fill a casual vacancy on the staff of the quæstor in that province.

"Well," said Cleanor, after an affectionate exchange of greetings, "and how did you like your quæstor's work in Sicily?"

"I found it most interesting," replied the young man, "and, I must say, most agreeable. My name made me most welcome everywhere. You can hardly imagine what an impression my uncle's action in giving back the statues to the cities has made on the whole island. The simple fact that I was his nephew was enough to make them almost worship me. I happened to be at Agrigentum when the famous Bull was solemnly put back into its place. If I had been the founder of the city come to life again I could not have been treated with more respect. I should be quite ashamed to describe all the oratings and crownings and embracing that I went through. In fact, if I had any complaint to make, it would be that to a modest young man like myself the honours were just a little overpowering."

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"And what," asked Cleanor, "are you going to do now?"

"That," replied the young Roman, "is just what I want to talk to you about. Lentulus, who is proconsul of Sicily, as I dare say you know, has expressed himself very handsomely about my services, and, what is more, has offered to propose me as one of the regular quæstors for next year. This is all the more satisfactory because he is no kinsman of mine, and in fact is not on the same side in politics as my uncle. If my uncle were to nominate me, I should probably get my election, but this will make it quite certain."

"Well," said Cleanor, "of course you won't hesitate to accept. I give you my congratulations in advance. It will be the first step in the ladder, and we shall see you climb, as your forbears have climbed before you, to be ædile, prætor, consul."

"Yes, yes," said the young man, "that is so. It is the first step, and I could not take it under better auspices, but—" and he paused, looking like anything but the ambitious young man before whom the greatest career in the world was opening.

"What is the hindrance, then?" asked the young Greek.

Scipio's embarrassment seemed to increase. "I have been to my aunt Cornelia's at Misenum," he added after a long pause.

"And what was her advice?" asked Cleanor. "Surely she had nothing to say against it. I should even have thought, as far as I know anything of your Roman politics, that she would have been especially well pleased to see you come out in public life under the auspices of Lentulus."

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"Oh, yes!" returned the young Roman. "That was exactly her view. But—" and the speaker paused in still greater embarrassment than ever. "Well—I must say it sooner or later—I have seen your sister."

"My sister! What has my sister got to do with it?" asked Cleanor in utter bewilderment. "I don't suppose you asked her advice, and if you did, she would not hinder you, I should suppose, from serving your country."

"Well," said Scipio, "I did ask her, though not exactly for her advice, and she said exactly what you supposed she would say."

"Then where is the difficulty? You want the thing yourself; all your friends advise you to take the chances. What is it that hinders? For heaven's sake, my friend, do explain what you mean, for it is quite past my understanding."

"Then, Cleanor, listen; if I offend you, as I can hardly help doing, be patient with me. First and foremost, then, I love your sister Cleoné. It is the dearest wish of my heart to make her my wife, and I think, that is, I hope, that she cares a little for me."

"I am delighted to hear it," cried the young Greek, as he sprang up and seized his friend's hands. "I am delighted to hear it. There isn't a better or braver girl in the world, if I may say so much of my own sister. You have heard her story, of course. Well, she deserves a good husband, if ever a girl did, and I am glad to think that she is likely to find one." [372]

"I am delighted to hear you say so, though I don't feel anything like worthy of her. But now comes what I find it so hard to say. Cleoné is a match for anyone in the world, in birth as well as in herself. But, in the eyes of our law, she is not a match for a Roman citizen. By some accursed chance—though, indeed, but for this said chance I should never have seen her—she was made a slave, and is now a freed woman. Out of that *status* nothing, as far as I know, can raise her, and being in that *status* she cannot be my wife. In one sense there may be a marriage between us, but it would not be a marriage that would give her the rights and privileges of a Roman matron; it would not be a marriage which would open to our children the career of a Roman citizen. There, my dear friend, the murder is out; that is the bare fact, and if it seems an insult to you—and an insult, I fear, it must seem—pray remember that it is not of my making or doing."

