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AN EGYPTIAN PRINCESS, Part 2.

By Georg Ebers

Volume 10.

CHAPTER XIII.

The waters of the Nile had begun to rise again. Two months had passed away since Phanes' disappearance, and much had happened.

The very day on which he left Egypt, Sappho had given birth to a girl, and had so far regained strength since then under the care of her grandmother, as to be able to join in an excursion up the Nile, which Croesus had suggested should take place on the festival of the goddess Neith. Since the departure of Phanes, Cambyses' behavior had become so intolerable, that Bartja, with the permission of his brother, had taken Sappho to live in the royal palace at Memphis, in order to escape any painful collision. Rhodopis, at whose house Croesus and his son, Bartja, Darius and Zopyrus were constant guests, had agreed to join the party.

On the morning of the festival-day they started in a gorgeously decorated boat, from a point between thirty and forty miles below Memphis, favored by a good north-wind and urged rapidly forward by a large number of rowers.

A wooden roof or canopy, gilded and brightly painted, sheltered them from the sun. Croesus sat by Rhodopis, Theopompus the Milesian lay at her feet. Sappho was leaning against Bartja. Syloson, the brother of Polykrates, had made himself a comfortable resting-place next to Darius, who was looking thoughtfully into the water. Gyges and Zopyrus busied themselves in making wreaths for the women, from the flowers handed them by an Egyptian slave.

"It seems hardly possible," said Bartja, "that we can be rowing against the stream. The boat flies like a swallow."

"This fresh north-wind brings us forward," answered Theopompus. "And then the Egyptian boatmen understand their work splendidly."

"And row all the better just because we are sailing against the stream," added Croesus. "Resistance always brings out a man's best powers."

"Yes," said Rhodopis, "sometimes we even make difficulties, if the river of life seems too smooth."

"True," answered Darius. "A noble mind can never swim with the stream. In quiet inactivity all men are equal. We must be seen fighting, to be rightly estimated."

"Such noble-minded champions must be very cautious, though," said Rhodopis, "lest they become contentious, and quarrelsome. Do you see those melons lying on the black soil yonder, like golden balls? Not one would have come to perfection if the sower had been too lavish with his seed. The fruit would have been choked by too luxuriant tendrils and leaves. Man is born to struggle and to work, but in this, as in everything else, he must know how to be moderate if his efforts are to succeed. The art of true wisdom is to keep within limits."

"Oh, if Cambyses could only hear you!" exclaimed Croesus. "Instead of being contented with his immense conquests, and now thinking for the welfare of his subjects, he has all sorts of distant plans in his head. He wishes to conquer the entire world, and yet, since Phanes left, scarcely a day has passed in which he has not been conquered himself by the Div of drunkenness."

"Has his mother no influence over him?" asked Rhodopis. "She is a noble woman."

"She could not even move his resolution to marry Atossa, and was forced to be present at the marriage feast."

"Poor Atossa!" murmured Sappho.

"She does not pass a very happy life as Queen of Persia," answered Croesus; "and her own naturally impetuous disposition makes it all the more difficult for her to live contentedly with this husband and mother; I am sorry to hear it said that Cambyses neglects her sadly, and treats her like a child. But the marriage does not seem to have astonished the Egyptians, as brothers and sisters often marry here."

"In Persia too," said Darius, putting on an appearance of the most perfect composure, "marriages with very near relations are thought to be the best."

"But to return to the king," said Croesus, turning the conversation for Darius' sake. "I can assure you, Rhodopis, that he may really be called a noble man. His violent and hasty deeds are repented of almost as soon as committed, and the resolution to be a just and merciful ruler has never forsaken him. At supper, for instance, lately, before his mind was clouded by the influence of wine, he asked us what the Persians thought of him in comparison with his father."

"And what was the answer?" said Rhodopis. "Intaphernes got us out of the trap cleverly enough," answered Zopyrus, laughing. "He exclaimed: 'We are of opinion that you deserve the preference, inasmuch as you have not only preserved intact the inheritance bequeathed you by Cyrus, but have extended his dominion beyond the seas by your conquest of Egypt.' This answer did not seem to please the king, however, and poor Intaphernes was not a little horrified to hear him strike his fist on the table and cry, 'Flatterer, miserable flatterer!' He then turned to Croesus and asked his opinion. Our wise friend answered at once: 'My opinion is that you have not attained to the greatness of your father; for,' added he in a pacifying tone, 'one thing is wanting to you —a son such as Cyrus bequeathed us in yourself.'"

"First-rate, first-rate," cried Rhodopis clapping her hands and laughing. "An answer that would have done honor to the ready-witted Odysseus himself. And how did the king take your honeyed pill?"

"He was very much pleased, thanked Croesus, and called him his friend."

"And I," said Croesus taking up the conversation, "used the favorable opportunity to dissuade him from the campaigns he has been planning against the long lived Ethiopians, the Ammonians and the Carthaginians. Of the first of these three nations we know scarcely anything but through fabulous tales; by attacking them we should lose much and gain little. The oasis of Ammon is scarcely accessible to a large army, on account of the desert by which it is surrounded; besides which, it seems to me sacrilegious to make war upon a god in the hope of obtaining possession of his treasures, whether we be his worshippers or not. As to the Carthaginians, facts have already justified my predictions. Our fleet is manned principally by Syrians and Phoenicians, and they have, as might be expected, refused to go to war against their brethren. Cambyses laughed at my reasons, and ended by swearing, when he was

already somewhat intoxicated, that he could carry out difficult undertakings and subdue powerful nations, even without the help of Bartja and Phanes."

"What could that allusion to you mean, my son?" asked Rhodopis.

"He won the battle of Pelusiam," cried Zopyrus, before his friend could answer. "He and no one else!"

"Yes," added Croesus, "and you might have been more prudent, and have remembered that it is a dangerous thing to excite the jealousy of a man like Cambyses. You all of you forget that his heart is sore, and that the slightest vexation pains him. He has lost the woman he really loved; his dearest friend is gone; and now you want to disparage the last thing in this world that he still cares for,—his military glory."

"Don't blame him," said Bartja, grasping the old man's hand. "My brother has never been unjust, and is far from envying me what I must call my good fortune, for that my attack arrived just at the right time can hardly be reckoned as a merit on my part. You know he gave me this splendid sabre, a hundred thorough-bred horses, and a golden hand-mill as rewards of my bravery."

Croesus' words had caused Sappho a little anxiety at first; but this vanished on hearing her husband speak so confidently, and by the time Zopyrus had finished his wreath and placed it on Rhodopis' head, all her fears were forgotten.

Gyges had prepared his for the young mother. It was made of snow-white water-lilies, and, when she placed it among her brown curls, she looked so wonderfully lovely in the simple ornament, that Bartja could not help kissing her on the forehead, though so many witnesses were present. This little episode gave a merry turn to the conversation; every one did his best to enliven the others, refreshments of all kinds were handed round, and even Darius lost his gravity for a time and joined in the jests that were passing among his friends.

When the sun had set, the slaves set elegantly-carved chairs, footstools, and little tables on the open part of the deck. Our cheerful party now repaired thither and beheld a sight so marvellously beautiful as to be quite beyond their expectations.

The feast of Neith, called in Egyptian "the lampburning," was celebrated by a universal illumination, which began at the rising of the moon. The shores of the Nile looked like two long lines of fire. Every temple, house and hut was ornamented with lamps according to the means of its possessors. The porches of the country-houses and the little towers on the larger buildings were all lighted up by brilliant flames, burning in pans of pitch and sending up clouds of smoke, in which the flags and pennons waved gently backwards and forwards. The palm-trees and sycamores were silvered by the moonlight and threw strange fantastic reflections on the red waters of the Nile-red from the fiery glow of the houses on their shores. But strong and glowing as was the light of the illumination, its rays had not power to reach the middle of the giant river, where the boat was making its course, and the pleasure-party felt as if they were sailing in dark night between two brilliant days. Now and then a brightly-lighted boat would come swiftly across the river and seem, as it neared the shore, to be cutting its way through a glowing stream of molten iron.

Lotus-blossoms, white as snow, lay on the surface of the river, rising and falling with the waves, and looking like eyes in the water. Not a sound could be heard from either shore. The echoes were carried away by the north-wind, and the measured stroke of the oars and monotonous song of the rowers were the only sounds that broke the stillness of this strange night—a night robbed of its darkness.

For a long time the friends gazed without speaking at the wonderful sight, which seemed to glide past them. Zopyrus was the first to break the silence by saying, as he drew a long breath: "I really envy you, Bartja. If things were as they should be, every one of us would have his dearest wife at his side on such a night as this."

"And who forbade you to bring one of your wives?" answered the happy husband.

"The other five," said the youth with a sigh. "If I had allowed Oroetes' little daughter Parysatis, my youngest favorite, to come out alone with me to-night, this wonderful sight would have been my last; tomorrow there would have been one pair of eyes less in the world."

Bartja took Sappho's hand and held it fast, saying, "I fancy one wife will content me as long as I live." The young mother pressed his hand warmly again, and said, turning to Zopyrus: "I don't quite trust you, my friend. It seems to me that it is not the anger of your wives you fear, so much as the commission of an offence against the customs of your country. I have been told that my poor Bartja gets terribly scolded in the women's apartments for not setting eunuchs to watch over me, and for letting me share his pleasures."

"He does spoil you terribly," answered Zopyrus, "and our wives are beginning to quote him as an example of kindness and indulgence, whenever we try to hold the reins a little tight. Indeed there will soon be a regular women's mutiny at the king's gate, and the Achaemenidae who escaped the swords and arrows of the Egyptians, will fall victims to sharp tongues and floods of salt tears."

"Oh! you most impolite Persian!" said Syloson laughing. "We must make you more respectful to these images of Aphrodite."

"You Greeks! that's a good idea," answered the youth. "By Mithras, our wives are quite as well off as yours. It's only the Egyptian women, that are so wonderfully free."

"Yes, you are quite right," said Rhodopis. "The inhabitants of this strange land have for thousands of years granted our weaker sex the same rights, that they demand for themselves. Indeed, in many respects, they have given us the preference. For instance, by the Egyptian law it is the daughters, not the sons, who are commanded to foster and provide for their aged parents, showing how well the fathers of this now humbled people understood women's nature, and how rightly they acknowledged that she far surpasses man in thoughtful solicitude and self-forgetful love. Do not laugh at these worshippers of animals. I confess that I cannot understand them, but I feel true admiration for a people in the teaching of whose priests, even Pythagoras, that great master in the art of knowledge, assured me lies a wisdom as mighty as the Pyramids."

"And your great master was right," exclaimed Darius. "You know that I obtained Neithotep's freedom, and, for some weeks past, have seen him and Onuphis very constantly, indeed they have been teaching me. And oh, how much I have learnt already from those two old men, of which I had no idea before! How much that is sad I can forget, when I am listening to them! They are acquainted with the entire history of the heavens and the earth. They know the name of every king, and the circumstances of every important event that has occurred during the last four thousand years, the courses of the stars, the works of their own artists and sayings of their sages, during the same immense period of time. All this knowledge is recorded in huge books, which have been preserved in a palace at Thebes, called the "place of healing for the soul. Their laws are a fountain of pure wisdom, and a comprehensive intellect has been shown in the adaptation of all their state institutions to the needs of the country. I wish we could boast of the same regularity and order at home. The idea that lies at the root of all their knowledge is the use of numbers, the only means by which it is possible to calculate the course of the stars, to ascertain and determine the limits of all that exists, and, by the application of which in the shortening and lengthening of the strings of musical instruments, tones can be regulated."

[We agree with Iamblichus in supposing, that these Pythagorean views were derived from the Egyptian mysteries.]

"Numbers are the only certain things; they can neither be controlled nor perverted. Every nation has its own ideas of right and wrong; every law can be rendered invalid by circumstances; but the results obtained from numbers can never be overthrown. Who can dispute, for instance, that twice two make four? Numbers determine the contents of every existing thing; whatever is, is equal to its contents, numbers therefore are the true being, the essence of all that is."

"In the name of Mithras, Darius, do leave off talking in that style, unless you want to turn my brain," interrupted Zopyrus. "Why, to hear you, one would fancy you'd been spending your life among these old Egyptian speculators and had never had a sword in your hand. What on earth have we to do with numbers?"

"More than you fancy," answered Rhodopis. "This theory of numbers belongs to the mysteries of the Egyptian priests, and Pythagoras learnt it from the very Onuphis who is now teaching you, Darius. If you will come to see me soon, I will show you how wonderfully that great Samian brought the laws of numbers and of the harmonies into agreement. But look, there are the Pyramids!"

The whole party rose at these words, and stood speechless, gazing at the grand sight which opened before them.

The Pyramids lay on the left bank of the Nile, in the silver moonshine, massive and awful, as if bruising the earth beneath them with their weight; the giant graves of mighty rulers. They seemed examples of man's creative power, and at the same time warnings of the vanity and mutability of earthly greatness. For where was Chufu now,—the king who had cemented that mountain of stone with the sweat of his subjects? Where was the long-lived Chafra who had despised the gods, and, defiant in the consciousness of his own strength, was said to have closed the gates of the temples in order to make himself and his name immortal by building a tomb of superhuman dimensions?

