

ALEPH THE CHALDEAN

OR
THE MESSIAH
AS SEEN FROM ALEXANDRIA



E. F. BURR

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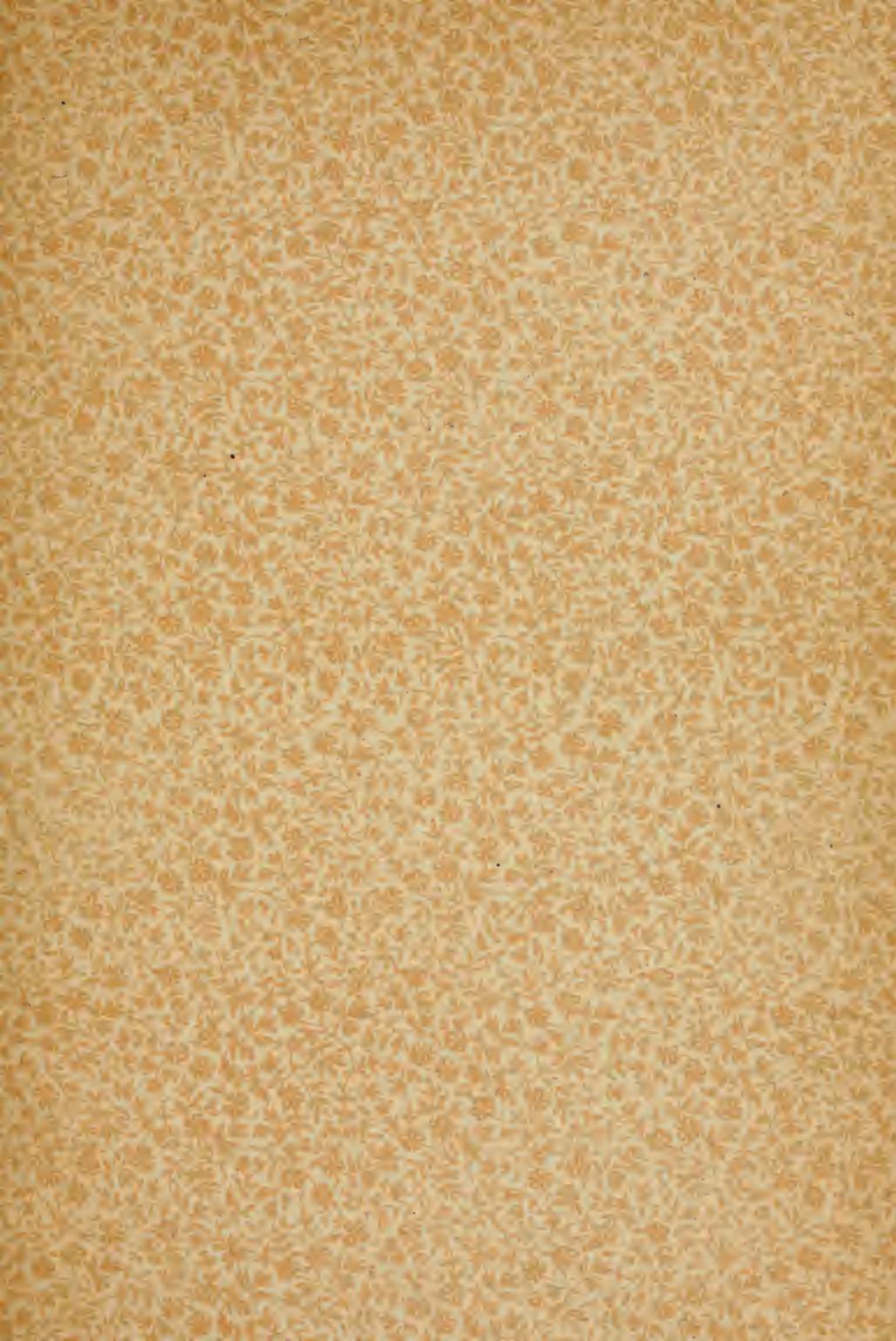
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ALEPH, THE CHALDEAN;

OR,

THE MESSIAH AS SEEN FROM ALEXANDRIA.

