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CLEOPATRA

By Georg Ebers

Volume 1.

Translated from the German by Mary J. Safford

PREFACE.

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

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

favour.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GEORG EBERS

TUTZING ON THE STARNBERGER SEE, October 5, 1893.

CLEOPATRA.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

While speaking, he shaded his keen eyes with his hand. The architect, who usually devoted his whole attention to the single object that claimed his notice, now permitted himself the pleasure of enjoying the entire picture in whose finishing touches he had himself borne a part; and, as his practised eye perceived in every temple and colonnade the studied and finished harmony of form, and the admirable grouping of the various buildings and statues, he said to himself, with a sigh of satisfaction, that his own art was the noblest and building the highest of royal pleasures. No doubt this belief was shared by the princes who, three centuries before, had endeavoured to obtain an environment for their palaces which should correspond with their vast power and overflowing wealth, and at the same time give

tangible expression to their reverence for the gods and their delight in art and beauty. No royal race in the universe could boast of a more magnificent abode. These thoughts passed through Gorgias's mind as the deep azure hue of sea and sky blended with the sunlight to bring into the strongest relief all that the skill and brains of man, aided by exhaustless resources, had here created.

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

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

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

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

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

What could they want of the secluded philosopher?

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

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

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

"Your presence," replied the architect blithely.

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

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

Both showed a degree of self-reliance unusual, at their age; but the architect's was the assurance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

would be only too quickly spread throughout Alexandria, whose inhabitants relished such speeches.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I?" asked the other in amazement.

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

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

who has forced his way the last few evenings into our friend's house."

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

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

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

"Credit her?" repeated Dion, shrugging his shoulders. "I only transport myself in imagination to the court and to the soul of the woman who helps make rain and sunshine there. You have columns rounded and beams hewed that they may afterwards support the roof to which in due time you wish to direct attention. She and all who have a voice in the management of court affairs look first at the roof and then seek anything to raise and support it, though it should be corpses, ruined lives, and broken hearts. The point is that the roof shall stand until the architect, the Queen, sees and approves it. As to the rest—But there is the carriage—It doubtless brings—You were—"

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

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

CHAPTER II.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As soon as Dion and the older man were alone, the latter inquired the cause of the increasing uproar,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"If you mean that it might injure the lovely woman," replied Dion, raising his head more proudly as if to intimate that he required no warning, even from him, "perhaps you are right. Only I beg you not to misunderstand me. I am not vain enough to suppose that I could win her heart, but unfortunately there are many who cannot forgive the power of attraction which she exerts over me as well as upon all. So many men gladly visit Barine's house that there are an equal number of women who would rejoice to close it. Among them, of course, is Iras. She dislikes my friend; nay, I fear that what you witness yonder is the apple she flung in order, if not to ruin, at least to drive her from the city, ere the Queen—may the gods grant her victory!—ere Cleopatra returns. You know your niece Iras. Like your sister Charmian, she will shrink from nothing to remove an annoyance from her mistress's pathway, and it will hardly please Cleopatra when she learns that the two youths whose welfare lies nearest her heart—Antyllus and Caesarion—seek Barine's house, no matter how stainless the latter's reputation may be."

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

"Impossible!" cried Dion, in surprise, nay, almost terror. "If that is the case, Iras is not wholly wrong, and we must deal with the matter differently. But it is of the first importance to conceal the fact that Caesarion has any interest in the affairs of the old house-owner. To seek to maintain the old man's right to his own property is a matter of course, and I will undertake to do this and try to get yonder orator home. Just see how the braggart is swinging his arms in Iras's service! As for Barine, it will be well to induce her to leave of her own free will a city where it will be made unpleasant for her. Try to persuade her to pursue this course. If I went to her with such a suggestion, I, who yesterday—No, no! Besides, she might hear that Iras and I—She would imagine all sorts of absurdities. You know what jealousy means. To you, whom she esteems, she would surely listen, and she need not go far from the city. If the heart of this enthusiastic boy—who might some day desire to be 'King of kings' not only in name—"

should really be fired with love for Barine, what serious misfortune might follow! We must secure her from him. She could not go to my country house among the papyrus plantations at Sebennys. It would afford too much license for evil tongues. But you—your villa at Kanopus is too near—but, if I am not mistaken, you have—"