[Herodotus repeats, in good faith, that the builders of the great Pyramids were despisers

of the gods. The tombs of their faithful subjects at the foot of these huge structures prove, however, that they owe their bad repute to the hatred of the people, who could not forget the era of their hardest bondage, and branded the memories of their oppressors wherever an opportunity could be found. We might use the word "tradition" instead of "the people," for this it is which puts the feeling and tone of mind of the multitude into the form of history.]

Their empty sarcophagi are perhaps tokens, that the judges of the dead found them unworthy of rest in the grave, unworthy of the resurrection, whereas the builder of the third and most beautiful pyramid, Menkera, who contented himself with a smaller monument, and reopened the gates of the temples, was allowed to rest in peace in his coffin of blue basalt.

There they lay in the quiet night, these mighty pyramids, shone on by the bright stars, guarded by the watchman of the desert—the gigantic sphinx,—and overlooking the barren rocks of the Libyan stony mountains. At their feet, in beautifully-ornamented tombs, slept the mummies of their faithful subjects, and opposite the monument of the pious Menkera stood a temple, where prayers were said by the priests for the souls of the many dead buried in the great Memphian city of the dead. In the west, where the sun went down behind the Libyan mountains, where the fruitful land ended and the desert began—there the people of Memphis had buried their dead; and as our gay party looked towards the west they felt awed into a solemn silence.

But their boat sped on before the north-wind; they left the city of the dead behind them and passed the enormous dikes built to protect the city of Menes from the violence of the floods; the city of the Pharaohs came in sight, dazzlingly bright with the myriads of flames which had been kindled in honor of the goddess Neith, and when at last the gigantic temple of Ptah appeared, the most ancient building of the most ancient land, the spell broke, their tongues were loosed, and they burst out into loud exclamations of delight.

It was illuminated by thousands of lamps; a hundred fires burnt on its Pylons, its battlemented walls and roofs. Burning torches flared between the rows of sphinxes which connected the various gates with the main building, and the now empty house of the god Apis was so surrounded by colored fires that it gleamed like a white limestone rock in a tropical sunset. Pennons, flags and garlands waved above the brilliant picture; music and loud songs could be heard from below.

"Glorious," cried Rhodopis in enthusiasm, "glorious! Look how the painted walls and columns gleam in the light, and what marvellous figures the shadows of the obelisks and sphinxes throw on the smooth yellow pavement!"

"And how mysterious the sacred grove looks yonder!" added Croesus. "I never saw anything so wonderful before."

"I have seen something more wonderful still," said Darius. "You will hardly believe me when I tell you that I have witnessed a celebration of the mysteries of Neith."

"Tell us what you saw, tell us!" was the universal outcry.

"At first Neithotep refused me admission, but when I promised to remain hidden, and besides, to obtain the freedom of his child, he led me up to his observatory, from which there is a very extensive view, and told me that I should see a representation of the fates of Osiris and his wife Isis.

"He had scarcely left, when the sacred grove became so brightly illuminated by colored lights that I was able to see into its innermost depths.

"A lake, smooth as glass, lay before me, surrounded by beautiful trees and flower-beds. Golden boats were sailing on this lake and in them sat lovely boys and girls dressed in snow-white garments, and singing sweet songs as they passed over the water. There were no rowers to direct these boats, and yet they moved over the ripples of the lake in a graceful order, as if guided by some magic unseen hand. A large ship sailed in the midst of this little fleet. Its deck glittered with precious stones. It seemed to be steered by one beautiful boy only, and, strange to say, the rudder he guided consisted of one white lotusflower, the delicate leaves of which seemed scarcely to touch the water. A very lovely woman, dressed like a queen, lay on silken cushions in the middle of the vessel; by her side sat a man of larger stature than that of ordinary mortals. He wore a crown of ivy on his flowing curls, a panther-skin hung over his shoulders and he held a crooked staff in the right hand. In the back part of the ship was a roof made of ivy, lotus- blossoms and roses; beneath it stood a milk-white cow with golden horns, covered with a cloth of purple. The man was Osiris, the woman Isis, the boy at the helm their son Horus, and the cow was the animal sacred to the immortal Isis. The little boats all skimmed over the water, singing glad songs of joy as they passed by the ship, and receiving in return showers of flowers and fruits,

thrown down upon the lovely singers by the god and goddess within. Suddenly I heard the roll of thunder. It came crashing on, louder, and louder, and in the midst of this awful sound a man in the skin of a wild boar, with hideous features and bristling red hair, came out of the gloomiest part of the sacred grove, plunged into the lake, followed by seventy creatures like himself, and swam up to the ship of Osiris.

[We have taken our description of this spectacle entirely from the Osiris-myth, as we find it in Plutarch, Isis and Orisis 13-19. Diod. I. 22. and a thousand times repeated on the monuments. Horus is called "the avenger of his father," &c. We copy the battle with all its phases from an inscription at Edfu, interpreted by Naville.]

"The little boats fled with the swiftness of the wind, and the trembling boy helmsman dropped his lotusblossom.

"The dreadful monster then rushed on Osiris, and, with the help of his comrades, killed him, threw the body into a coffin and the coffin into the lake, the waters of which seemed to carry it away as if by magic. Isis meanwhile had escaped to land in one of the small boats, and was now running hither and thither on the shores of the lake, with streaming hair, lamenting her dead husband and followed by the virgins who had escaped with her. Their songs and dances, while seeking the body of Osiris, were strangely plaintive and touching, and the girls accompanied the dance by waving black Byssus scarfs in wonderfully graceful curves. Neither were the youths idle; they busied themselves in making a costly coffin for the vanished corpse of the god, accompanying their work with dances and the sound of castanets. When this was finished they joined the maidens in the train of the lamenting Isis and wandered on the shore with them, singing and searching.

"Suddenly a low song rose from some invisible lips. It swelled louder and louder and announced, that the body of the god had been transported by the currents of the Mediterranean to Gebal in distant Phoenicia. This singing voice thrilled to my very heart; Neithotep's son, who was my companion, called it 'the wind of rumor.'

"When Isis heard the glad news, she threw off her mourning garments and sang a song of triumphant rejoicing, accompanied by the voices of her beautiful followers. Rumor had not lied; the goddess really found the sarcophagus and the dead body of her husband on the northern shore of the lake.

[It is natural, that Isis should find the body of her husband in the north. The connection between Phoenicia and Egypt in this myth, as it has been handed down to us by Plutarch, is very remarkable. We consider the explanation of the close affinity between the Isis and Osiris and the Adonis myths to be in the fact, that Egyptians and Phoenicians lived together on the shores of the Delta where the latter had planted their colonies. Plutarch's story of the finding of Osiris' dead body is very charming. Isis and Osiris. Ed. Parth. 15.]

"They brought both to land with dances; Isis threw herself on the beloved corpse, called on the name of Osiris and covered the mummy with kisses, while the youths wove a wonderful tomb of lotus-flowers and ivy.

"When the coffin had been laid under this beautiful vault, Isis left the sad place of mourning and went to look for her son. She found him at the east end of the lake, where for a long time I had seen a beautiful youth practising arms with a number of companions.

"While she was rejoicing over her newly-found child, a fresh peal of thunder told that Typhon had returned. This time the monster rushed upon the beautiful flowering grave, tore the body out of its coffin, hewed it into fourteen pieces, and strewed them over the shores of the lake.

"When Isis came back to the grave, she found nothing but faded flowers and an empty coffin; but at fourteen different places on the shore fourteen beautiful colored flames were burning. She and her virgins ran to these flames, while Horus led the youths to battle against Typhon on the opposite shore.

"My eyes and ears hardly sufficed for all I had to see and hear. On the one shore a fearful and interesting struggle, peals of thunder and the braying of trumpets; on the other the sweet voices of the women, singing the most captivating songs to the most enchanting dances, for Isis had found a portion of her husband's body at every fire and was rejoicing.

"That was something for you, Zopyrus! I know of no words to describe the grace of those girls' movements, or how beautiful it was to see them first mingling in intricate confusion, then suddenly standing in faultless, unbroken lines, falling again into the same lovely tumult and passing once more into order, and all this with the greatest swiftness. Bright rays of light flashed from their whirling ranks all the time, for each dancer had a mirror fastened between her shoulders, which flashed while she was in motion, and reflected the scene when she was still.

"Just as Isis had found the last limb but one of the murdered Osiris, loud songs of triumph and the flourish of trumpets resounded from the opposite shore.

"Horus had conquered Typhon, and was forcing his way into the nether regions to free his father. The gate to this lower world opened on the west side of the lake and was guarded by a fierce female hippopotamus.

"And now a lovely music of flutes and harps came nearer and nearer, heavenly perfumes rose into the air, a rosy light spread over the sacred grove, growing brighter every minute, and Osiris came up from the lower world, led by his victorious son. Isis hastened to embrace her risen and delivered husband, gave the beautiful Horus his lotus-flower again instead of the sword, and scattered fruits and flowers over the earth, while Osiris seated himself under a canopy wreathed with ivy, and received the homage of all the spirits of the earth and of the Amenti."

[The lower world, in Egyptian Amenti, properly speaking, the West or kingdom of death, to which the soul returns at the death of the body, as the sun at his setting. In a hieroglyphic inscription of the time of the Ptolemies the Amenti is called Hades.]

Darius was silent. Rhodopis began:

"We thank you for your charming account; but this strange spectacle must have a higher meaning, and we should thank you doubly if you would explain that to us."

"Your idea is quite right," answered Darius, "but what I know I dare not tell. I was obliged to promise Neithotep with an oath, not to tell tales out of school."

"Shall I tell you," asked Rhodopis, "what conclusions various hints from Pythagoras and Onuphis have led me to draw, as to the meaning of this drama? Isis seems to me to represent the bountiful earth; Osiris, humidity or the Nile, which makes the earth fruitful; Horus, the young spring; Typhon, the scorching drought. The bounteous earth, robbed of her productive power, seeks this beloved husband with lamentations in the cooler regions of the north, where the Nile discharges his waters. At last Horus, the young springing power of nature, is grown up and conquers Typhon, or the scorching drought. Osiris, as is the case with the fruitful principle of nature, was only apparently dead, rises from the nether regions and once more rules the blessed valley of the Nile, in concert with his wife, the bounteous earth."

"And as the murdered god behaved properly in the lower regions," said Zopyrus, laughing, "he is allowed, at the end of this odd story, to receive homage from the inhabitants of Hamestegan, Duzakh and Gorohtman, or whatever they call these abodes for the Egyptian spirit-host."

"They are called Amenti," said Darius, falling into his friend's merry mood; but you must know that the history of this divine pair represents not only the life of nature, but also that of the human soul, which, like the murdered Osiris, lives an eternal life, even when the body is dead."

"Thank you," said the other; "I'll try to remember that if I should chance to die in Egypt. But really, cost what it may, I must see this wonderful sight soon."

"Just my own wish," said Rhodopis. "Age is inquisitive."

"You will never be old," interrupted Darius. "Your conversation and your features have remained alike beautiful, and your mind is as clear and bright as your eyes."

"Forgive me for interrupting you," said Rhodopis, as if she had not heard his flattering words, "but the word 'eyes' reminds me of the oculist Nebenchari, and my memory fails me so often, that I must ask you what has become of him, before I forget. I hear nothing now of this skilful operator to whom the noble Kassandane owes her sight."

"He is much to be pitied," replied Darius. "Even before we reached Pelusium he had begun to avoid society, and scorned even to speak with his countryman Onuphis. His gaunt old servant was the only being allowed to wait on or be with him. But after the battle his whole behavior changed. He went to the king with a radiant countenance, and asked permission to accompany him to Sais, and to choose two citizens of that town to be his slaves. Cambyses thought he could not refuse anything to the man, who had been such a benefactor to his mother, and granted him full power to do what he wished. On arriving at Amasis' capital, he went at once to the temple of Neith, caused the high-priest (who had moreover placed himself at the head of the citizens hostile to Persia), to be arrested, and with him a certain oculist named Petammon. He then informed them that, as punishment for the burning of certain papers, they would be condemned to serve a Persian to whom he should sell them, for the term of their natural lives, and to perform the most menial services of slaves in a foreign country. I was present at

this scene, and I assure you I trembled before the Egyptian as he said these words to his enemies. Neithotep, however, listened quietly, and when Nebenchari had finished, answered him thus: If thou, foolish son, hast betrayed thy country for the sake of thy burnt manuscripts, the deed has been neither just nor wise. I preserved thy valuable works with the greatest care, laid them up in our temple, and sent a complete copy to the library at Thebes. Nothing was burnt but the letters from Amasis to thy father, and a worthless old chest. Psamtik and Petammon were present, and it was then and there resolved that a new family tomb in the city of the dead should be built for thee as a compensation for the loss of papers, which, in order to save Egypt, we were unfortunately forced to destroy. On its walls thou canst behold pleasing paintings of the gods to whom thou hast devoted thy life, the most sacred chapters from the book of the dead, and many other beautiful pictures touching thine own life and character."