BY

E. F. BURR, D.D., LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF "ECCE CÆLUM," "PATER MUNDI," ETC.

*"So forth we gat us from our home ;
So we are here to-day ;
Now tell us where this King to find,
Whose reign shall be alway."*

—ANON.

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P R E F A C E .

TWO facts, at least, should be remembered by the readers of this book.

1. It was not uncommon in the times of the Christ for Hebrew men, in imitation of Joseph and Moses and Boaz, to marry outside of their own people.

2. It is a great mistake to suppose that women in the Roman Empire of the First Century were secluded after the current oriental fashion. They had about as much freedom on most lines of social intercourse as women have among us. The New Testament shows this in regard to Palestine and such contiguous countries as appear in the Acts of the Apostles. But it was the same wherever the Roman authority and influence extended.

“Tradition was in favor of restriction, but by a concurrence of circumstances women had been liberated from the enslaving fetters of the old legal forms, and enjoyed freedom of intercourse in society; they walked and drove in the public thoroughfares with veils that did not

conceal their faces ; they dined in the company of men ; they studied literature and philosophy ; they took part in political movements ; they were allowed to defend their own law cases if they liked ; and they helped their husbands in the government of provinces and the writing of books.”

LYME, CONN., U. S. A.

I.

DOWN THE NILE.

Φησὶ δὲ, τοῖς μὲν εὐθὺ γινομένοις μιξαι χρυσοῦν.

—ARISTOTLE, *Polit.* ii. 3.

He says that some have gold in their composition from the start.

1. Who are they?
2. A son of Misraim.
3. The times of old.
4. A seeming misfortune.

I.

DOWN THE NILE.

FROM Coptus downward on the dreamy Nile—past innumerable canals with their primitive water-wheels; past populous villages and lordly villas embowered in sycamores and palms; past still more lordly ruins, silent now for many a century; past caravans and pleasure-parties and bodies of Roman soldiery, foot and horse, coming and going on the thoroughfares that closely skirt the river on either hand; past water craft of all sorts, from skin-buoyed rafts carrying sandstone from Chennu to the Delta up to gay barges carrying travelers to Thebes and the dead Egypt of the Pharaohs; past crocodiles and hippopotami and pelicans sporting in the water, or basking along the muddy shore as so many logs or stones.

Who are moving downward on the dreamy Nile to Alexandria—in a large merchant vessel, whose lateen sail swells gently to the south wind? A large number of persons with whom we have no special concern. Two persons with whom we have great concern, and whose appearance is striking enough to draw much attention from their fellow-travelers, as they stand together watching the ever-changing scene.

Both wear the classic Greek dress, of plain material. The elder, a man of some sixty years, is so Greek in feat-

ure that no dress is needed to proclaim his nationality. The other, a young man of perhaps twenty years, has a face of a different type. And what a face! Is it Egyptian? No. Is it Roman? No. Is it Hebrew? No. As we take our privilege of drawing very near, and of looking carefully at those features on all sides, and even of lifting the abundant brown hair from the broad white forehead that swells so loftily over the steady and somewhat austere gray eyes, we would rather say that we are looking on the original type from which all other racial faces have varied, so readily does it express the better elements of all. Yes, the young man must be from Britain or the Caucasus—and yet he certainly is not from Britain; for that is still a land of savages, and this youth has an air of culture and refinement, which the plainness of his garb cannot conceal. Is it mere fancy? Have I really a sixth sense? There is something about the young man that seems to breathe of lofty plateaus, and mountain summits, and torrents that dash and roar on their way from the clouds to the sea. What does this mountaineer here among the lowlands of the Nile?