"My dear friend," said Cleanor, "I won't pretend that what you have said hasn't hurt me. We have always been accustomed to think ourselves as good as anybody in point of birth and standing. In fact we Greeks are not a little exclusive, and it is a blow to be told that we are ourselves outside the social pale. But for you, I assure you I haven't a feeling that is not all friendship. I don't draw back from a single word of what I said about my sister. Still we must consider; and of course, before all things, she must know." [373]

"Yes, she must know," replied Scipio. "Of course I have said nothing. She does not know—so far at least as anything that I have said is concerned—that I love her."

"Well," said Cleanor, "we will leave that then for the present. Now listen to what I have been thinking about myself and my own future. I am in love, too, and you have seen the lady. Can you guess who it is?"

"Guess!" said Scipio with a smile. "There is no need of guessing. I have known it a long time. Well, I will allow that your Daphne is the fairest woman in the world,—with, of course, one exception."

"Well, when a man is in my plight, he naturally, if he is worthy of being called a man, begins to think of his future. And what future have I here in Italy? I have property enough to live upon, but that is all. But what career is there before me? I have turned the matter over in my mind, and I have asked for information from others. There seems to be positively but one thing for a man in my situation to do. I might become a teacher of rhetoric. That is the one solitary employment open to a Greek stranger, and a very precarious employment too. The old-fashioned nobles don't like Greek rhetoricians, and it is quite possible that some fine day I might find myself banished.⁷⁰ That, you will allow, is not a prospect with which a man will readily content himself." [374]

"And do you see any way out of it?" asked Scipio.

"I have dreams," replied the young Greek, "and I have always had, and the dreams of to-day fit on curiously enough to the dreams of the past. When I was a boy I had an ambition to be something beyond the chief citizen of Chelys. As for Carthage, though no one thought that her end was so near, I knew that there was nothing there to satisfy me, even if her honours had been open to me. But there is a world beyond Carthage, and even beyond Rome. It is of that that I dreamed then, and of which I dream still. Say, Scipio, my friend, shall we go and look for it?"

The young men had a long talk on the subject. Cleanor poured out the store of knowledge which, with an enthusiasm that dated back to very early years indeed, he had gathered from every available source. There was, of course, a plentiful admixture of fiction, or fact so transmuted and idealized that it almost had become fiction. There were legends and traditions, travellers' tales, and yarns of adventurous seamen; but there was also a solid substratum of truth. Cleanor's sheet-anchor, so to speak, was the famous *Circumnavigation* of Hanno.⁷¹ That famous voyager had beyond all doubt passed into the great western ocean through the Pillars of Hercules, and turning southward had seen many a strange and beautiful land, aye, and lived to bring back the report of them. All these things the ardent Greek dwelt upon with an enthusiasm which at last fired the duller fancy of the Roman. Scipio left the house more than half persuaded. [375]

A few days afterwards Cleanor, having fairly finished his part in the work which had so long occupied his leisure, went down with Scipio to Misenum. They had agreed to say nothing of their scheme till they had heard what their hostess had to say to it. Cornelia was doubtful. Cleanor indeed had her fullest sympathy when he declared that he could not be content with any career that fate had left open for him, and that he must seek one elsewhere. It was about her great-

nephew that she doubted. She could not bring herself to think him right when he proposed to relinquish his Roman birthright. Not for any woman, not though she was, as Cleoné, one among ten thousand, should a man give up the splendid opportunities of service and reward which Rome held forth to her sons.

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The young man found an unexpected ally in his cousin Tiberius. "My duty," he said, "keeps me here; but if I could choose my own way, I would join your search. Sometimes I seem to see further into the future than is commonly given to man, and what I see is dark with the shadow of disaster and death. Our great kinsman has won splendid victories for Rome, and has others to win, but I doubt whether the gods have not granted these victories to our country more in wrath than in love. When we have trodden all our foes and rivals under our feet we shall turn our swords upon ourselves. The wealth of the world that is pouring into our treasury will kindle to a deadlier rage the eternal quarrel between those who have and those who have not. My lot is cast in with the unhappy. The love of woman is not for me; I shall not be able even to keep the affection of my kinsfolk. But I would not avoid my fate, even if I could. You are happier. It would be as great a folly for you to stay, as it would be a crime for me to depart."