"The physician turned very pale—asked first to see his books, and then his new and beautifully-fitted-up tomb. He then gave his slaves their freedom, (notwithstanding which they were still taken to Memphis as prisoners of war), and went home, often passing his hand across his forehead on the way, and with the uncertain step of one intoxicated. On reaching his house he made a will, bequeathing all he possessed to the grandson of his old servant Hib, and, alleging that he was ill, went to bed. The next morning he was found dead. He had poisoned himself with the fearful strychnos-juice."

"Miserable man" said Croesus. "The gods had blinded him, and he reaped despair instead of revenge, as a reward for his treachery."

"I pity him," murmured Rhodopis. "But look, the rowers are taking in their oars. We are at the end of our journey; there are your litters and carriages waiting for you. It was a beautiful trip. Farewell, my dear ones; come to Naukratis soon, I shall return at once with Theopompus and Syloson. Give little Parmys a thousand kisses from me, and tell Melitta never to take her out at noon. It is dangerous for the eyes. Good-night, Croesus; good-night, friends, farewell my dear son."

The Persians left the vessel with many a nod and farewell word, and Bartja, looking round once more, missed his footing and fell on the landing-pier.

He sprang up in a moment without Zopyrus' help, who came running back, calling out, "Take care, Bartja! It's unlucky to fall in stepping ashore. I did the very same thing, when we left the ship that time at Naukratis."

CHAPTER XIV.

While our friends were enjoying their row on the Nile, Cambyses' envoy, Prexaspes, had returned from a mission to the long-lived Ethiopians. He praised their strength and stature, described the way to their country as almost inaccessible to a large army, and had plenty of marvellous tales to tell. How, for instance; they always chose the strongest and handsomest man in their nation for their king, and obeyed him unconditionally: how many of them reached the age of 120 years, and some even passed it: how they ate nothing but boiled flesh, drank new milk and washed in a spring the waters of which had the scent of violets, gave a remarkable lustre to their skins, and were so light that wood could not swim in them: how their captives wore golden fetters, because other metals were rare and dear in their country; and lastly, how they covered the bodies of the dead with plaster or stucco, over which a coating of some glass-like material was poured, and kept the pillars thus formed one year in their houses, during which time sacrifices were offered them, and at the year's end they were placed in rows around the town.

The king of this strange people had accepted Cambyses' presents, saying, in a scornful tone, that he new well his friendship was of no importance to the Persians, and Prexaspes had only been sent to spy out the land. If the prince of Asia were a just man, he would be contented with his own immense empire and not try to subjugate a people who had done him no wrong. "Take your king this bow," he said, "and advise him not to begin the war with us, until the Persians are able to bend such weapons as easily as we do. Cambyses may thank the gods, that the Ethiopians have never taken it into their heads to conquer countries which do not belong to them."

He then unbent his mighty bow of ebony, and gave it to Prexaspes to take to his lord.

Cambyses laughed at the bragging African, invited his nobles to a trial of the bow the next morning, and awarded Prexaspes for the clever way in which he had overcome the difficulties of his journey and

acquitted himself of his mission. He then went to rest, as usual intoxicated, and fell into a disturbed sleep, in which he dreamed that Bartja was seated on the throne of Persia, and that the crown of his head touched the heavens.

This was a dream, which he could interpret without the aid of soothsayer or Chaldean. It roused his anger first, and then made him thoughtful.

He could not sleep, and such questions as the following came into his mind: "Haven't you given your brother reason to feel revengeful? Do you think he can forget that you imprisoned and condemned him to death, when he was innocent? And if he should raise his hand against you, would not all the Achaemenidae take his part? Have I ever done, or have I any intention of ever doing anything to win the love of these venal courtiers? Since Nitetis died and that strange Greek fled, has there been a single human being, in whom I have the least confidence or on whose affection I can rely?"

These thoughts and questionings excited him so fearfully, that he sprang from his bed, crying: "Love and I have nothing to do with one another. Other men maybe kind and good if they like; I must be stern, or I shall fall into the hands of those who hate me—hate me because I have been just, and have visited heavy sins with heavy chastisements. They whisper flattering words in my ear; they curse me when my back is turned. The gods themselves must be my enemies, or why do they rob me of everything I love, deny me posterity and even that military glory which is my just due? Is Bartja so much better than I, that everything which I am forced to give up should be his in hundred-fold measure? Love, friendship, fame, children, everything flows to him as the rivers to the sea, while my heart is parched like the desert. But I am king still. I can show him which is the stronger of us two, and I will, though his forehead may touch the heavens. In Persia there can be only one great man. He or I, —I or he. In a few days I'll send him back to Asia and make him satrap of Bactria. There he can nurse his child and listen to his wife's songs, while I am winning glory in Ethiopia, which it shall not be in his power to lessen. Ho, there, dressers! bring my robes and a good morning- draught of wine. I'll show the Persians that I'm fit to be King of Ethiopia, and can beat them all at bending a bow. Here, give me another cup of wine. I'd bend that bow, if it were a young cedar and its string a cable!" So saying he drained an immense bowl of wine and went into the palace-garden, conscious of his enormous strength and therefore sure of success.

All his nobles were assembled waiting for him there, welcomed him with loud acclamations, and fell on their faces to the ground before their king.

Pillars, connected by scarlet cords, had been quickly set up between the closely-cut hedges and straight avenues. From these cords, suspended by gold and silver rings, yellow and dark blue hangings fluttered in the breeze. Gilded wooden benches had been placed round in a large circle, and nimble cup-bearers handed wine in costly vessels to the company assembled for the shooting-match.

At a sign from the king the Achaemenidae rose from the earth.

Cambyses glanced over their ranks, and his face brightened on seeing that Bartja was not there. Prexaspes handed him the Ethiopian bow, and pointed out a target at some distance. Cambyses laughed at the large size of the target, weighted the bow with his right hand, challenged his subjects to try their fortune first, and handed the bow to the aged Hystaspes, as the highest in rank among the Achaemenidae.

While Hystaspes first, and then all the heads of the six other highest families in Persia, were using their utmost efforts to bend this monster weapon in vain, the king emptied goblet after goblet of wine, his spirits rising as he watched their vain endeavors to solve the Ethiopian's problem. At last Darius, who was famous for his skill in archery, took the bow. Nearly the same result. The wood was inflexible as iron and all his efforts only availed to move it one finger's breadth. The king gave him a friendly nod in reward for his success, and then, looking round on his friends and relations in a manner that betokened the most perfect assurance, he said: "Give me the bow now, Darius. I will show you, that there is only one man in Persia who deserves the name of king; —only one who can venture to take the field against the Ethiopians;— only one who can bend this bow."

He grasped it tightly with his left hand, taking the string, which was as thick as a man's finger and made from the intestines of a lion, in his right, fetched a deep breath, bent his mighty back and pulled and pulled; collected all his strength for greater and greater efforts, strained his sinews till they threatened to break, and the veins in his forehead were swollen to bursting, did not even disdain to use his feet and legs, but all in vain. After a quarter of an hour of almost superhuman exertion, his strength gave way, the ebony, which he had succeeded in bending even farther than Darius, flew back and set all his further endeavors at naught. At last, feeling himself thoroughly exhausted, he dashed the bow on to the ground in a passion, crying: "The Ethiopian is a liar! no mortal man has ever bent that bow. What is impossible for my arm is possible for no other. In three days we will start for Ethiopia. I will

challenge the impostor to a single combat, and ye shall see which is the stronger. Take up the bow, Prexaspes, and keep it carefully. The black liar shall be strangled with his own bow-string. This wood is really harder than iron, and I confess that the man who could bend it, would really be my master. I should not be ashamed to call him so, for he must be of better stuff than I."

As he finished speaking, Bartja appeared in the circle of assembled Persians. His glorious figure was set off to advantage by his rich dress, his features were bright with happiness and a feeling of conscious strength. He passed through the ranks of the Achaemenidae with many a friendly nod, which was warmly returned, and going straight to his brother, kissed his robe, looked up frankly and cheerfully into his gloomy eyes, and said: "I am a little late, and ask your forgiveness, my lord and brother. Or have I really come in time? Yes, yes, I see there's no arrow in the target yet, so I am sure you, the best archer in the world, cannot have tried your strength yet. But you look so enquiringly at me. Then I will confess that our child kept me. The little creature laughed to-day for the first time, and was so charming with its mother, that I forgot how time was passing while I watched them. You have all full leave to laugh at my folly; I really don't know how to excuse myself. See, the little one has pulled my star from the chain. But I think, my brother, you will give me a new one to-day if I should hit the bull's eye. Shall I shoot first, or will you begin, my Sovereign?"

"Give him the bow, Prexaspes," said Cambyses, not even deigning to look at his brother.

Bartja took it and was proceeding to examine the wood and the string, when Cambyses suddenly called out, with a mocking laugh: "By Mithras, I believe you want to try your sweet looks on the bow, and win its favor in that fashion, as you do the hearts of men. Give it back to Prexaspes. It's easier to play with beautiful women and laughing children, than with a weapon like this, which mocks the strength even of real men."

Bartja blushed with anger and annoyance at this speech, which was uttered in the bitterest tone, picked up the giant arrow that lay before him, placed himself opposite the target, summoned all his strength, bent the bow, by an almost superhuman effort, and sent the arrow into the very centre of the target, where its iron point remained, while the wooden shaft split into a hundred shivers.

[Herodotus tells this story (III, 30.), and we are indebted to him also for our information of the events which follow. The following inscription, said to have been placed over the grave of Darius, and communicated by Onesikritus, (Strabo 730.) proves that the Persians were very proud of being reputed good archers: "I was a friend to my friends, the best rider and archer, a first-rate hunter; I could do everything."]

Most of the Achaemenidae burst into loud shouts of delight at this marvellous proof of strength; but Bartja's nearest friends turned pale and were silent; they were watching the king, who literally quivered with rage, and Bartja, who was radiant with pride and joy.

Cambyses was a fearful sight at that moment. It seemed to him as if that arrow, in piercing the target, had pierced his own heart, his strength, dignity and honor. Sparks floated before his eyes, in his ears was a sound like the breaking of a stormy sea on the shore; his cheeks glowed and he grasped the arm of Prexaspes who was at his side. Prexaspes only too well understood what that pressure meant, when given by a royal hand, and murmured: "Poor Bartja!"

At last the king succeeded in recovering his presence of mind. Without saying a word, he threw a gold chain to his brother, ordered his nobles to follow him, and left the garden, but only to wander restlessly up and down his apartments, and try to drown his rage in wine. Suddenly he seemed to have formed a resolution and ordered all the courtiers, except Prexaspes, to leave the hall. When they were alone, he called out in a hoarse voice and with a look that proved the extent of his intoxication: "This life is not to be borne! Rid me of my enemy, and I will call you my friend and benefactor."

Prexaspes trembled, threw himself at the king's feet and raised his hands imploringly; but Cambyses was too intoxicated, and too much blinded by his hatred to understand the action. He fancied the prostration was meant as a sign of devotion to his will, signed to him to rise, and whispered, as if afraid of hearing his own words: "Act quickly and secretly; and, as you value your life, let no one know of the upstart's death. Depart, and when your work is finished, take as much as you like out of the treasury. But keep your wits about you. The boy has a strong arm and a winning tongue. Think of your own wife and children, if he tries to win you over with his smooth words."

As he spoke he emptied a fresh goblet of pure wine, staggered through the door of the room, calling out as he turned his back on Prexaspes: "Woe be to you if that upstart, that woman's hero, that fellow who has robbed me of my honor, is left alive."

Long after he had left the hall, Prexaspes stood fixed on the spot where he had heard these words.

The man was ambitious, but neither mean nor bad, and he felt crushed by the awful task allotted to him. He knew that his refusal to execute it would bring death or disgrace on himself and on his family; but he loved Bartja, and besides, his whole nature revolted at the thought of becoming a common, hired murderer. A fearful struggle began in his mind, and raged long after he left the palace. On the way home he met Croesus and Darius. He fancied they would see from his looks that he was already on the way to a great crime, and hid himself behind the projecting gate of a large Egyptian house. As they passed, he heard Croesus say: "I reproached him bitterly, little as he deserves reproach in general, for having given such an inopportune proof of his great strength. We may really thank the gods, that Cambyses did not lay violent hands on him in a fit of passion. He has followed my advice now and gone with his wife to Sais. For the next few days Bartja must not come near the king; the mere sight of him might rouse his anger again, and a monarch can always find unprincipled servants . . ."

The rest of the sentence died away in the distance, but the words he had heard were enough to make Prexaspes start, as if Croesus had accused him of the shameful deed. He resolved in that moment that, come what would, his hands should not be stained with the blood of a friend. This resolution restored him his old erect bearing and firm gait for the time, but when he reached the dwelling which had been assigned as his abode in Sais his two boys ran to the door to meet him. They had stolen away from the play-ground of the sons of the Achaemenidae, (who, as was always the case, had accompanied the king and the army), to see their father for a moment. He felt a strange tenderness, which he could not explain to himself, on taking them in his arms, and kissed the beautiful boys once more on their telling him that they must go back to their play-ground again, or they should be punished. Within, he found his favorite wife playing with their youngest child, a sweet little girl. Again the same strange, inexplicable feeling of tenderness. He overcame it this time for fear of betraying his secret to his young wife, and retired to his own apartment early.

Night had come on.