He is evidently looking at the country for the first time. Everything seems to interest him much. His companion, as plainly, is by no means an entire stranger to the scene, and yet shows the degree of interest natural to one who is revisiting a country after long absence. The Greek language flows easily between the two; as the elder from time to time points this way and that, and seems to be recalling and introducing old acquaintances, as the vessel slowly glides by object after object.

“It is now more than thirty years,” said the Greek, whom we will call Cimon, “since I left Egypt; but I

notice very few changes—here and there a new quay or villa, or an old palace decorated with new gardens and trees. I once knew who lived in some of the finer dwellings; for example, yonder low castellated building that covers so much ground on the eastern bank. It is very ancient, and the gradual rise of the land from the annual deposits by the river, long since converted the lower story into a dungeon. The Roman proprætor lived here a part of the year. It once belonged to Cleopatra; was given by her to a favorite noble and relative, from whom the Romans took it, as being heirs to all the Pharaohs.”

The vessel, from some cause, now approached the palace they were observing, and the two men walked to the right side of the boat for a closer view. While standing here and noticing various points of a structure that was now seen to be a fortress as well as a palace, they became aware of a man standing by their side.

“You seem interested in this place,” he said in a grave but courteous tone; “can I give you any information about it? I happen to be particularly well acquainted in this neighborhood.”

They had turned to see a man of majestic stature and mien, far advanced in life, but still erect as a palm and keen-eyed—as thoroughly Egyptian in his look and dress as Rameses the Great.

“I see that you are strangers, and *not* Romans,” he added apologetically, “and old age likes to speak of the past when it can do so safely.” And he looked around as if to assure himself that they were alone.

Cimon politely thanked the Egyptian, and said that he had just been telling his young friend Aleph that the structure before them was once a royal residence.

“That is so,” said the old man; “not only a residence of the Ptolemies, but also of our native kings. You see that the material is stone from Syene, and that the style of building is old Egyptian. It passed to the Ptolemies with the crown of the Pharaohs, but was restored to a direct descendant of the old owners as an act of justice by Cleopatra. For a generation it continued in his family; but at last the Roman governor took a liking to the place and took it. The Romans are apt to take what they like.”

“Not a very uncommon thing for conquerors anywhere to do,” said Cimon. “Perhaps the site of this very palace was taken without purchase or leave by the Pharaoh who built it, from a weak subject or from another defeated Pharaoh.”

“I think not,” decidedly said the Egyptian. “I could show you papyri and parchments in the Serapeum proving that the property has been in the possession of the same priestly family to which it now belongs almost as long as we have been historically a people; and that, you know, is a great while, and nearly connects us with the time when vacant Misraim was divided among our fathers.”

“Certainly,” said the young man whom we have heard his companion call Aleph, “no people between this and the Pillars of Hercules holds its land by so ancient and original a tenure as does the people of Misraim. The Egyptian is older than the Roman, older than the Greek; indeed, was wise and powerful ages before Rome or Greece was born. And, if I mistake not, there is no tradition, nor other reason for thinking, that your fathers dispossessed any other people. They must stand as original

proprieters. If immemorial possession, without hint of wrong, does not give a just title, the world knows of no such title, whether the party be a nation or an individual."

"That seems to me well said," came slowly from the old man, as his eye rested on the ingenuous face of the youth. "We came to the valley of the Nile so early that we did not have to inhabit at the expense of any other nation. We may be said to hold our country directly from the immortal gods."

"You say we *came*," said Cimon. "So, in your opinion, this was not the original site of the Egyptians. From whence do you suppose them to have come, and at how early a period? For my part, I have no doubt that you were here, and were here as a great and accomplished people, long before the Greeks, or even the Phenicians, had any political existence."

"Your question would be variously answered among us," returned the Egyptian. "Some would claim for our past hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of years; would say that such a civilization as ours was at the date of our oldest monuments could not have ripened from that savagery and even brutality which they fancy to have been the primitive human condition in anything short of such immense periods. But such is not my view. I see that you are surprised at this!"