After this Cornelia, who was always overawed when the deeper nature of her son revealed itself, silently withdrew her opposition. The elder Scipio, who would almost certainly have used all his influence to bring it to nothing, was fortunately absent from Italy. Daphne put no hindrance in the way. She had secretly worshipped the magnificent hero—for such he seemed to her—who had rescued her and hers from the deadliest peril, and was ready to follow him, if he willed it, to the ends of the world, and, if it might be, even beyond it.

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But Scipio found Cleoné far more difficult to deal with. She was very far from disdaining his love, but it filled her with something like rage to think that for her sake he should abandon his career. It was partly that her pride was touched. That she, the long-descended daughter of heroes, who reckoned Ion himself among her far-away ancestors, should bring humiliation and disability on the man to whom she gave her hand! The bare idea was beyond endurance. Such love was a disgrace to both of them. She peremptorily commanded her suitor to forget it. But this stern mood did not last. She was moved not a little by the sight of Daphne's happiness. She was conscious of a craving in her own heart for a happiness of her own. She had herself suffered so much, and it was hard, when at last the sunshine came, to have to shut it out, and still to sit in the darkness. Then the strongest influences were brought to bear upon her. Her brother was urgent in his entreaties that she should not mar their plan. And her refusal would mar it. He could not go if she stayed behind. And the sight of Scipio's suffering touched her, for indeed she loved him tenderly. In the end she gave way.

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CHAPTER XXXVI.

BEYOND THE SUNSET.

THE party, which was increased by some manumitted slaves of Greek origin, sailed for Utica in the early autumn of the year, and reached that port after a quick and prosperous voyage. Their first destination was the court of King Gulussa. It so happened that their arrival coincided with a meeting of the three brothers. One of the wilder tribes on the desert border had invaded the kingdom, and it was necessary to make arrangements for an expedition of more than usual proportions. Micipsa had brought with him his two sons, and a younger lad, Jugurtha by name, his son by a wife of inferior rank, of whom we have heard before, and of whom the world was to hear a great deal more before many years had passed.

Gulussa and his brother kings gave a most complimentary welcome to their guests. But when Cleanor, who was naturally the spokesman of the party, unfolded his scheme, they took no pains to conceal their incredulity.

"It would be a thousand pities," said Gulussa, "if you were to throw away your lives on a romantic folly of this kind. Why not stop here, where you have something ready to your hands, not quite so splendid as these dreams of yours, but, believe me, a hundred times more solid and real. Now, listen to what I have got to say. We—that is, my brothers and I—have been talking matters over since you came, and we have made up our minds to make you an offer that it may be really worth your while to accept. Enter our service; you are both skilful soldiers. My father, than whom there never was a better judge of men, thought very highly of you, Cleanor; the name of Scipio would be commendation enough, even if we did not know how worthily it is borne by your friend. Details we can settle afterwards, but you may depend upon it, that you will never have to find fault with our liberality. Don't answer at once," Gulussa went on, as Cleanor was beginning to reply, "but think the matter over carefully, and let us know your decision, say, three days hence."

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The princes spared no pains to make their guests' sojourn at court agreeable to them. A great hunting party was arranged for each day, and the two young men were furnished with

magnificent mounts and allotted the best places. At the banquet which followed they occupied seats of honour. Meanwhile the ladies of the party were welcomed in the royal harem, received the most flattering attention from the queens and princesses, and were loaded with handsome presents.

"We might do worse than stay, Cleanor," said Scipio to his friend, for his unimaginative temper could not help comparing these present splendours with the remote prospects of Cleanor's scheme, not a little to the disadvantage of the latter. [380]

Cleanor shook his head.