The sorely-tried man could not sleep; he turned restlessly from side to side. The fearful thought, that his refusal to do the king's will would be the ruin of his wife and children, stood before his wakeful eyes in the most vivid colors. The strength to keep his good resolution forsook him, and even Croesus' words, which, when he first heard them had given his nobler feelings the victory, now came in as a power on the other side. "A monarch can always find unprincipled servants." Yes, the words were an affront, but at the same time a reminder, that though he might defy the king's command a hundred others would be ready to obey it. No sooner had this thought become clear to him, than he started up, examined a number of daggers which hung, carefully arranged, above his bed, and laid the sharpest on the little table before him.

He then began to pace the room in deep thought, often going to the opening which served as a window, to cool his burning forehead and see if dawn were near.

When at last daylight appeared, he heard the sounding brass calling the boys to early prayer. That reminded him of his sons and he examined the dagger a second time. A troop of gaily-dressed courtiers rode by on their way to the king. He put the dagger in his girdle; and at last, on hearing the merry laughter of his youngest child sound from the women's apartments, he set the tiara hastily on his head, left the house without taking leave of his wife, and, accompanied by a number of slaves, went down to the Nile. There he threw himself into a boat and ordered the rowers to take him to Sais.

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A few hours after the fatal shooting-match, Bartja had followed Croesus' advice and had gone off to Sais with his young wife. They found Rhodopis there. She had yielded to an irresistible impulse and, instead of returning to Naukratis, had stopped at Sais. Bartja's fall on stepping ashore had disturbed her, and she had with her own eyes seen an owl fly from the left side close by his head. These evil omens, to a heart which had by no means outgrown the superstitions of the age, added to a confused succession of distressing dreams which had disturbed her slumbers, and her usual wish to be always near Bartja and Sappho, led her to decide quickly on waiting for her granddaughter at Sais.

Bartja and Sappho were delighted to find such a welcome guest, and after she had dandled and played with her great grandchild, the little Parmys, to her heart's content, they led her to the rooms which had been prepared for her.

[Herodotus states, that beside Atossa, &c.. Darius took a daughter of the deceased Bartja, named Parmys, to be his wife. Herod. III. 88. She is also mentioned VII. 78.]

They were the same in which the unhappy Tachot had spent the last months of her fading existence. Rhodopis could not see all the little trifles which showed, not only the age and sex of the former occupant, but her tastes and disposition, without feeling very sad. On the dressing-table were a number

of little ointment-boxes and small bottles for perfumes, cosmetics, washes and oils. Two larger boxes, one in the form of a Nile- goose, and another on the side of which a woman playing on a lute had been painted, had once contained the princess's costly golden ornaments, and the metal mirror with a handle in the form of a sleeping maiden, had once reflected her beautiful face with its pale pink flush. Everything in the room, from the elegant little couch resting on lions' claws, to the delicately-carved ivory combs on the toilet-table, proved that the outward adornments of life had possessed much charm for the former owner of these rooms. The golden sisirum and the delicately-wrought nabla, the strings of which had long ago been broken, testified to her taste for music, while the broken spindle in the corner, and some unfinished nets of glass beads shewed that she had been fond of woman's usual work.

It was a sad pleasure to Rhodopis to examine all these things, and the picture which she drew in her own mind of Tachot after the inspection, differed very little from the reality. At last interest and curiosity led her to a large painted chest. She lifted the light cover and found, first, a few dried flowers; then a ball, round which some skilful hand had wreathed roses and leaves, once fresh and bright, now, alas, long ago dead and withered. Beside these were a number of amulets in different forms, one representing the goddess of truth, another containing spells written on a strip of papyrus and concealed in a little golden case. Then her eyes fell on some letters written in the Greek character. She read them by the light of the lamp. They were from Nitetis in Persia to her supposed sister, and were written in ignorance of the latter's illness. When Rhodopis laid them down her eyes were full of tears. The dead girl's secret lay open before her. She knew now that Tachot had loved Bartja, that he had given her the faded flowers, and that she had wreathed the ball with roses because he had thrown it to her. The amulets must have been intended either to heal her sick heart, or to awaken love in his.

As she was putting the letters back in their old place, she touched some cloths which seemed put in to fill up the bottom of the chest, and felt a hard round substance underneath. She raised them, and discovered a bust made of colored wax, such a wonderfully-exact portrait of Nitetis, that an involuntary exclamation of surprise broke from her, and it was long before she could turn her eyes away from Theodorus' marvellous work.

She went to rest and fell asleep, thinking of the sad fate of Nitetis, the Egyptian Princess.

The next morning Rhodopis went into the garden—the same into which we led our readers during the lifetime of Amasis—and found Bartja and Sappho in an arbor overgrown with vines.

Sappho was seated in a light wicker-work chair. Her child lay on her lap, stretching out its little hands and feet, sometimes to its father, who was kneeling on the ground before them, and then to its mother whose laughing face was bent down over her little one.

Bartja was very happy with his child. When the little creature buried its tiny fingers in his curls and beard, he would draw his head back to feel the strength of the little hand, would kiss its rosy feet, its little round white shoulders and dimpled arms. Sappho enjoyed the fun, always trying to draw the little one's attention to its father.

Sometimes, when she stooped down to kiss the rosy baby lips, her forehead would touch his curls and he would steal the kiss meant for the little Parmys.

Rhodopis watched them a long time unperceived, and, with tears of joy in her eyes, prayed the gods that they might long be as happy as they now were. At last she came into the arbor to wish them good-morning, and bestowed much praise on old Melitta for appearing at the right moment, parasol in hand, to take her charge out of the sunshine before it became too bright and hot, and put her to sleep.

The old slave had been appointed head-nurse to the high-born child, and acquitted herself in her new office with an amount of importance which was very comical. Hiding her old limbs under rich Persian robes, she moved about exulting in the new and delightful right to command, and kept her inferiors in perpetual motion.

Sappho followed Melitta into the palace, first whispering in her husband's ear with her arm round his neck: "Tell my grandmother everything and ask whether you are right."

Before he could answer, she had stopped his mouth with a kiss, and then hurried after the old woman who was departing with dignified steps.

The prince smiled as he watched her graceful walk and beautiful figure, and said, turning to Rhodopis: "Does not it strike you, that she has grown taller lately?"

"It seems so," answered Rhodopis. "A woman's girlhood has its own peculiar charm, but her true dignity comes with motherhood. It is the feeling of having fulfilled her destiny, which raises her head and makes us fancy she has grown taller."

"Yes," said Bartja, "I think she is happy. Yesterday our opinions differed for the first time, and as she was leaving us just now, she begged me, privately, to lay the question before you, which I am very glad to do, for I honor your experience and wisdom just as much, as I love her childlike inexperience."

Bartja then told the story of the unfortunate shooting-match, finishing with these words: "Croesus blames my imprudence, but I know my brother; I know that when he is angry he is capable of any act of violence, and it is not impossible that at the moment when he felt himself defeated he could have killed me; but I know too, that when his fierce passion has cooled, he will forget my boastful deed, and only try to excel me by others of the same kind. A year ago he was by far the best marksman in Persia, and would be so still, if drink and epilepsy had not undermined his strength. I must confess I feel as if I were becoming stronger every day."

"Yes," interrupted Rhodopis, "pure happiness strengthens a man's arm, just as it adds to the beauty of a woman, while intemperance and mental distress ruin both body and mind far more surely even than old age. My son, beware of your brother; his strong arm has become paralyzed, and his generosity can be forfeited too. Trust my experience, that the man who is the slave of one evil passion, is very seldom master of the rest; besides which, no one feels humiliation so bitterly as he who is sinking—who knows that his powers are forsaking him. I say again, beware of your brother, and trust the voice of experience more than that of your own heart, which, because it is generous itself, believes every one else to be so."

"I see," said Bartja, "that you will take Sappho's side. Difficult as it will be for her to part from you, she has still begged me to return with her to Persia. She thinks that Cambyses may forget his anger, when I am out of sight. I thought she was over-anxious, and besides, it would disappoint me not to take part in the expedition against the Ethiopians."

"But I entreat you," interrupted Rhodopis, "to follow her advice. The gods only know what pain it will give me to lose you both, and yet I repeat a thousand times: Go back to Persia, and remember that none but fools stake life and happiness to no purpose. As to the war with Ethiopia, it is mere madness; instead of subduing those black inhabitants of the south, you yourselves will be conquered by heat, thirst and all the horrors of the desert. In saying this I refer to the campaigns in general; as to your own share in them, I can only say that if no fame is to be won there, you will be putting your own life and the happiness of your family in jeopardy literally for nothing, and that if, on the other hand, you should distinguish yourself again, it would only be giving fresh cause of jealousy and anger to your brother. No, go to Persia, as soon as you can."

Bartja was just beginning to make various objections to these arguments, when he caught sight of Prexaspes coming up to them, looking very pale.

After the usual greeting, the envoy whispered to Bartja, that he should like to speak with him alone. Rhodopis left them at once, and he began, playing with the rings on his right hand as he spoke, in a constrained, embarrassed way. "I come from the king. Your display of strength irritated him yesterday, and he does not wish to see you again for some time. His orders are, that you set out for Arabia to buy up all the camels that are to be had.

[Camels are never represented on the Egyptian monuments, whereas they were in great use among the Arabians and Persians, and are now a necessity on the Nile. They must have existed in Egypt, however. Hekekyan-Bey discovered the bones of a dromedary in a deep bore. Representations of these creatures were probably forbid We know this was the case with the cock, of which bird there were large numbers in Egypt: It is remarkable, that camels were not introduced into Barbary until after the birth of Christ.]

"As these animals can bear thirst very long, they are to be used in conveying food and water for our army on the Ethiopian campaign. There must be no delay. Take leave of your wife, and (I speak by the king's command) be ready to start before dark. You will be absent at least a month. I am to accompany you as far as Pelusium. Kassandane wishes to have your wife and child near her during your absence. Send them to Memphis as soon as possible; under the protection of the queen mother, they will be in safety."

Prexaspes' short, constrained way of speaking did not strike Bartja. He rejoiced at what seemed to him great moderation on the part of his brother, and at receiving a commission which relieved him of all doubt on the question of leaving Egypt, gave his friend, (as he supposed him to be), his hand to kiss and an invitation to follow him into the palace.

In the cool of the evening, he took a short but very affectionate farewell of Sappho and his child, who was asleep in Melitta's arms, told his wife to set out as soon as possible on her journey to Kassandane, called out jestingly to his mother-in-law, that at least this time she had been mistaken in her judgment

of a man's character, (meaning his brother's), and sprang on to his horse.

As Prexaspes was mounting, Sappho whispered to him, "Take care of that reckless fellow, and remind him of me and his child, when you see him running into unnecessary danger."

"I shall have to leave him at Pelusium," answered the envoy, busying himself with the bridle of his horse in order to avoid meeting her eyes.

"Then may the gods take him into their keeping!" exclaimed Sappho, clasping her husband's hand, and bursting into tears, which she could not keep back. Bartja looked down and saw his usually trustful wife in tears. He felt sadder than he had ever felt before. Stooping down lovingly from his saddle, he put his strong arm round her waist, lifted her up to him, and as she stood supporting herself on his foot in the stirrup, pressed her to his heart, as if for a long last farewell. He then let her safely and gently to the ground, took his child up to him on the saddle, kissed and fondled the little creature, and told her laughingly to make her mother very happy while he was away, exchanged some warm words of farewell with Rhodopis, and then, spurring his horse till the creature reared, dashed through the gateway of the Pharaohs' palace, with Prexaspes at his side.

When the sound of the horses' hoofs had died away in the distance, Sappho laid her head on her grandmother's shoulder and wept uncontrollably. Rhodopis remonstrated and blamed, but all in vain, she could not stop her tears.

CHAPTER XV.

On the morning after the trial of the bow, Cambyses was seized by such a violent attack of his old illness, that he was forced to keep his room for two days and nights, ill in mind and body; at times raging like a madman, at others weak and powerless as a little child.

On the third day he recovered consciousness and remembered the awful charge he had laid on Prexaspes, and that it was only too possible he might have executed it already. At this thought he trembled, as he had never trembled in his life before. He sent at once for the envoy's eldest son, who was one of the royal cup-bearers. The boy said his father had left Memphis, without taking leave of his family. He then sent for Darius, Zopyrus and Gyges, knowing how tenderly they loved Bartja, and enquired after their friend. On hearing from them that he was at Sais, he sent the three youths thither at once, charging them, if they met Prexaspes on the way, to send him back to Memphis without delay. This haste and the king's strange behavior were quite incomprehensible to the young Achaemenidae; nevertheless they set out on their journey with all speed, fearing that something must be wrong.

Cambyses, meanwhile, was miserably restless, inwardly cursed his habit of drinking and tasted no wine the whole of that day. Seeing his mother in the palace-gardens, he avoided her; he durst not meet her eye.

The next eight days passed without any sign of Prexaspes' return; they seemed to the king like a year. A hundred times he sent for the young cup-bearer and asked if his father had returned; a hundred times he received the same disappointing answer.

At sunset on the thirteenth day, Kassandane sent to beg a visit from him. The king went at once, for now he longed to look on the face of his mother; he fancied it might give him back his lost sleep.