"Not surprised that you reject the brute-origin of mankind," returned the Greek; "for that seems to be contrary to the feeling and faith of all nations; but rather surprised that you do not share what I have supposed to be the fashionable opinion among Egyptians as to their immense antiquity, and what would naturally be to you a very pleasant opinion."

“No opinion is pleasant to me,” replied the old man, slowly shaking his head, “for which I can see no reasonable foundation. Manetho, our only extant historian, was an ancestor of mine. I have his original manuscripts, entire, and am satisfied by the careful study of them and of the palace registers of Thebes that his earlier dynasties were largely cotemporaneous. No; from two thousand to three thousand years are enough to account for our whole history, monuments and all, if we suppose the nation to have been originally gifted and far advanced in civilization on their coming into the land.”

“May I ask from whence you suppose them to have come?” inquired Aleph.

“That is a very broad question at its broadest; and the broadest is what I see in the depths of your eyes. There has been but one tradition among us on the subject, and it is like the traditions of all these western peoples. They look toward the sun-rising. Our fathers entered the land from the north, after journeying from the east. From what part of the great east, do you say? My answer is that Seti the aged is the son of the youth who now stands before me. His is the primitive stock. Caucasian Chaldea is the cradle of the nations. And if you go on to ask whence that cradle and primitive stock, I have to tell you what primitive Egypt thought and said—that AMUN RE, the eternal, almighty, and all-wise Spirit, made the stars and the world, and the first parents of us all. That your Democritus and Epicurus,” added the Egyptian, looking archly at Cimon, “should have taught differently! They should have visited us three thousand years ago and taken lessons. They would have steered their way more successfully among the snags and breakers

of thought. For, the stream of history is like the Nile—broad with us, and not without its monsters as well as fertilities, but beginning small and beginning very high among mysterious mountains. I speak with confidence; for I feel that, owing to certain circumstances, I stand on higher ground than most observers do, and can see farther across the centuries. The horizon is distant, but I can see that there *is* a horizon, and that it sweeps high among the clouds.”

At this moment a Roman officer, who had been lying intoxicated behind some boxes, but was now sufficiently recovered to be miserable and quarrelsome, came somewhat unsteadily toward them. They were standing with their backs toward him; and, noticing their plain garbs, he was, perhaps, encouraged in his thought of mischief. Coming up to the Egyptian, he struck him a smart blow on the back with the flat of his sheathed sword which he carried in his hand.

“Ha, old mummy, did you never see a Roman before?” as Seti turned suddenly toward him. “Improve your opportunity. But you will have an opportunity to *feel* a Roman as well as to see him if you do not at once find the skipper for me. Come, hurry off, old fellow!” and he raised his sword as if for another blow.

Aleph stepped between. “It is more fitting that I should do your errand, if it must be done. You see that I am a young man,” said he, fixing a steady eye on the haughty and inflamed face before him.

“Who are you who dare to stand between a Roman and his will?” cried the officer furiously, his hand still uplifted.

“Let it suffice you that we are peaceable people, mov-

ing quietly about on our own private affairs, as Roman law and custom entitle us to do. Do you understand?"

"I understand that if you do not stand away from between Rome and Egypt, the Caucasus will suffer," and the madman began to draw his sword.

"Listen," said Aleph with composure and emphasis. "You had better not. You have a superior officer, and we are going to Alexandria. I call all these people to witness (by this time many had gathered about) that this quarrel is not of our seeking."

"Dare you threaten a Roman commander, you beardless cub! By the immortals, you shall see what I dare," shouted the man, as he plucked his sword from the scabbard.

"You *shall* not," said Aleph; and, snatching a large bundle from a by-stander, he thrust it into the face of the Roman. It burst and enveloped the man in a cloud of pelican feathers, which a Jew had been collecting for the rag-market of Alexandria. Before his assailant could recover himself and sight, Aleph had thrown his arms about him, secured his sword, and, despite his struggles, laid him supine on the floor. Then, without much difficulty, he managed to swathe and bind his arms to his body with his long sword-sash. Looking about, his eye caught a small coil of rope near him; this he drew to himself, and with it fastened the man in a sitting posture to one of the posts that supported the awning. All this was not done without much struggling and cursing on the part of the Roman; but Aleph was perfectly silent till his prisoner was well secured. Then, turning to the spectators, he said:

"In behalf of the general safety, let this man remain

as you see him till we reach Alexandria. Wine has made him dangerous; and you notice that what has been done, I only have done, and that reluctantly, to prevent something worse."