"How long do you think it would last? I don't say anything about the chances that our hosts might not always be as friendly as they are now. They are a fickle race. But let that pass. Yet how long will this Numidian kingdom stand? I remember what the old king said when I was in attendance on him before he died. He was sure that Rome would swallow it up before long. There is sure to be some quarrel sooner or later, and then who can doubt which of the two will go to the wall. And there is another thing. If the kingdom lasts, will it always be in the same hands? Have you noticed that lad Jugurtha? I remember that the old king warned me specially against him. 'That viper,' he called him; and as King Gulussa said the other day, Masinissa was an excellent judge of character. The brothers are elderly men, and, to judge from their looks, not very strong. Micipsa's two sons, who by rights should come after him, are feeble creatures; Jugurtha is his father's favourite, and he will come to the top of the tree sooner or later. And Jugurtha hates us; you first,—perhaps because you are a Roman, and his hatred for the Romans is a proverb,—and me next. No, it would not be well, I am sure, in any case to stop here; and to stop with a chance of finding ourselves under Jugurtha's thumb would be madness."

Scipio could not but acknowledge the force of these arguments, and gave way. At the appointed time the friends announced their decision to the kings. Gulussa shrugged his shoulders. [381]

"Well," he said, "you must have your own way. If you should come back—very few do come back, I am told—and I am still alive, you will find me as ready to be your friend as ever. Meanwhile let us do what we can for you. The queen tells me that you have brought your wives that are to be with you. Let us have the honour of providing your marriage feast, and remain with us afterwards for as long as you like and may find convenient. If you are bent on this wild voyage of yours you must go prepared."

The friends gladly accepted this hospitable invitation. Preparations were at once commenced for performing the marriage ceremonies with due solemnity. While these were going on, Cleanor made his way to the coast to find a captain and crew who would be willing to take part in his adventure.

His first care was to discover Syphax, the old sailor with whom, as you may remember, he had made his voyage to Sicily. The old man listened with eager interest to his exposition of his plans, but shook his head when the question whether he would go was put to him.

"Ah!" he said, "if you had only come to me with this scheme twenty years ago! But what am I saying? old fool that I am! Twenty years ago you were little more than a baby in arms. I mean that I am too old. I am not fit for anything more now than pottering about with my fishing-lines. And there is my old wife. She couldn't go, poor thing; she hasn't set her foot outside the hut for the last ten years, and I certainly could not go without her. But there's my son Mago. He can't settle down in the new state of things, for Rome is likely to be a much harder master than Carthage ever was. Mago is your man; let me send for him." [382]

Mago came, and Cleanor talked his plans over with him, and found him all that he wanted. The general scheme, and such particulars as the capacity of the vessel required, the stores, the cargo of articles for trade with native tribes, were settled between them, and Mago was left to carry out the details, while Cleanor returned to the court of King Gulussa.

Two months later,—for I shall not weary my readers with describing the marriage festivities,—the good ship *Pallas* lay ready for sea in the harbour of Utica. The piers and quays were filled with a dense crowd of spectators, for the fame of this adventurous voyage had spread through the city, and brought together a multitude of curious sight-seers. Loud and hearty were the cheers that went up as a soft breeze from the east slowly filled the sails, and the *Pallas*—her prow appropriately adorned with the figure of the goddess friend of Ulysses, prince of adventurous heroes—forged her way round the end of the western pier and shaped a course towards the setting sun. [383]

Sail on, swift ship, to the region that lies beyond the darkness of the west. You leave behind you a world over which the shadows of civil strife and desolating war are gathering. Who knows what lies before you—Islands of the Blest, where nature smiles for ever, her fair face untouched by frost or storm, and where man still keeps primeval faith and innocence; or, perhaps, to a world that is but a meaner copy of that from which you are fleeing? Yet sail on, happy at least for the hour that is, in the unflinching confidence of youth and hope.

NOTE.

I have departed, for convenience sake in the construction of my story, from historical truth in the date of Masinissa's death. This took place before the beginning of the Third Punic War. For the same reason, the Macedonian pretender is postdated. He had certainly disappeared from the scene before the autumn immediately preceding the fall of Carthage (when my hero is supposed to visit him).

If my readers fail to form a clear idea of the topography of Carthage, I must beg them not to blame me. This is a problem which no one has yet been able to solve.

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Chelys is an imaginary place; the young Scipio an imaginary person.

A. C.

THE END.

PRINTED BY BLACKIE AND SON, LIMITED, GLASGOW.