After he had greeted her with a tenderness so rare from him, that it astonished her, he asked for what reason she had desired his presence. She answered, that Bartja's wife had arrived at Memphis under singular circumstances and had said she wished to present a gift to Cambyses. He gave Sappho an audience at once, and heard from her that Prexaspes had brought her husband an order to start for Arabia, and herself a summons to Memphis from the queen-mother. At these words the king turned very pale, and his features were agitated with pain as he looked at his brother's lovely young wife. She felt that something unusual was passing in his mind, and such dreadful forebodings arose in her own, that she could only offer him the gift in silence and with trembling hands.

"My husband sends you this," she said, pointing to the ingeniously-wrought box, which contained the wax likeness of Nitetis. Rhodopis had advised her to take this to the king in Bartja's name, as a propitiatory offering.

Cambyses showed no curiosity as to the contents of the box, gave it in charge to a eunuch, said a few words which seemed meant as thanks to his sister-in law, and left the women's apartments without even so much as enquiring after Atossa, whose existence he seemed to have forgotten.

He had come to his mother, believing that the visit would comfort and calm his troubled mind, but Sappho's words had destroyed his last hope, and with that his last possibility of rest or peace. By this time either Prexaspes would already have committed the murder, or perhaps at that very moment might be raising his dagger to plunge it into Bartja's heart.

How could he ever meet his mother again after Bartja's death? how could he answer her questions or those of that lovely Sappho, whose large, anxious, appealing eyes had touched him so strangely?

A voice within told him, that his brother's murder would be branded as a cowardly, unnatural, and unjust deed, and he shuddered at the thought. It seemed fearful, unbearable, to be called an assassin. He had already caused the death of many a man without the least compunction, but that had been done either in fair fight, or openly before the world. He was king, and what the king did was right. Had he killed Bartja with his own hand, his conscience would not have reproached him; but to have had him privately put out of the way, after he had given so many proofs of possessing first-rate manly qualities, which deserved the highest praise —this tortured him with a feeling of rage at his own want of principle, -a feeling of shame and remorse which he had never known before. He began to despise himself. The consciousness of having acted, and wished to act justly, forsook him, and he began to fancy, that every one who had been executed by his orders, had been, like Bartja, an innocent victim of his fierce anger. These thoughts became so intolerable, that he began to drink once more in the hope of drowning them. But now the wine had precisely the opposite effect, and brought such tormenting thoughts, that, worn out as he was already by epileptic fits and his habit of drinking, both body and mind threatened to give way to the agitation caused by the events of the last months. Burning and shivering by turns, he was at last forced to lie down. While the attendants were disrobing him, he remembered his brother's present, had the box fetched and opened, and then desired to be left alone. The Egyptian paintings on the outside of the box reminded him of Nitetis, and then he asked himself what she would have said to his deed. Fever had already begun, and his mind was wandering as he took the beautiful wax bust out of the box. He stared in horror at the dull, immovable eyes. The likeness was so perfect, and his judgment so weakened by wine and fever, that he fancied himself the victim of some spell, and yet could not turn his eyes from those dear features. Suddenly the eyes seemed to move. He was seized with terror, and, in a kind of convulsion, hurled what he thought had become a living head against the wall. The hollow, brittle wax broke into a thousand fragments, and Cambyses sank back on to his bed with a groan.

From that moment the fever increased. In his delirium the banished Phanes appeared, singing a scornful Greek song and deriding him in such infamous words, that his fists clenched with rage. Then he saw his friend and adviser, Croesus, threatening him in the very same words of warning, which he had used when Bartja had been sentenced to death by his command on account of Nitetis: "Beware of shedding a brother's blood; the smoke thereof will rise to heaven and become a cloud, that must darken the days of the murderer, and at last cast down the lightnings of heaven upon his head."

And in his delirious fancy this figure of speech became a reality. A rain of blood streamed down upon him from dark clouds; his clothes and hands were wet with the loathsome moisture. He went down to the Nile to cleanse himself, and suddenly saw Nitetis coming towards him. She had the same sweet smile with which Theodorus had modelled her. Enchanted with this lovely vision, he fell down before her and took her hand, but he had scarcely touched it, when drops of blood appeared at the tips of her delicate fingers, and she turned away from him with every sign of horror. He humbly implored her to forgive him and come back; she remained inexorable. He grew angry, and threatened her, first with his wrath, and then with awful punishments. At last, as she only answered his threats by a low scornful laugh, he ventured to throw his dagger at her. She crumbled at once into a thousand pieces, like the wax statue. But the derisive laughter echoed on, and became louder. Many voices joined in it, each trying to outbid the other. And the voices of Bartja and Nitetis were the loudest,—their tone the most bitter. At last he could bear these fearful sounds no longer and stopped his ears; this was of no use, and he buried his head, first in the glowing desert-sand and then in the icy cold Nile-water, until his senses forsook him. On awaking, the actual state of things seemed incomprehensible to him. He had gone to bed in the evening, and yet he now saw, by the direction of the sun's rays which fell on his bed, that, instead of dawning as he had expected, the day was growing dark. There could be no mistake; he heard the chorus of priests singing farewell to the setting Mithras.

Then he heard a number of people moving behind a curtain, which had been hung up at the head of his bed. He tried to turn in his bed, but could not; he was too weak. At last, finding it impossible to discover whether he was in real life or still in a dream, he called for his dressers and the courtiers, who were accustomed to be present when he rose. They appeared in a moment, and with them his mother,

Prexaspes, a number of the learned among the Magi, and some Egyptians who were unknown to him. They told him, that he had been lying in a violent fever for weeks, and had only escaped death by the special mercy of the gods, the skill of the physicians, and the unwearied nursing of his mother. He looked enquiringly first at Kassandane, then at Prexaspes, lost consciousness again, and fell into a deep sleep, from which he awoke the next morning with renewed strength.

In four days he was strong enough to sit up and able to question Prexaspes on the only subject, which occupied his thoughts.

In consideration of his master's weakness the envoy was beginning an evasive reply, when a threatening movement of the king's gaunt, worn hand, and a look which had by no means lost its old power of awing into submission, brought him to the point at once, and in the hope of giving the king a great pleasure and putting his mind completely at rest, he began: "Rejoice, O King! the youth, who dared to desire the disparagement of thy glory, is no more. This hand slew him and buried his body at Baal-Zephon. The sand of the desert and the unfruitful waves of the Red Sea were the only witnesses of the deed; and no creature knows thereof beside thyself, O King, thy servant Prexaspes, and the gulls and cormorants, that hover over his grave."

The king uttered a piercing shriek of rage, was seized by a fresh shivering-fit, and sank back once more in raving delirium.

Long weeks passed, every day of which threatened its death. At last, however, his strong constitution gained the day, but his mind had given way, and remained disordered and weak up to his last hour.

When he was strong enough to leave the sick-room and to ride and shoot once more, he abandoned himself more than ever to the pleasure of drinking, and lost every remnant of self-control.

The delusion had fixed itself in his disordered mind, that Bartja was not dead, but transformed into the bow of the King of Ethiopia, and that the Feruer (soul) of his father Cyrus had commanded him to restore Bartja to its original form, by subjugating the black nation.

This idea, which he confided to every one about him as a great secret, pursued him day and night and gave him no rest, until he had started for Ethiopia with an immense host. He was forced, however, to return without having accomplished his object, after having miserably lost the greater part of his army by heat and the scarcity of provisions. An historian, who may almost be spoken of as contemporary, tells us that the wretched soldiers, after having subsisted on herbs as long as they could, came to deserts where there was no sign of vegetation, and in their despair resorted to an expedient almost too fearful to describe. Lots were drawn by every ten men, and he on whom the lot fell was killed and eaten by the other nine.

[Herodotus visited Egypt some 60 years after the death of Cambyses, 454 B.C. He describes the Ethiopian campaign, III. 25.]

At last things went so far, that his subjects compelled this madman to return, but only, with their slavish Asiatic feelings, to obey him all the more blindly, when they found themselves once more in inhabited regions.

On reaching Memphis with the wreck of his army, he found the Egyptians in glorious apparel celebrating a festival. They had found a new Apis and were rejoicing over the reappearance of their god, incarnate in the sacred bull.

As Cambyses had heard at Thebes, that the army he had sent against the oasis of Ammon in the Libyan desert, had perished miserably in a Khamsin, or Simoom, and that his fleet, which was to conquer Carthage, had refused to fight with a people of their own race, he fancied that the Memphians must be celebrating a festival of joy at the news of his misfortunes, sent for their principal men, and after reproaching them with their conduct, asked why they had been gloomy and morose after his victories, but joyous at hearing of his misfortunes. The Memphians answered by explaining the real ground for their merry-making, and told him, that the appearance of the sacred bull was always celebrated in Egypt with the greatest rejoicings. Cambyses called them liars, and, as such, sentenced them to death. He then sent for the priests; received, however, exactly the same answer from them.

With the bitterest irony he asked to be allowed to make the acquaintance of this new god, and commanded them to bring him. The bull Apis was brought and the king told that he was the progeny of a virgin cow and a moonbeam, that he must be black, with a white triangular spot on the forehead, the likeness of an eagle on his back, and on his side the crescent moon. There must be two kinds of hair on his tail, and on his tongue an excrescence in the form of the sacred beetle Scarabaeus.

When Cambyses saw this deified creature he could discover nothing remarkable in him, and was so

enraged that he plunged his sword into its side. As the blood streamed from the wound and the animal fell, he broke out into a piercing laugh, and cried: "Ye fools! so your gods are flesh and blood; they can be wounded. Such folly is worthy of you. But ye shall find, that it is not so easy to make a fool of me. Ho, guards! flog these priests soundly, and kill every one whom you find taking part in this mad celebration." The command was obeyed and fearfully exasperated the Egyptians.

[According to Herod. III. 29. Cambyses' sword slipped and ran into the leg of the sacred bull. As the king died also of a wound in the thigh, this just suits Herodotus, who always tries to put the retribution that comes after presumptuous crime in the strongest light; but it is very unlikely that the bull should have died of a mere thigh wound.]

Apis died of his wound; the Memphians buried him secretly in the vaults belonging to the sacred bulls, near the Serapeum, and, led by Psamtik, attempted an insurrection against the Persians. This was very quickly put down, however, and cost Psamtik his life,—a life the stains and severities of which deserve to be forgiven, in consideration of his unwearied, ceaseless efforts to deliver his people from a foreign yoke, and his death in the cause of freedom.

Cambyses' madness had meanwhile taken fresh forms. After the failure of his attempt to restore Bartja, (transformed as he fancied into a bow) to his original shape, his irritability increased so frightfully that a single word, or even a look, was sufficient to make him furious. Still his true friend and counsellor, Croesus, never left him, though the king had more than once given him over to the guards for execution. But the guards knew their master; they took good care not to lay hands on the old man, and felt sure of impunity, as the king would either have forgotten his command, or repented of it by the next day. Once, however, the miserable whip bearers paid a fearful penalty for their lenity. Cambyses, while rejoicing that Croesus was saved, ordered his deliverers to be executed for disobedience without mercy.

It would be repugnant to us to repeat all the tales of barbarous cruelties, which are told of Cambyses at this insane period of his life; but we cannot resist mentioning a few which seem to us especially characteristic.

While sitting at table one day, already somewhat intoxicated, he asked Prexaspes what the Persians thought of him. The envoy, who in hopes of deadening his tormenting conscience by the performance of noble and dangerous acts, let no opportunity pass of trying to exercise a good influence over his sovereign, answered that they extolled him on every point, but thought he was too much addicted to wine.

These words, though spoken half in jest, put the king into a violent passion, and he almost shrieked: "So the Persians say, that the wine has taken away my senses, do they? on the contrary, I'll show them that they've lost their own." And as he spoke he bent his bow, took aim for a moment at Prexaspes' eldest son, who, as cup-bearer, was standing at the back of the hall waiting for and watching every look of his sovereign, and shot him in the breast. He then gave orders that the boy's body should be opened and examined. The arrow had pierced the centre of his heart. This delighted the senseless tyrant, and he called out with a laugh: "Now you see, Prexaspes, it's the Persians who have lost their judgment, not I. Could any one have hit the mark better?"

Prexaspes stood there, pale and motionless, compelled to watch the horrid scene, like Niobe when chained to Sipylus. His servile spirit bowed before the ruler's power, instead of arming his right hand with the dagger of revenge, and when the frantic king asked him the same question a second time, he actually answered, pressing his hand on his heart: "A god could not have hit the mark more exactly."

A few weeks after this, the king went to Sais, and there was shown the rooms formerly occupied by his bride. This brought back all the old painful recollections in full force, and at the same time his clouded memory reminded him, though without any clearness of detail, that Amasis had deceived both Nitetis and himself. He cursed the dead king and furiously demanded to be taken to the temple of Neith, where his mummy was laid. There he tore the embalmed body out of its sarcophagus, caused it to be scourged, to be stabbed with pins, had the hair torn off and maltreated it in every possible way. In conclusion, and contrary to the ancient Persian religious law, which held the pollution of pure fire by corpses to be a deadly sin, he caused Amasis' dead body to be burnt, and condemned the mummy of his first wife, which lay in a sarcophagus at Thebes, her native place, to the same fate.

On his return to Memphis, Cambyses did not shrink from personally ill-treating his wife and sister, Atossa.