A cheer flashed out from the faces huddled about, and almost shaped itself on their parted lips, but was suddenly suppressed before anything more than an indistinct murmur had escaped; for their eyes fell on the watchful and infuriated face of the officer. They were prudent people, those passengers. They admired courage; they were glad to see a Roman put down; but they were not ready to sacrifice safety to sentiment. So, instead of cheering, they compromised and fell to laughing at the Jew, who, exclaiming,

"O, my feathers, my poor feathers! Ah, father Abraham, I am a ruined man this day; what will become of me!" crept about on his hands and knees, trying to collect as much of his volatile property as possible.

"Do not worry yourself, my friend," said Seti to him in a low voice; "gather what you can, and add this coin to make the weight good. What has been lost for my sake shall not be loss to you."

The Jew glanced at the coin that had been slipped into his hand, and, catching the gleam of gold, hurried it dexterously to his pouch, at the same time exclaiming,

"May all the patriarchs . . . oh, my beautiful feathers for which I paid . . . may Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob . . . ah, what will become of me!"

And so he went on groping and exclaiming and stuffing handful after handful of his recovered property into his bag amid the merriment of the crowd.

Making a sign to the two friends to follow, the Egyp-

tian led the way to another part of the vessel free from people, where was a single seat. On this he seated himself.

“I take the privilege of age,” said he, “and I am by no means sure but that age gives me the only advantage I have over you. I suspect that the eyes of Seti, though aged, have made a discovery.”

The two friends glanced inquiringly at each other, but said nothing. They were now moving along the canal that connected the Nile with Lake Mareotis ; and for some time they silently watched the agricultural operations and the ever-increasing number of people and dwellings on either bank. At length, emerging into the lake, they saw in the distance the crowded shipping and towers of the city of Alexandria.

Seti roused himself from the mood of intense thoughtfulness, into which he had fallen, and asked :

“Are you acquainted with Alexandria?”

Cimon answered : “With the city, well ; with the people of the city, not at all. A generation has passed since I was here.”

“Excuse one further question,” continued the Egyptian. “Do you stay long in the city?”

“That depends on circumstances,” replied Cimon ; “but probably our affairs will keep us here for some time.”

“This young man has to-day made an enemy, and a powerful one ; no less a person than the dissipated son of Flaccus, the Governor of Egypt. But he has also found a friend ; and if at any time you should need such aid, in whatever affairs you have in hand, as can be given by a native of the country, and by one well acquainted

with things and persons here and not altogether without influence, ask at the Serapeum for the priest Seti, and you will find that I have not forgotten to-day. Do you believe in faces?" looking at Aleph.

"In *some* faces, as interpreted by circumstances, I do certainly," replied the young man.

"And so do I, at least so far as you are concerned," said the Egyptian; "and it is largely because I do so that I now say what I do. There are two men in Alexandria with whom you should have as little dealing as possible. One is Flaccus, the Roman; the other is Malus, the Jew. The one is violent, the other is crafty, and both are wicked and powerful. Avoid them, if possible; but if it is not possible, then remember Seti, the Egyptian. It is true—what the proverb says, that in this world the worst men often occupy the best places."

As the vessel approached the quay, Seti continued: "I think that, contrary to my expectation, I will ask one more question before we part. Of what faith are you? All sorts are found here; also multitudes with no faith at all. Where do you stand?" looking at Cimon. "Do you hold with your fathers?"

"With my father," said the Greek; "but not with my fathers. I follow not Zeus, but Jehovah; not the oracles of Delphi and Dodona, but those of the Hebrew prophets. This young man the same."