FOOTNOTES

¹ One paid a talent (£215) per day, making an annual amount, allowing for the difference in the value of money, of not less than a quarter of a million.

² C. Flaminius was degraded from the Senate for killing a captive in cold blood to entertain his company at dinner.

³ Hannibal carried about with him in the cavity of a ring a poison so deadly that it would destroy life in a few seconds. When about to be delivered up to the Romans by the petty sovereign—Prusias, King of Bithynia—with whom he had taken refuge, he killed himself in this way.

⁴ Numidia corresponds roughly to Algeria, Mauretania to Morocco.

⁵ In his youth Masinissa was betrothed to Sophonisba, the accomplished and beautiful daughter of Hasdrubal, son of Gisco. The engagement was broken off for political reasons. Hasdrubal made Sophonisba's hand the price of an alliance which he wished Syphax, Masinissa's rival in the struggle for the Numidian throne, to contract with Carthage. In the war that followed, Syphax was defeated, first by the Romans, afterwards by Masinissa himself, who took Cirta, his capital, and in it Sophonisba. To marry her at once seemed to the conqueror the only way of saving her from the Romans. But the marriage did not suit the policy of Rome, which dreaded the hostile influence which such a woman might exercise. Scipio (the Elder), who was in command, insisted that Sophonisba should be given up; and Masinissa, to save her the humiliation of captivity, sent her a cup of poison.

⁶ It is the Asiatic elephant only that has been domesticated in modern times, and taught to utilize his strength in the service of man.

⁷ About equivalent to a colonel in our army. There were five tribunes in the legion or brigade, and these commanded in turn.

⁸ Flaminius commanded at the disastrous battle of Lake Trasumennus, Varro at the still more disastrous defeat of Cannæ.

⁹ *Carthage* was Kirjath-Hadeschath, the "new town" (opposed to Tyre, which was the old); its chief magistrates were *Shophetim* (Latinized into Suffetes), the Hebrew word for "judges". *Barca* was a well-known name, corresponding to the Hebrew *Barak*, and meaning "lightning".

¹⁰ By the "League" Cleanor means the Achæan League, a combination originally of the cities of Achaia proper, or the southern shore of the Corinthian Gulf, but afterwards extended over the greater part of Mainland Greece.

¹¹ The Cantabri (now the Basques), who were not subdued by Rome for more than a century after this time.

¹² By the "Sea" Hasdrubal means the *Mediterranean*; outside the Pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar and Tangiers) was the *Ocean* (the Atlantic).

¹³ The ancient boxing-glove, a formidable construction fitted to the hand, of leather thongs heavily loaded with lead.

¹⁴ This consisted in throwing wine out of a cup into a bowl placed at some distance. The game was played in various ways.

¹⁵ Marcellus was the Roman general in command.

¹⁶ £27,000 in our money, reckoning by weight at five shillings per ounce for silver. This would mean a great deal more in purchasing power, not less than £100,000.

¹⁷ This narrow stripe indicated the knight; the broad stripe indicated the senator. The knights were the capitalists of Rome, farming the revenues of the state, a business becoming yearly more important as the dominions of the republic continued to grow.

¹⁸ This was the ancient aristocracy of Corinth.

¹⁹ The fourth hour, reckoned, *i.e.*, from sunrise. As the time is supposed to be late in the autumn, sunrise would be at 7, and the fourth hour about 10.20, each hour being of fifty minutes duration, *i.e.* the twelfth part of the hour's day between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. Whatever the length of the day it was divided into twelve hours.

²⁰ C. Postumius was sent in the year 286 B.C. to deliver to the people of Tarentum the *ultimatum* of Rome. While he was speaking a buffoon bespattered his toga with some filth. He held up the robe in the sight of the Assembly, with the words, "Verily this shall be washed white".

²¹ It ran thus:

"Go tell to Sparta, thou that passest by,
That here obedient to her laws we lie".

²² "Bravest of beasts am I, who watch the grave
Of him that, living, was of men most brave.
Lion he was alike in name and heart,
Else had I ne'er endured the watcher's part."