He had ordered a combat of wild beasts to take place, during which, amongst other entertainments of the same kind, a dog was to fight with a young lion. The lion had conquered his antagonist, when another dog, the brother of the conquered one, broke away from his chain, attacked the lion, and with

the help of the wounded dog, vanquished him.

This scene delighted Cambyses, but Kassandane and Atossa, who had been forced by the king's command to be present, began to weep aloud.

The tyrant was astonished, and on asking the reason for their tears, received as answer from the impetuous Atossa, that the brave creature who had risked its own life to save its brother, reminded her of Bartja. She would not say by whom he had been murdered, but his murder had never been avenged.

These words so roused the king's anger, and so goaded his conscience, that in a fit of insane fury he struck the daring woman, and might possibly have killed her, if his mother had not thrown herself into his arms and exposed her own body to his mad blows.

Her voice and action checked his rage, for he had not lost reverence for his mother; but her look of intense anger and contempt, which he clearly saw and could not forget, begot a fresh delusion in his mind. He believed from that moment, that the eyes of women had power to poison him; he started and hid himself behind his companions whenever he saw a woman, and at last commanded that all the female inhabitants of the palace at Memphis, his mother not excepted, should be sent back to Ecbatana. Araspes and Gyges were appointed to be their escort thither.

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The caravan of queens and princesses had arrived at Sais; they alighted at the royal palace. Croesus had accompanied them thus far on their way from Egypt.

Kassandane had altered very much during the last few years. Grief and suffering had worn deep lines in her once beautiful face, though they had had no power to bow her stately figure.

Atossa, on the contrary, was more beautiful than ever, notwithstanding all she had suffered. The refractory and impetuous child, the daring spirited girl, had developed into a dignified, animated and determined woman. The serious side of life, and three sad years passed with her ungovernable husband and brother, had been first-rate masters in the school of patience, but they had not been able to alienate her heart from her first love. Sappho's friendship had made up to her in some measure for the loss of Darius.

The young Greek had become another creature, since the mysterious departure of her husband. Her rosy color and her lovely smile were both gone. But she was wonderfully beautiful, in spite of her paleness, her downcast eyelashes and languid attitude. She looked like Ariadne waiting for Theseus. Longing and expectation lay in every look, in the low tone of her voice, in her measured walk. At the sound of approaching steps, the opening of a door or the unexpected tones of a man's voice, she would start, get up and listen, and then sink back into the old waiting, longing attitude, disappointed but not hopeless. She began to dream again, as she had been so fond of doing in her girlish days.

She was her old self only when playing with her child. Then the color came back to her cheeks, her eyes sparkled, she seemed once more to live in the present, and not only in the past or future.

Her child was everything to her. In that little one Bartja seemed to be still alive, and she could love the child with all her heart and strength, without taking one iota from her love to him. With this little creature the gods had mercifully given her an aim in life and a link with the lower world, the really precious part of which had seemed to vanish with her vanished husband. Sometimes, as she looked into her baby's blue eyes, so wonderfully like Bartja's, she thought: Why was not she born a boy? He would have grown more like his father from day to day, and at last, if such a thing indeed could ever be, a second Bartja would have stood before me.

But such thoughts generally ended soon in her pressing the little one closer than ever to her heart, and blaming herself for ingratitude and folly.

One day Atossa put the same idea in words, exclaiming: "If Parmys were only a boy! He would have grown up exactly like his father, and have been a second Cyrus for Persia." Sappho smiled sadly at her friend, and covered the little one with kisses, but Kassandane said: "Be thankful to the gods, my child, for having given you a daughter. If Parmys were a boy, he would be taken from you as soon as he had reached his sixth year, to be brought up with the sons of the other Achaemenidae, but your daughter will remain your own for many years."

Sappho trembled at the mere thought of parting from her child; she pressed its little fair curly head close to her breast, and never found fault with her treasure again for being a girl.

Atossa's friendship was a great comfort to her poor wounded heart. With her she could speak of

Bartja as much and as often as she would, and was always certain of a kind and sympathizing listener. Atossa had loved her vanished brother very dearly. And even a stranger would have enjoyed hearing Sappho tell of her past happiness. Her words rose into real eloquence in speaking of those bright days; she seemed like an inspired poetess. Then she would take her lyre, and with her clear, sweet, plaintive voice sing the love-songs of the elder Sappho, in which all her own deepest feelings were so truly expressed, and fancy herself once more with her lover sitting under the sweet-scented acanthus in the quiet night, and forget the sad reality of her present life. And when, with a deep sigh, she laid aside the lyre and came back out of this dream-kingdom, the tears were always to be seen in Kassandane's eyes, though she did not understand the language in which Sappho had been singing, and Atossa would bend down and kiss her forehead.

Thus three long years had passed, during which Sappho had seldom seen her grandmother, for, as the mother of Parmys, she was by the king's command, forbidden to leave the harem, unless permitted and accompanied either by Kassandane or the eunuchs.

On the present occasion Croesus, who had always loved, and loved her still, like a daughter, had sent for Rhodopis to Sais. He, as well as Kassandane, understood her wish to take leave of this, her dearest and most faithful friend, before setting out for Persia; besides which Kassandane had a great wish to see one in whose praise she had heard so much. When Sappho's tender and sad farewell was over therefore, Rhodopis was summoned to the queen-mother.

A stranger, who saw these two women together, would have thought both were queens; it was impossible to decide which of the two had most right to the title.

Croesus, standing as he did in as close a relation to the one as to the other, undertook the office of interpreter, and the ready intellect of Rhodopis helped him to carry on an uninterrupted flow of conversation.

Rhodopis, by her own peculiar attractions, soon won the heart of Kassandane, and the queen knew no better way of proving this than by offering, in Persian fashion, to grant her some wish.

Rhodopis hesitated a moment; then raising her hands as if in prayer, she cried: "Leave me my Sappho, the consolation and beauty of my old age."

Kassandane smiled sadly. "It is not in my power to grant that wish," she answered. "The laws of Persia command, that the children of the Achaemenidae shall be brought up at the king's gate. I dare not allow the little Parmys, Cyrus' only grandchild, to leave me, and, much as Sappho loves you, you know she would not part from her child. Indeed, she has become so dear to me now, and to my daughter, that though I well understand your wish to have her, I could never allow Sappho to leave us."

Seeing that Rhodopis' eyes were filling with tears, Kassandane went on: "There is, however, a good way out of our perplexity. Leave Naukratis, and come with us to Persia. There you can spend your last years with us and with your granddaughter, and shall be provided with a royal maintenance."

Rhodopis shook her head, hoary but still so beautiful, and answered in a suppressed voice: "I thank you, noble queen, for this gracious invitation, but I feel unable to accept it. Every fibre of my heart is rooted in Greece, and I should be tearing my life out by leaving it forever. I am so accustomed to constant activity, perfect freedom, and a stirring exchange of thought, that I should languish and die in the confinement of a harem. Croesus had already prepared me for the gracious proposal you have just made, and I have had a long and difficult battle to fight, before I could decide on resigning my dearest blessing for my highest good. It is not easy, but it is glorious, it is more worthy of the Greek name—to live a good and beautiful life, than a happy one—to follow duty rather than pleasure. My heart will follow Sappho, but my intellect and experience belong to the Greeks; and if you should ever hear that the people of Hellas are ruled by themselves alone, by their own gods, their own laws, the beautiful and the good, then you will know that the work on which Rhodopis, in league with the noblest and best of her countrymen, has staked her life, is accomplished. Be not angry with the Greek woman, who confesses that she would rather die free as a beggar than live in bondage as a queen, though envied by the whole world."

Kassandane listened in amazement. She only understood part of what Rhodopis had said, but felt that she had spoken well and nobly, and at the conclusion gave her her hand to kiss. After a short pause, Kassandane said: "Do what you think right, and remember, that as long as I and my daughter live, your granddaughter will never want for true and faithful love."

"Your noble countenance and the fame of your great virtue are warrant enough for that," answered Rhodopis.

"And also," added the queen, "the duty which lies upon me to make good the wrong, that has been

done your Sappho."

She sighed painfully and went on: "The little Parmys shall be carefully educated. She seems to have much natural talent, and can sing the songs of her native country already after her mother. I shall do nothing to check her love of music, though, in Persia the religious services are the only occasions in which that art is studied by any but the lower classes."

At these words Rhodopis' face glowed. "Will you permit me to speak openly, O Queen?" she said. "Speak without fear," was Kassandane's answer. "When you sighed so painfully just now in speaking of your dear lost son, I thought: Perhaps that brave young hero might have been still living, if the Persians had understood better how to educate their sons. Bartja told me in what that education consisted. To shoot, throw the spear, ride, hunt, speak the truth, and perhaps also to distinguish between the healing and noxious properties of certain plants: that is deemed a sufficient educational provision for a man's life. The Greek boys are just as carefully kept to the practice of exercises for hardening and bracing the body; for these exercises are the founders and preservers of health, the physician is only its repairer and restorer. If, however, by constant practice a Greek youth were to attain to the strength of a bull, the truth of the Deity, and the wisdom of the most learned Egyptian priest, we should still look down upon him were he wanting in two things which only early example and music, combined with these bodily exercises, can give: grace and symmetry. You smile because you do not understand me, but I can prove to you that music, which, from what Sappho tells me, is not without its moving power for your heart, is as important an element in education as gymnastics, and, strange as it may sound, has an equal share in effecting the perfection of both body and mind. The man who devotes his attention exclusively to music will, if he be of a violent disposition, lose his savage sternness at first; he will become gentle and pliable as metal in the fire. But at last his courage will disappear too; his passionate temper will have changed into irritability, and he will be of little worth as a warrior, the calling and character most desired in your country. If, on the other hand, he confines himself to gymnastics only, he will, like Cambyses, excel in manliness and strength; but his mind—here my comparison ceases—will remain obtuse and blind, his perceptions will be confused, He will not listen to reason, but will endeavor to carry everything by force, and, lacking grace and proportion, his life will probably become a succession of rude and violent deeds. On this account we conclude that music is necessary not only for the mind, and gymnastics not only for the body, but that both, working together, elevate and soften the mind and strengthen the body—give manly grace, and graceful manliness."

[The fundamental ideas of this speech are drawn from Plato's ideal "State."]

After a moment's pause Rhodopis went on: "The youth who has not received such an education, whose roughness has never been checked even in childhood, who has been allowed to vent his temper on every one, receiving flattery in return and never hearing reproof; who has been allowed to command before he has learnt to obey, and who has been brought up in the belief that splendor, power and riches are the highest good, can never possibly attain to the perfect manhood, which we beseech the gods to grant our boys. And if this unfortunate being happens to have been born with an impetuous disposition, ungovernable and eager passions, these will be only nourished and increased by bodily exercise unaccompanied by the softening influence of music, so that at last a child, who possibly came into the world with good qualities, will, merely through the defects in his education, degenerate into a destructive animal, a sensual self-destroyer, and a mad and furious tyrant."

Rhodopis had become animated with her subject. She ceased, saw tears in the eyes of the queen, and felt that she had gone too far and had wounded a mother's heart,—a heart full of noble feeling. She touched her robe, kissed its border, and said softly: "Forgive me."

Kassandane looked her forgiveness, courteously saluted Rhodopis and prepared to leave the room. On the threshold, however, she stopped and said: "I am not angry. Your reproaches are just; but you too must endeavor to forgive, for I can assure you that he who has murdered the happiness of your child and of mine, though the most powerful, is of all mortals the most to be pitied. Farewell! Should you ever stand in need of ought, remember Cyrus' widow, and how she wished to teach you, that the virtues the Persians desire most in their children are magnanimity and liberality."

After saying this she left the apartment.

On the same day Rhodopis heard that Phanes was dead. He had retired to Crotona in the neighborhood of Pythagoras and there passed his time in reflection, dying with the tranquillity of a philosopher.

She was deeply affected at this news and said to Croesus: "Greece has lost one of her ablest men, but there are many, who will grow up to be his equals. The increasing power of Persia causes me no fear; indeed, I believe that when the barbarous lust of conquest stretches out its hand towards us, our many-

headed Greece will rise as a giant with one head of divine power, before which mere barbaric strength must bow as surely as body before spirit."

Three days after this, Sappho said farewell for the last time to her grandmother, and followed the queens to Persia. Notwithstanding the events which afterwards took place, she continued to believe that Bartja would return, and full of love, fidelity and tender remembrance, devoted herself entirely to the education of her child and the care of her aged mother-in-law, Kassandane.

Little Parmys became very beautiful, and learnt to love the memory of her vanished father next to the gods of her native land, for her mother's tales had brought him as vividly before her as if he had been still alive and present with them.

Atossa's subsequent good fortune and happiness did not cool her friendship. She always called Sappho her sister. The hanging-gardens were the latter's residence in summer, and in her conversations there with Kassandane and Atossa one name was often mentioned—the name of her, who had been the innocent cause of events which had decided the destinies of great kingdoms and noble lives—the Egyptian Princess.

CHAPTER XVI.

Here we might end this tale, but that we feel bound to give our readers some account of the last days of Cambyses. We have already described the ruin of his mind, but his physical end remains still to be told, and also the subsequent fate of some of the other characters in our history.