"It is as I supposed," said the old man, after a moment adding, as if to himself, "and it is well. Zeus, Jupiter, Amun Re, and Jehovah, rightly understood, are the same."

Giving them his hand, he stepped ashore, and disappeared in the crowd. Runners from the various khans

now came noisily aboard and fought for customers, as they do now, and have done from time out of mind. To one of these troublesome fellows Cimon delivered certain packages, and then, with his young companion, followed them. In passing the spot where they had left the Roman, they found that he had disappeared. Who had set him free? No matter ; he is gone. We hope they have seen the last of him. We hope that returning soberness has made the man so ashamed of himself that hereafter he will carefully keep out of view. But we have our fears. The appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober is not always a success. Besides, Philip was not a Roman.

II.

THE CARAVANSARY.

Ἀλλῆ δ' ἀλλῶν γλῶσσα μεμιγμένη.

—HOMER, *Odyss.* xix. 175.

There was a great confusion of tongues.

1. All sorts.
2. What all believe.
3. An exception.
4. A wrong righted.

II.

THE CARAVANSARY.

THE khan to which our two friends were conducted was not far from the landing. It was the chief point, in that part of the city, of arrival and departure for commercial people ; and, as evening was now near, the great court within was bustling and picturesque with arrivals. Donkeys were being led through it to stables in the rear, camels were being unloaded, horsemen were dismounting ; it was a very Babel of sounds, of costumes, and of movements.

“Is Nathan still the keeper of this khan?” inquired Cimon of their guide, as they were being shown to their quarters.

“He is,” said the man ; “but he is now out of the city. Do you wish to see his assistant? The master himself will not be at home for, perhaps, some days.”

Cimon answered in the negative. Following their guide and parcels into a small sleeping-room, with an ante-room opening on the piazza which surrounded the court, and directing that a simple meal should be sent to them in the evening, they busied themselves for a while in arranging matters for the night. Then they went out on the cooler piazza, and seated themselves on a bench.

“This adventure with the Roman seems unfortunate,”

said Cimon thoughtfully. "Unless matters have much changed since I was here, the ill-will of any Roman official is not to be coveted; while that of the Roman governor looks like quite a serious matter to people on such an errand as ours."

"My interference, I suppose," said Aleph, "would hardly be considered prudent by most people; but I cannot but think that there is something better than prudence. Shall we never allow our hearts to speak and act without stopping to consider how our interests will be affected? Safety gained in that way seems to me hardly worth the having."

"I think you are right," said the other. "I am far from finding fault with what you have done. Under like circumstances I would have you do it again. Our first thought, no doubt, should be, What is highest and worthiest? If that is not prudence, it is something vastly better. But it *is* prudence, on the whole; for it will never do for a man to despise himself and offend Heaven. God governs. But we must wait for Him. A cloud is not always a calamity. A rough wind may help one toward the harbor sought. I know that these are your father's views, and that he would be unwilling to have his son sacrifice even magnanimity to any appearance of present advantage."

"Have you any idea who Seti is?" inquired the young man after a moment.

"I have been trying," answered the other, "to find in my memory something about him. I know that when I was here, the Egyptians as well as the Jews had an official head or *alabarch* of their own nation, who was the organ of communication between them and the

Roman authorities. My impression is that the Egyptian alabarch was of Pharaonic family and a priest of the Serapeum. It may be that Seti is the man. I hope he is."

"I confess," said Aleph, "that the man has quite taken possession of me. It seems to me that I would be willing to venture almost anything on his thorough uprightness and even grandeur of character, although I have known him but such a short time. Did you notice what an aspect he turned on the Roman just after the blow? Had not the fellow been besotted, the surprised majesty of that look alone would have quelled him. But how is it possible for such a man to be a worshipper of brutes, and even to act as their priest?"