²³ Thermopylæ—the Hot Gates; so called from the hot springs found in the neighbourhood.

²⁴ The same Greek word stands for "purse" and "girdle". The old-fashioned long silk purse is an interesting survival of this ancient custom. Those who lead lives of adventure still carry their money in a belt fastened round the waist.

²⁵ The legendary hero, son of Hæmon, from whom Thessalia was supposed to have received its name.

²⁶ About fourpence farthing.

²⁷ About five farthings; six obols went to the drachma.

²⁸ The *Chasidim*, who were the backbone of the patriot party of the Maccabees, the Pharisees of the time.

²⁹ It is impossible to give the play of words which we have in the Greek. *Epiphanes*, "Splendid", was the title which Antiochus assumed; *Epimanes*, "Crazy", was the nickname to which it was altered.

³⁰ About £40, if we reckon, as usual, by weight of bullion at the standard price.

³¹ 241 B.C.

³² This was a drink made out of wine (mixed with water) and honey. It was frequently taken (warm) early in the day, being considered a wholesome draught for an empty stomach.

³³ The reader will remember the capture of Quebec by Wolfe's daring plan of scaling the Heights of Abraham.

³⁴ Mancinus was elected one of the consuls for the year 145 B.C. There is a curious story, that after the conclusion of the war he exhibited in the Forum of Rome maps and plans of Carthage, showing where the various attacks had been made, and that he was never weary of explaining to the people the operations of the siege. This conduct, the story continues, made him so popular that he offered himself as a candidate for the consulship, and was successful. This story looks somewhat strange as it stands. The consulship was a very great honour, and, what is more, a serious responsibility. It

would hardly have been bestowed on the giver of a popular and entertaining exhibition. But there may have been a general feeling that Mancinus had really done good service in the siege—had shown the way, so to speak, for the capture of the city.

³⁵ Scipio was a tribune at this age. Young men of good birth were appointed to the office without previous service. Soldiers of lower origin who distinguished themselves were promoted to it, but, of course, at a later age. The great Marius was not a tribune till he was between thirty and forty.

³⁶ The Latin *latrunculi*, a game somewhat resembling our "military tactics", or "fox and geese".

³⁷ The battle which brought the Second Punic War to a conclusion in 202 B.C.

³⁸ Lælius was as close a friend to the Younger as his father had been to the Elder Scipio. The two were born in the same year (B.C. 185), as were also the elder pair of friends (B.C. 234). It should be remembered that the Younger Scipio was *nephew by marriage*, though *grandson by adoption*, to the Elder. He was the younger son of Æmilius Paullus, whose sister was married to the Elder Scipio, and he was adopted by his sister's son, who had no children of his own.

³⁹ "At Plataea Pausanias commanded the Spartans to change their position. All the captains but one were ready to obey, but Amompharetus refused to move. 'I will not fly,' he said, 'before the strangers, nor bring disgrace upon Sparta.' After a while the Athenians sent a horseman to learn why the Spartans did not change their place as had been agreed upon. When the man came up the dispute was waxing hot, and Amompharetus took up with both hands a huge stone, and put it at the feet of the general, saying, 'With this pebble (*psephos*) I give my vote not to fly from the strangers.' At last the general gave the signal for retreat, expecting that Amompharetus and his men would not like to be left behind. And so indeed it turned out, for, when he saw the rest of the army in motion, he also left his place and followed them" (Herod. ix. 53-5).

⁴⁰ "E'en in the turmoil of battle each other's spears will we shun:
I shall find many a Trojan, and allies many an one
To slay, whom my feet shall o'ertake, or a god deliver to me;
And for thee be Achaians enow, to smite as thy strength shall be."

⁴¹ He was probably born about the year 204 B.C., and so would now (147 B.C.) be in his fifty-eighth year.