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

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

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

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

"That the boy may not follow Barine?" asked Archibius, shaking his head. "I think we need feel no anxiety on that score. He will doubtless eagerly desire to do so, but with him there is a wide gulf between the wish and its fulfilment. Antyllus is differently constituted. He would be quite capable of ordering a horse to be saddled, or the sails of a boat to be spread in order to pursue her—beyond the Cataract if necessary. So we must maintain the utmost secrecy concerning the place to which Barine voluntarily exiles herself."

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

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

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

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

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

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

It had been difficult for him to grasp her meaning while she was speaking. There was a roaring sound in his ears as if, instead of being in the silent temple grove, he was standing on a stormy day upon the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Then, in the afternoon, Caesarion went secretly in a boat to the little palace of Archibius, situated on the seashore at Kanopus, and now as the latter, with his friend, stood beside the carriage door, he explained to them that he was going with the architect to old Didymus to assure him of his assistance.

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

CHAPTER III.

"The lad is in an evil plight," said Gorgias, shaking his head thoughtfully as the equipage rolled over the

stone pavement of the Street of the King.

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

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

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

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

"He bought a dozen false witnesses."

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

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

"So much the better. Tell the officials also, confidentially, that you know of objections just discovered which may perhaps change the Regent's views."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Shall I accompany you?" asked Gorgias kindly.

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

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

He had had similar experiences only too often, and his friends, Dion at their head, had perceived his weakness and spoiled many an hour for him by their biting jests. The series of tall and short, fair and dark beauties who had fired his fancy was indeed of considerable length, and every one on whom he had bestowed his quickly kindled affections had seemed to him the one woman he must make his own, if he would be a happy man. But ere he had reached the point of offering his hand, the question had arisen in his mind whether he might not love another still more ardently. So he had begun to persuade himself that his heart yearned for no individual, but the whole sex—at least the portion which was young and could feel love—and therefore he would scarcely be wise to bind himself to any one. True, he knew that he was capable of fidelity, for he clung to his friends with changeless loyalty, and was ready to make any sacrifice in their behalf. With women, however, he dealt differently. Was Helena's image, which now floated before him so bewitchingly, destined to fade as swiftly? The contrary would have been remarkable. Yet he firmly believed that this time Eros meant honestly by him. The laughing loves who twined their rose garlands around him and Helena's predecessors had nothing to do with this grave maiden.

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

the old man's granddaughter an opportunity to soften the tidings of the impending misfortune.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

burden, had drawn close to his side.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

While speaking, she pressed her little hands on the part of the kerchief which concealed her ears, and said no more until the noise subsided, although she declared that she was in a hurry, and had only come to learn how matters were. Meanwhile it seemed as if she was so full of quick, pulsing life, that it was impossible to leave even a moment unused, if it were merely to bestow or answer a friendly glance.

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

In reply to repeated inquiries from the two old men in regard to her arrival there, she answered: "Nobody will believe it, because in this hurry I could not keep my mouth shut; but I acted like a mute fish and reached the water." Then, drawing her grandfather aside, she whispered to him that, when she left her boat at the harbour, Archibius had seen her from his carriage, and instantly stopped it to inform her of his intended visit that evening. He was coming to discuss an important matter. Therefore she must receive the worthy man, whom she sincerely liked, so she could not stay. Then turning to the

others still with her kerchief on her head ready for departure—she asked what the people meant by their outcries. The architect replied that Philostratus had endeavoured to make the crowd believe that the only appropriate site for the statues of which she had heard was her grandfather's garden, and he thought he knew in whose behalf the fellow was acting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"My tongue," he cried, "is the tool which supports me. Why am I using it here till it is weary and almost paralyzed? In honour of Cleopatra, our illustrious Queen, and her generous friend, to whom we

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"And yet," cried Philostratus, "only the day before yesterday he walked arm in arm in the Paneum

garden with Arius, the tutor of Octavianus, our own and our Queen's most hated foe. In my presence, and before I know not how many others, Didymus distinguished this Arius as his most beloved pupil."