A short time after the departure of the queens, news reached Naukratis that Oroetes, the satrap of Lydia, had, by a stratagem, allured his old enemy, Polykrates, to Sardis and crucified him there, thus fulfilling what Amasis had prophesied of the tyrant's mournful end. This act the satrap had committed on his own responsibility, events having taken place in the Median kingdom which threatened the fall of the Achaemenidaeen dynasty.

The king's long absence in a foreign country had either weakened or entirely dissipated, the fear which the mere mention of his name had formerly inspired in those who felt inclined to rebel. The awe that his subjects had formerly felt for him, vanished at the tidings of his madness, and the news that he had wantonly exposed the lives of thousands of their countrymen to certain death in the deserts of Libya and Ethiopia, inspired the enraged Asiatics with a hatred which, when skilfully fed by the powerful Magi, soon roused, first the Medes and Assyrians, and then the Persians, to defection and open insurrection. Motives of self-interest led the ambitious high-priest, Oropastes, whom Cambyses had appointed regent in his absence, to place himself at the head of this movement. He flattered the people by remitting their taxes, by large gifts and larger promises, and finding his clemency gratefully recognized, determined on an imposture, by which he hoped to win the crown of Persia for his own family.

He had not forgotten the marvellous likeness between his brother Gaumata (who had been condemned to lose his ears) and Bartja, the son of Cyrus, and on hearing that the latter, the universal favorite, as he well knew, of the Persian nation, had disappeared, resolved to turn this to account by passing off his brother as the vanished prince, and setting him on the throne in place of Cambyses. The hatred felt throughout the entire kingdom towards their insane king, and the love and attachment of the nation to Bartja, made this stratagem so easy of accomplishment, that when at last messengers from Oropastes arrived in all the provinces of the empire declaring to the discontented citizens that, notwithstanding the rumor they had heard, the younger son of Cyrus was still alive, had revolted from his brother, ascended his father's throne and granted to all his subjects freedom from tribute and from military service during a period of three years, the new ruler was acknowledged throughout the kingdom with rejoicings.

The pretended Bartja, who was fully aware of his brother's mental superiority, had obeyed his directions in every particular, had taken up his residence in the palace of Nisaea,—in the plains of Media, placed the crown on his head, declared the royal harem his own, and had shown himself once from a distance to the people, who were to recognize in him the murdered Bartja. After that time, however, for fear of being at last unmasked, he concealed himself in his palace, giving himself up, after the manner of Asiatic monarchs, to every kind of indulgence, while his brother held the sceptre with a firm hand, and conferred all the important offices of state on his friends and family.

No sooner did Oropastes feel firm ground under his feet, than he despatched the eunuch Ixabates to Egypt, to inform the army of the change of rulers that had taken place and persuade them to revolt in favor of Bartja, who he knew had been idolized by the Soldiers.

The messenger had been well chosen, fulfilled his mission with much skill, and had already won over a considerable part of the army for the new king, when he was taken prisoner by some Syrians, who brought him to Memphis in hopes of reward.

On arriving in the city of the Pyramids he was brought before the king, and promised impunity on condition of revealing the entire truth.

The messenger then confirmed the rumor, which had reached Egypt, that Bartja had ascended the throne of Cyrus and had been recognized by the greater part of the empire.

Cambyses started with terror at these tidings, as one who saw a dead man rise from his grave. He was by this time fully aware that Bartja had been murdered by Prexaspes at his own command, but in this moment he began to suspect that the envoy had deceived him and spared his brother's life. The thought had no sooner entered his mind than he uttered it, reproaching Prexaspes so bitterly with treachery, as to elicit from him a tremendous oath, that he had murdered and buried the unfortunate Bartja with his own hand.

Oropastes' messenger was next asked whether he had seen the new king himself. He answered that he had not, adding that the supposed brother of Cambyses had only once appeared in public, and had then shown himself to the people from a distance. On hearing this, Prexaspes saw through the whole web of trickery at once, reminded the king of the unhappy misunderstandings to which the marvellous likeness between Bartja and Gaumata had formerly given rise, and concluded by offering to stake his own life on the correctness of his supposition. The explanation pleased the king, and from that moment his diseased mind was possessed by one new idea to the exclusion of all others—the seizure and slaughter of the Magi.

The host was ordered to prepare for marching. Aryandes,—one of the Achaemenidae, was appointed satrap of Egypt, and the army started homeward without delay. Driven by this new delusion, the king took no rest by day or night, till at last his over-ridden and ill-used horse fell with him, and he was severely wounded in the fall by his own dagger.

After lying insensible for some days, he opened his eyes and asked first to see Araspes, then his mother, and lastly Atossa, although these three had set out on their journey home months before. From all he said it appeared that during the last four years, from the attack of fever until the present accident, he had been living in a kind of sleep. He seemed astonished and pained at hearing what had happened during these years. But of his brother's death he was fully aware. He knew that Prexaspes had killed him by his—the king's—orders and had told him that Bartja lay buried on the shores of the Red Sea.—During the night which followed this return to his senses it became clear to himself also, that his mind had been wandering for along time. Towards morning he fell into a deep sleep, and this so restored his strength, that on waking he called for Croesus and required an exact relation of the events that had passed during the last few years.

His old friend and adviser obeyed; he felt that Cambyses was still entrusted to his care, and in the hope, faint as it was, of bringing him back to the right way, he did not suppress one of the king's acts of violence in his relation.

His joy was therefore great at perceiving, that his words made a deep impression on the newly-awakened mind of the king. With tears in his eyes, and with the ashamed look of a child, he grieved over his wrong deeds and his madness, begged Croesus to forgive him, thanked him for having borne so long and faithfully with him, and commissioned him to ask Kassandane and Sappho especially for forgiveness, but also, Atossa and all whom he had unjustly offended.

The old man wept too, but his tears were tears of joy and he repeatedly assured Cambyses that he would recover and have ample opportunity of making amends for the past. But to all this Cambyses shook his head resolutely, and, pale and wan as he looked, begged Croesus to have his couch carried on to a rising ground in the open air, and then to summon the Achaemenidae. When these orders, in spite of the physicians, had been obeyed, Cambyses was raised into an upright sitting position, and began, in a voice which could be heard at a considerable distance:

"The time to reveal my great secret has arrived, O ye Persians. Deceived by a vision, provoked and annoyed by my brother, I caused him to be murdered in my wrath. Prexaspes wrought the evil deed by my command, but instead of bringing me the peace I yearned for, that deed has tortured me into madness and death. By this my confession ye will be convinced, that my brother Bartja is really dead.

The Magi have usurped the throne of the Achaemenidae. Oropastes, whom I left in Persia as my vicegerent and his brother Gaumata, who resembles Bartja so nearly that even Croesus, Intaphernes and my uncle, the noble Hystaspes, were once deceived by the likeness, have placed themselves at their head. Woe is me, that I have murdered him who, as my nearest kinsman, should have avenged on the Magi this affront to my honor. But I cannot recall him from the dead, and I therefore appoint you the executors of my last will. By the Feruer of my dead father, and in the name of all good and pure spirits, I conjure you not to suffer the government to fall into the hands of the unfaithful Magi. If they have obtained possession thereof by artifice, wrest it from their hands in like manner; if by force, use force to win it back. Obey this my last will, and the earth will yield you its fruits abundantly; your wives, your flocks and herds shall be blessed and freedom shall be your portion. Refuse to obey it, and ye shall suffer the corresponding evils; yea, your end, and that of every Persian shall be even as mine."

After these words the king wept and sank back fainting, on seeing which, the Achaemenidae rent their clothes and burst into loud lamentations. A few hours later Cambyses died in Croesus' arms. Nitetis was his last thought; he died with her name on his lips and tears of penitence in his eyes. When the Persians had left the unclean corpse, Croesus knelt down beside it and cried, raising his hand to heaven: "Great Cyrus, I have kept my oath. I have remained this miserable man's faithful adviser even unto his end."

The next morning the old man betook himself, accompanied by his son Gyges, to the town of Barene, which belonged to him, and lived there many years as a father to his subjects, revered by Darius and praised by all his contemporaries.

.....

After Cambyses' death the heads of the seven Persian tribes held a council, and resolved, as a first measure, on obtaining certain information as to the person of the usurper. With this view, Otanes sent a confidential eunuch to his daughter Phaedime, who, as they knew, had come into the possession of the new king with the rest of Cambyses' harem.

[The names of the seven conspiring chiefs, given by Herodotus agree for the most part with those in the cuneiform inscriptions. The names are: Otanes, Intaphernes, Gobryas, Megabyzus, Aspatines, Hydarnes and Darius Hystaspis. In the inscription Otana: Vindafrand, Gaubaruva, Ardumams, Vidarna, Bagabukhsa and Darayavus.]

Before the messenger returned, the greater part of the army had dispersed, the soldiers seizing this favorable opportunity to return to their homes and families, after so many years of absence. At last, however, the long-expected messenger came back and brought for answer, that the new king had only visited Phaedime once, but that during that visit she had, at great personal risk, discovered that he had lost both ears. Without this discovery, however, she could assert positively that though there were a thousand points of similarity between the usurper and the murdered Bartja, the former was in reality none other than Gaumata, the brother of Oropastes. Her old friend Boges had resumed his office of chief of the eunuchs, and had revealed to her the secrets of the Magi. The high-priest had met the former keeper of the women begging in the streets of Susa, and had restored him to his old office with the words: "You have forfeited your life, but I want men of your stamp." In conclusion. Phaedime entreated her father to use every means in his power for the overthrow of the Magi, as they treated her with the greatest contempt and she was the most miserable of women.

Though none of the Achaemenidae had really for a moment believed; that Bartja was alive and had seized on the throne, so clear an account of the real person of the usurper was very welcome to them, and they resolved at once to march on Nisaea with the remnant of the army and overthrow the Magi either by craft or force.

They entered the new capital unassailed, and finding that the majority of the people seemed content with the new government, they also pretended to acknowledge the king as the son of Cyrus, to whom they were prepared to do homage. The Magi, however, were not deceived; they shut themselves up in their palace, assembled an army in the Nisaeian plain, promised the soldiers high pay, and used every effort to strengthen the belief of the people in Gaumata's disguise. On this point no one could do them more injury, or, if he chose, be more useful to them, than Prexaspes. He was much looked up to by the Persians, and his assurance, that he had not murdered Bartja, would have been sufficient to tame the fast-spreading report of the real way in which the youth had met his death. Oropastes, therefore, sent for Prexaspes, who, since the king's dying words, had been avoided by all the men of his own rank and had led the life of an outlaw, and promised him an immense sum of money, if he would ascend a high tower and declare to the people, assembled in the court beneath, that evil-disposed men had called him Bartja's murderer, whereas he had seen the new king with his own eyes and had recognized in him the younger son of his benefactor. Prexaspes made no objection to this proposal, took a tender leave of his family while the people were being assembled, uttered a short prayer before the sacred fire-altar and

walked proudly to the palace. On his way thither he met the chiefs of the seven tribes and seeing that they avoided him, called out to them: "I am worthy of your contempt, but I will try to deserve your forgiveness."

Seeing Darius look back, he hastened towards him, grasped his hand and said: "I have loved you like a son; take care of my children when I am no more, and use your pinions, winged Darius." Then, with the same proud demeanor he ascended the tower.

Many thousands of the citizens of Nisaea were within reach of his voice, as he cried aloud: "Ye all know that the kings who have, up to the present time, loaded you with honor and glory, belonged to the house of the Achaemenidae. Cyrus governed you like a real father, Cambyses was a stern master, and Bartja would have guided you like a bridegroom, if I, with this right hand which I now show you, had not slain him on the shores of the Red Sea. By Mithras, it was with a bleeding heart that I committed this wicked deed, but I did it as a faithful servant in obedience to the king's command. Nevertheless, it has haunted me by day and night; for four long years I have been pursued and tormented by the spirits of darkness, who scare sleep from the murderer's couch. I have now resolved to end this painful, despairing existence by a worthy deed, and though even this may procure me no mercy at the bridge of Chinvat, in the mouths of men, at least, I shall have redeemed my honorable name from the stain with which I defiled it. Know then, that the man who gives himself out for the son of Cyrus, sent me hither; he promised me rich rewards if I would deceive you by declaring him to be Bartja, the son of the Achaemenidae. But I scorn his promises and swear by Mithras and the Feruers of the kings, the most solemn oaths I am acquainted with, that the man who is now ruling you is none other than the Magian Gaumata, he who was deprived of his ears, the brother of the king's vicegerent and high-priest, Oropastes, whom ye all know. If it be your will to forget all the glory ye owe to the Achaemenidae, if to this ingratitude ye choose to add your own degradation, then acknowledge these creatures and call them your kings; but if ye despise a lie and are ashamed to obey worthless impostors, drive the Magi from the throne before Mithras has left the heavens, and proclaim the noblest of the Achaemenidae, Darius, the exalted son of Hystaspes, who promises to become a second Cyrus, as your king. And now, in order that ye may believe my words and not suspect that Darius sent me hither to win you over to his side, I will commit a deed, which must destroy every doubt and prove that the truth and glory of the Achaemenidae are clearer to me, than life itself. Blessed be ye if ye follow my counsels, but curses rest upon you, if ye neglect to reconquer the throne from the Magi and revenge yourselves upon them.—Behold, I die a true and honorable man!"