⁴² I have not ventured to interrupt my narrative with an account of the invention as it was described by Polybius in more than one conversation, but I will give it here for the benefit of such readers as may be interested in the subject. The plan which Polybius seems to have found in use was a very curious one, and, it is evident, far from being effective. The two bodies of men which would have to communicate by signal were provided with two vessels of exactly the same diameter and depth, and with outlets for the water of exactly the same size. Divisions were marked on them, and each division was appropriated to some common contingency in military affairs, as for instance, "Cavalry has arrived", "Cavalry is wanted", "Food is short", &c. The party desirous to communicate showed a torch. The other replied in the same way to indicate that they were attending. Another torch was shown by the first party. This meant that the water had been set flowing. The other replied in the same way, and set the water flowing in their vessel. When the desired point had been reached a third signal was shown. As soon as this signal was seen, the other side observed how far the water in their vessel had sunk. The defect was that only a few out of the innumerable contingencies of war could be thus communicated. The system perfected by Polybius was much more effective. The alphabet was divided into five groups of five letters each. The party wishing to communicate, which I will in future speak of as No. 1, called the attention of the other (No. 2) by raising two torches, and this signal was acknowledged in the same way. No. 1 then showed one, two, three, four, or five torches on the left to indicate which group he was about to use, and then one, two, three, four, or five on the right to indicate the letter in the group. An observing-glass with two tubes was necessary for No. 2 to enable him to distinguish between right and left. I will give an example, taking it, for convenience, from our own alphabet. "Cavalry wanted" is the message which No. 1 desires to send. The groups of letters would be—

1. *a b c d e.*
2. *f g h i j.*
3. *k l m n o.*
4. *p q r s t.*
5. *u v w x y.*

z might be neglected, as practically of no use. (In the Greek alphabet of 24 letters the fifth group would be one letter short. This, of course, would not matter.)

C is shown by 1 left and 3 on right; *a* by 1 and 1; *v* by 5 and 2; *l* by 3 and 2; *r* by 4

and 3; y by 5 and 5.

And similarly with "wanted".

⁴³ So Horace in his Ode, "Ad Amphoram" (To the Wine Jar):

"Cato's virtue, as we know,
Caught from thee a warmer glow".

⁴⁴ The great victory of the Romans over Antiochus the Great at Magnesia was in 190 B.C. Polybius is speaking of the year 151.

⁴⁵ Cato was accustomed, whatever the business before the Senate might be, to add to his opinion on the matter in hand, "I also think that Carthage ought to be destroyed". One of the Scipios, who favoured a more liberal policy, or perhaps thought that Rome would be better if she had a not too powerful rival, used to add in the same way, "I think that Carthage ought still to exist".

⁴⁶ A ship of war, with a first-rate crew of rowers, making a very long day, say of fifteen hours, could travel 150 miles. From Carthage to Alexandria, by sea, is about 1100 miles. We must allow not less than ten days each way.

⁴⁷ A gold piece equal to twelve shillings.

⁴⁸ The Attali of Pergamum, and the Ptolemies of Alexandria, were rivals in amassing literary treasures. The house of the Attali became extinct in 133 B.C., and soon afterwards their kingdom became a Roman province. Their library remained at Pergamum till Antony presented it to Cleopatra. The word "parchment" (*pergamena*) remains as a reminder of its existence. Skins, of course, had long been used for writing purposes, but the manufacture was greatly improved under the patronage of the kings of Pergamum. The jealousy of the Ptolemies forbade, it is said, the export of paper (*papyrus*) from Alexandria, and parchment had to be used as a substitute.

⁴⁹ The backward movement of the equinoctial points along the elliptic. A constellation which Hesiod describes as rising sixty days after the spring equinox, now rises one hundred days after. The equinox therefore has receded by a space equivalent to forty days.

⁵⁰ A mina and a half are equivalent to £5, 5s., eight minas, therefore, to £28, and five to £17, 10s. This allows, reckoning the weight of wheat at 64 lbs. per bushel, a buying price of 3s. 3d. (about) per bushel, and a selling price of 17s. for the wheat, and 1s. 7½d. buying, and 11s. selling, for the barley. The highest price paid for wheat in England during this century has been 14s. 3d. (1812), and the lowest 2s. 3d. (1895). I will not trouble my readers with the figures for the barley. Commonly it was much cheaper in proportion to wheat than it is now. (So in Rev. vi. 6 we have, "*A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny*", a penny being the Roman *denarius*, or 9½d.) We may calculate the gross profit of the voyage at £6660 (nearly), taking the mina as equal to £3, 10s. 3¾d., or £5222 for the captain's share. The sum entitling a Roman citizen to equestrian rank was £4000.