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

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

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

The dim torchlight was sufficient to reveal Philostratus's pallor to the bystanders. For a moment the orator seemed to lose his self-control, but he quickly recovered himself, and shouted: "Fellow-citizens, dear friends! I was about to make you witnesses of the misery which a woman, whose wickedness is even greater than her beauty, brought upon an inexperienced—"

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

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

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

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

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

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

She felt as if the act had ransomed her.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But if she should consent to become his without the blessing of Hymen?

No.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He had judged correctly and perceived that, in her assault upon the old scholar, she had at first intended to play into the hands of the rulers, work against the old philosopher and his relatives, among whose number was Barine; for the Egyptian law permitted the relatives of those who were convicted of any crime against the sovereign or the government to be banished with the criminal. This attack upon an innocent person was disgraceful, yet every word Iras uttered made Dion feel, every feature of her face betrayed, that it was not merely base jealousy, but a nobler emotion, that caused her to assail the guiltless sage—love for her mistress, the desire which dominated her whole being to guard Cleopatra from grief and trouble in these trying times. He knew Iras's iron will and the want of consideration with which she had learned to pursue her purpose at the court. His first object was to protect Barine from the danger which threatened her; but he also wished to relieve the anxiety of Iras, the daughter of Krates, his father's neighbour, with whom he had played in boyhood and for whom he had never ceased to feel a tender interest.

His remark surprised her. She saw that her plot was detected by the man whose esteem she most valued, and a loving woman is glad to recognize the superiority of her lover. Besides, from her earliest childhood—and she was only two years younger than Dion—she had belonged to circles where no quality was more highly prized than mental pliancy and keenness. Her dark eyes, which at first had glittered distrustfully and questioningly and afterwards glowed with a gloomy light, now gained a new

expression. Her gaze sought her friend's with a tender, pleading look as, admitting his charge, she began: "Yes! Dion, the philosopher's granddaughter must not stay here. Or do you see any other way to protect the unhappy boy from incalculable misfortune? You know me well enough to be aware that, like you, I am reluctant to infringe another's rights, that except in case of necessity I am not cruel. I value your esteem. No one is more truthful, and yesterday you averred that Eros had no part in your visits to the much-admired young woman, that you joined her guests merely because the society you found at her house afforded a pleasant stimulus to the mind. I have ceased to believe in many things, but not in you and your words, and if hearing that you had taken sides with the grandfather, I fancied that you were secretly seeking the thanks and gratitude of the granddaughter, why—surely the atrocious maxim that Zeus does not hear the vows of lovers comes from you men—why, suspicion again reared its head. Now you seem to share my opinion—"

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

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

"That might attract attention," answered Dion, smiling and raising his hand as if to enjoin moderation. "Your mode of action does not please me, even now that I know its purpose, but I will gladly aid you to attain your object. Your crooked paths also lead to the goal, and perhaps one is less likely to stumble in them; but straight ways suit me better, and I think I have already found the right one. A friend will invite Barine to an estate far away from here, perhaps in the lake regions."

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

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

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

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

"May she bloom there like a young shepherdess!"

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

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

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

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

With a swift impulse of gratitude Iras bent her face towards him in the dusk, extending the slender

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

Dion gazed after her litter a short time, then passed his hand through his waving brown hair, walked swiftly to the shore and, without pausing long to choose, sprang into one of the boats which were rented for pleasure voyages. Ordering the sailors who were preparing to accompany him to remain on shore, he stretched the sail with a practised hand, and ran out towards the mouth of the harbour. He needed some strong excitement, and wished to go himself in search of news.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

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

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CLEOPATRA — VOLUME 01 ***

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