With these words he ascended the highest pinnacle of the tower and cast himself down head foremost, thus expiating the one crime of his life by an honorable death.

The dead silence with which the people in the court below had listened to him, was now broken by shrieks of rage and cries for vengeance. They burst open the gates of the palace and were pressing in with cries of "Death to the Magi," when the seven princes of the Persians appeared in front of the raging crowd to resist their entrance.

At sight of the Achaemenidae the citizens broke into shouts of joy, and cried more impetuously than ever, "Down with the Magi! Victory to King Darius!"

The son of Hystaspes was then carried by the crowd to a rising ground, from which he told the people that the Magi had been slain by the Achaemenidae, as liars and usurpers. Fresh cries of joy arose in answer to these words, and when at last the bleeding heads of Oropastes and Gaumata were shown to the crowd, they rushed with horrid yells through the streets of the city, murdering every Magian they could lay hold of. The darkness of night alone was able to stop this awful massacre.

Four days later, Darius, the son of Hystaspes, was chosen as king by the heads of the Achaemenidae, in consideration of his high birth and noble character, and received by the Persian nation with enthusiasm. Darius had killed Gaumata with his own hand, and the highpriest had received his death-thrust from the hand of Megabyzus, the father of Zopyrus. While Prexaspes was haranguing the people, the seven conspiring Persian princes, Otanes, Intaphernes, Gobryas, Megabyzus, Aspatines, Hydarnes and Darius, (as representative of his aged father Hystaspes), had entered the palace by a carelessly-guarded gate, sought out the part of the building occupied by the Magi, and then, assisted by their own knowledge of the palace, and the fact that most of the guards had been sent to keep watch over the crowd assembled to hear Prexaspes easily penetrated to the apartments in which at that moment they were to be found. Here they were resisted by a few eunuchs, headed by Boges, but these were overpowered and killed to a man. Darius became furious on seeing Boges, and killed him at once. Hearing the dying cries of these eunuchs, the Magi rushed to the spot and prepared to defend themselves. Oropastes snatched a lance from the fallen Boges, thrust out one of Intaphernes' eyes and wounded Aspatines in the thigh, but was stabbed by Megabyzus. Gaumata fled into another apartment and tried to bar the door, but was followed too soon by Darius and Gobryas; the latter seized, threw

him, and kept him down by the weight of his own body, crying to Darius, who was afraid of making a false stroke in the half-light, and so wounding his companion instead of Gaumata, "Strike boldly, even if you should stab us both." Darius obeyed, and fortunately only hit the Magian.

Thus died Oropastes, the high-priest, and his brother Gaumata, better known under the name of the "pseudo" or "pretended Smerdis."

A few weeks after Darius' election to the throne, which the people said had been marvellously influenced by divine miracles and the clever cunning of a groom, he celebrated his coronation brilliantly at Pasargadae, and with still more splendor, his marriage with his beloved Atossa. The trials of her life had ripened her character, and she proved a faithful, beloved and respected companion to her husband through the whole of that active and glorious life, which, as Prexaspes had foretold, made him worthy of the names by which he was afterwards known—Darius the Great, and a second Cyrus.

[Atossa is constantly mentioned as the favorite wife of Darius, and he appointed her son Xerxes to be his successor, though he had three elder sons by the daughter of Gobryas. Herodotus (VII. 3.) speaks with emphasis of the respect and consideration in which Atossa was held, and Aeschylus, in his Persians, mentions her in her old age, as the much-revered and noble matron.]

As a general he was circumspect and brave, and at the same time understood so thoroughly how to divide his enormous realm, and to administer its affairs, that he must be classed with the greatest organizers of all times and countries. That his feeble successors were able to keep this Asiatic Colossus of different countries together for two hundred years after his death, was entirely owing to Darius. He was liberal of his own, but sparing of his subjects' treasures, and made truly royal gifts without demanding more than was his due. He introduced a regular system of taxation, in place of the arbitrary exactions practised under Cyrus and Cambyses, and never allowed himself to be led astray in the carrying out of what seemed to him right, either by difficulties or by the ridicule of the Achaemenidae, who nicknamed him the "shopkeeper," on account of what seemed, to their exclusively military tastes, his petty financial measures. It is by no means one of his smallest merits, that he introduced one system of coinage through his entire empire, and consequently through half the then known world.

Darius respected the religions and customs of other nations. When the writing of Cyrus, of the existence of which Cambyses had known nothing, was found in the archives of Ecbatana, he allowed the Jews to carry on the building of their temple to Jehovah; he also left the Ionian cities free to govern their own communities independently. Indeed, he would hardly have sent his army against Greece, if the Athenians had not insulted him.

In Egypt he had learnt much; among other things, the art of managing the exchequer of his kingdom wisely; for this reason he held the Egyptians in high esteem, and granted them many privileges, amongst others a canal to connect the Nile with the Red Sea, which was greatly to the advantage of their commerce.

[Traces of this canal can be found as early as the days of Setos I; his son Rameses II. caused the works to be continued. Under Necho they were recommenced, and possibly finished by Darius. In the time of the Ptolemies, at all events, the canal was already completed. Herod. II. 158. Diod. I. 33. The French, in undertaking to reconstruct the Suez canal, have had much to encounter from the unfriendly commercial policy of the English and their influence over the internal affairs of Egypt, but the unwearied energy and great talent of Monsr. de Lesseps and the patriotism of the French nation have at last succeeded in bringing their great work to a successful close. Whether it will pay is another question. See G. Ebers, *Der Kanal von Suez*. Nordische Revue, October 1864. The maritime canal connecting the Mediterranean with the Red Sea has also been completed since 1869. We were among those, who attended the brilliant inauguration ceremonies, and now willingly recall many of the doubts expressed in our work 'Durch Gosen zum Sinai'. The number of ships passing through the canal is constantly increasing.]

During the whole of his reign, Darius endeavored to make amends for the severity with which Cambyses had treated the Egyptians; even in the later years of his life he delighted to study the treasures of their wisdom, and no one was allowed to attack either their religion or customs, as long as he lived. The old high-priest Neithotep enjoyed the king's favor to the last, and Darius often made use of his wise old master's astrological knowledge.

The goodness and clemency of their new ruler was fully acknowledged by the Egyptians; they called him a deity, as they had called their own kings, and yet, in the last years of his reign, their desire for independence led them to forget gratitude and to try to shake off his gentle yoke, which was only oppressive because it had originally been forced on them.

[The name of Darius occurs very often on the monuments as Ntariusch. It is most frequently found in the inscriptions on the temple in the Oasis el-Khargah, recently photographed by G. Rohlfs. The Egypto- Persian memorial fragments, bearing inscriptions in the hieroglyphic and cuneiform characters are very interesting. Darius' name in Egyptian was generally "Ra, the beloved of Ammon." On a porcelain vessel in Florence, and in some papyri in Paris and Florence he is called by the divine titles of honor given to the Pharaohs.]

Their generous ruler and protector did not live to see the end of this struggle.

[The first rebellion in Egypt, which broke out under Aryandes, the satrap appointed by Cambyses, was put down by Darius in person. He visited Egypt, and promised 100 talents (L22,500.) to any one who would find a new Apis. Polyæn. VII. ii. 7. No second outbreak took place until 486 B.C. about 4 years before the death of Darius. Herod. VI i. Xerxes conquered the rebels two years after his accession, and appointed his brother Achaemenes satrap of Egypt.]

It was reserved for Xerxes, the successor and son of Darius and Atossa, to bring back the inhabitants of the Nile valley to a forced and therefore insecure obedience.

Darius left a worthy monument of his greatness in the glorious palace which he built on Mount Rachmed, the ruins of which are the wonder and admiration of travellers to this day. Six thousand Egyptian workmen, who had been sent to Asia by Cambyses, took part in the work and also assisted in building a tomb for Darius and his successors, the rocky and almost inaccessible chambers of which have defied the ravages of time, and are now the resort of innumerable wild pigeons.

He caused the history of his deeds to be cut, (in the cuneiform character and in the Persian, Median and Assyrian languages), on the polished side of the rock of Bisitun or Behistan, not far from the spot where he saved Atossa's life. The Persian part of this inscription can still be deciphered with certainty, and contains an account of the events related in the last few chapters, very nearly agreeing with our own and that of Herodotus. The following sentences occur amongst others: "Thus saith Darius the King: That which I have done, was done by the grace of Auramazda in every way. I fought nineteen battles after the rebellion of the kings. By the mercy of Auramazda I conquered them. I took nine kings captive. One was a Median, Gaumata by name. He lied and said: 'I am Bardiya (Bartja), the son of Cyrus.' He caused Persia to rebel."

Some distance lower down, he names the chiefs who helped him to dethrone the Magi, and in another place the inscription has these words: "Thus saith the King Darius: That which I have done was done in every way by the grace of Auramazda. Auramazda helped me, and such other gods as there be. Auramazda and the other gods gave me help, because I was not swift to anger, nor a liar, nor a violent ruler, neither I nor my kinsmen. I have shown favor unto him who helped my brethren, and I have punished severely him who was my enemy. Thou who shalt be king after me, be not merciful unto him who is a liar or a rebel, but punish him with a severe punishment. Thus saith Darius the King: Thou who shalt hereafter behold this tablet which I have written, or these pictures, destroy them not, but so long as thou shalt live preserve them, &c."

It now only remains to be told that Zopyrus, the son of Megabyzus, continued to the last the king's most faithful friend.

A courtier once showed the king a pomegranate, and asked him of what one gift of fortune he would like so many repetitions, as there were seeds in that fruit. Without a moment's hesitation Darius answered, "Of my Zopyrus."—[Plutarch]

The following story will prove that Zopyrus, on his part, well understood how to return his royal friend's kindness. After the death of Cambyses, Babylon revolted from the Persian empire. Darius besieged the city nine months in vain, and was about to raise the siege, when one day Zopyrus appeared before him bleeding, and deprived of his ears and nose, and explained that he had mutilated himself thus in order to cheat the Babylonians, who knew him well, as he had formerly been on intimate terms with their daughters. He said he wished to tell the haughty citizens, that Darius had thus disfigured him, and that he had come to them for help in revenging himself. He thought they would then place troops at his disposal, with which he intended to impose upon them by making a few successful sallies at first. His ultimate intention was to get possession of the keys, and open the Semiramis gate to his friends.

These words, which were spoken in a joking tone, contrasted so sadly with the mutilated features of his once handsome friend, that Darius wept, and when at last the almost impregnable fortress was really won by Zopyrus' stratagem, he exclaimed: "I would give a hundred Babylons, if my Zopyrus had

not thus mutilated himself."

He then appointed his friend lord of the giant city, gave him its entire revenues, and honored him every year with the rarest presents. In later days he used to say that, with the exception of Cyrus, who had no equal, no man had ever performed so generous a deed as Zopyrus.

[Herod. III. 160. Among other presents Zopyrus received a gold hand-mill weighing six talents, the most honorable and distinguished gift a Persian monarch could bestow upon a subject. According to Ktesias, Megabaeus received this gift from Xerxes.]

Few rulers possessed so many self-sacrificing friends as Darius, because few understood so well how to be grateful.

When Syloson, the brother of the murdered Polykrates, came to Susa and reminded the king of his former services, Darius received him as a friend, placed ships and troops at his service, and helped him to recover Samos.

The Samians made a desperate resistance, and said, when at last they were obliged to yield: "Through Syloson we have much room in our land."

Rhodopis lived to hear of the murder of Hipparchus, the tyrant of Athens, by Harmodius and Aristogiton, and died at last in the arms of her best friends, Theopompus the Milesian and Kallias the Athenian, firm in her belief of the high calling of her countrymen.

All Naukratis mourned for her, and Kallias sent a messenger to Susa, to inform the king and Sappho of her death.

A few months later the satrap of Egypt received the following letter from the hand of the king:

"Inasmuch as we ourselves knew and honored Rhodopis, the Greek, who has lately died in Naukratis,—inasmuch as her granddaughter, as widow of the lawful heir to the Persian throne, enjoys to this day the rank and honors of a queen,—and lastly, inasmuch as I have lately taken the great-grandchild of the same Rhodopis, Parmys, the daughter of Bartja and Sappho, to be my third lawful wife, it seems to me just to grant royal honors to the ancestress of two queens. I therefore command thee to cause the ashes of Rhodopis, whom we have always esteemed as the greatest and rarest among women, to be buried in the greatest and rarest of all monuments, namely, in one of the Pyramids. The costly urn, which thou wilt receive herewith, is sent by Sappho to preserve the ashes of the deceased."

Given in the new imperial palace at Persepolis.

DARIUS, son of Hystaspes.

King.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

A noble mind can never swim with the stream
Age is inquisitive
Apis the progeny of a virgin cow and a moonbeam
Be not merciful unto him who is a liar or a rebel
Canal to connect the Nile with the Red Sea
I was not swift to anger, nor a liar, nor a violent ruler
Introduced a regular system of taxation-Darius
Numbers are the only certain things
Resistance always brings out a man's best powers

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AN EGYPTIAN PRINCESS — VOLUME 10 ***

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