⁵¹ An Attic talent, worth, by weight of silver, about £225.

⁵² Against Nebuchadnezzar in 598 B.C., and against Alexander in 331.

⁵³ "'Far hence be Bacchus' gifts,' the chief rejoined;
'Inflaming wine, pernicious to mankind,
Unnerves the limbs, and dulls the noble mind.'"
Iliad (Pope), vi.

⁵⁴ A treaty was made between Rome and Carthage in the year 509 B.C.

⁵⁵ Cornelia, the "mother of the Gracchi", was the elder daughter of Scipio Africanus the Elder. The young Scipio of my story, who is, I may say, an imaginary character, but is supposed to belong to a younger generation than Scipio Africanus the Younger, the conqueror of Carthage, would therefore be her great-nephew. Scipio himself was her nephew by adoption (being the adopted son of her brother), and her first cousin by blood. (He was a son of Æmilius Paullus, and she was the daughter of Æmilius Paullus's sister.) He was also her son-in-law. Her elder son Tiberius was born in 163 B.C., and was therefore seventeen at this time; the younger, Caius, was about nine.

⁵⁶ About 10.30 p.m.

⁵⁷ Ἔσσεται ἡμᾶρ ὅτ' ἄν ποτ' ὀλώλη Ἴλιος ἰρή.

⁵⁸ Still called by the same name, at the south-east extremity of the Morea.

⁵⁹ The inhabitants of Delos were sent away from their island by the Roman

government in 167 B.C. The Athenians had done exactly the same thing in 422 B.C., but the oracle of Delphi had warned them that they must be brought back, and this was accordingly done some time afterwards.

⁶⁰ In 404 B.C., when the Spartans and their allies had captured Athens, Corinth voted for the total destruction of the city.

⁶¹ The Achæan League.

⁶² It was the favourite plan of the Peloponnesian states in the Persian war to fortify the Isthmus and leave all Northern Greece at the mercy of the Persians; but this plan was abandoned owing to the declaration of the Athenians that, if it was persisted in, they would make terms with the Persians. A wall, of course, would have been useless, if the fleet of the enemy were free to land an army wherever it pleased. The work, however, was begun, though never completed.

⁶³ A *novus homo* was one who could not reckon among his ancestors anyone who had risen to the rank of consul or prætor.

⁶⁴ Five thousand sesterces would be £40, 7s. 1d., and the total price paid would be a little over £4000; the property qualification of a knight was £3600.

⁶⁵ This was made of an alloy known as *Corinthian brass* or *bronze*, and said to have been composed of gold, silver, and copper. In later times it was believed to have been first made, and that by accident, at this very taking of Corinth, when gold, silver, and other metals were found to have been melted by the violent conflagration and to have run together; but it had been known long before.

⁶⁶ About £9000.

⁶⁷ It was the Roman custom, and Polybius naturally uses Roman terms on this occasion, to set up a spear when an auction was going on.

⁶⁸ Something less than £1.

⁶⁹ The "Holidays of Saturn" (*Saturnalia*) occurred in the early part of the latter half of December. They extended to as many as seven days. It is not improbable that they were, in a way, carried on by the Christmas festivities.

⁷⁰ The Greek teachers of rhetoric were actually banished thirty years after this date.

⁷¹ The *Periplus* of Hanno, probably written early in the fourth century B.C.

Transcriber's Notes

Punctuation and spelling standardized when a predominant preference was found in this book; otherwise unchanged. Simple typographical errors remedied; most retained.

Page [305](#) last line, quotation marks "a treasure" changed to 'a treasure'.

Page [310](#) last line, "he promise" changed to "he promises".

Page [339](#) last line, "You will tell we" changed to "You will tell me".

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK LORDS OF THE WORLD: A STORY OF THE FALL OF CARTHAGE AND CORINTH ***

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