"That is not a question easily answered," replied the Greek. "But probably Seti, like all superior Egyptian priests from time immemorial, believes in a religion for the few and another religion for the many. The doctrine of One God to be worshiped without sensible figures is for the few elect who are prepared for it; the lower classes in general are not prepared for it, but need to have the various divine attributes shadowed out to them in sensible forms; and as no forms that man can make are equal to even the familiar living creatures with their wonderful mysteries of internal structure, these are offered to assist the feeble thought of feeble men. Of course, this is all wrong; but it is a wrong imbedded in the traditions and prejudices of ages, and so not easily escaped from. Jehovah makes allowances for such people, whether their names be Socrates and Plato or Zoroaster and Seti. Aristotle says that some of our species have gold blended in their composition from the very beginning. Seti seems to me one of these."

By this time the sun was below the west side of the khan, and the open court was quite in the shade. This brought out into it and the surrounding piazzas all the guests. It was a motley to see as well as to hear. Almost every nation seemed represented, almost every style of features and costume. There were Romans, Greeks, Phenicians, Egyptians, Persians, Arabs, and even a sprinkling of natives from Gaul, Spain, and other places. Such a variety of faces, dress, and, when one listened attentively, of speech! A drag-net of all seas was Nathan's khan.

Aleph was all eyes and ears. The scene was full of novelty and interest to him. At length, turning to his companion, he said :

“This scene reminds me of what I have often heard you and my father say.”

“And what is that?” asked Cimon. “Your father, at least, is wont to say wise things beyond any man I ever knew.”

“That, wide as is the variety of religious beliefs among men, they believe alike in certain main respects. What differences among the faces before us as to color, size, proportion of parts, expression; and yet they are all faces, all human faces, all faces having the same general plan of structure and location of the various organs.”

“Yes,” added the elder; “*Homines diversi sed homines*, as said a Roman before you. And see how various the costume; and yet it is all clothing,—all clothing that recognizes the warm climate, the season of the year, and to a certain extent the time of day and the convenience of travelers.”

“And you might add,” continued the young man,

after a moment of close listening, "that it is just so with the various articulate sounds that come to us. While they differ in tone, in time, in syntax, in dialect, they are all speech, all articulate speech, and, for the most part, speech so much of the Greek pattern as to be intelligible to nearly all of us."

"Yes," said Cimon, "and I suppose that it is very much so with the religious beliefs of these people. Though their creeds differ much among themselves, they are alike in many most important particulars. They all recognize a realm of spiritual beings superior to man, a Supreme Deity, his concern in human affairs, messages from him, our responsibility to him, a future state of rewards and punishments, and the main principles of good morals. There may be some exceptions; for these, I understand, are skeptical times in the Roman world. Almost everything is called in question among the philosophers, even the fact that there is something to be called in question; though it is found hard to get men to question that the Romans are masters, that Tiberius reigns, and that Alexandria is the greatest emporium of the world. But the vagaries of the schools make but little impression on the people at large. They never have done so. The more fundamental beliefs have kept a firm hold on all nations and ages. A little pool will show the heavens as well as the ocean. This khan is a little pool; and at the bottom of it, amid many wrinkles and clouds, one can discover many of the larger stars of religious truth which have shone on the world from the beginning."

"And how do you account for these universal beliefs?" asked Aleph.

"It seems to me that they came from a Divine revela-

tion to the first fathers of the race, and that they were carried forth with them as they gradually dispersed from their original seats, and that they took root so deeply in the needs and reasons of men that no evil circumstances have been able to remove them. It seems to me that as all the routes of trade in our day naturally converge on Alexandria, so the natural highways of thought and need all over the world converge on these fundamental truths."

"No doubt you also think it reasonable to believe that Deity, who made the deposits with the race, has been personally active all along to preserve it, as a broad ground for responsibility and further enlightenment? In addition to a mighty undertow in human nature itself toward these fundamental truths, there are winds and currents of external circumstance setting in the same direction by the personal agency of the Most High."

"Just so. But look at those men!"

The two persons pointed at had been sitting not far away in the open court, conversing in a low tone. By degrees their conversation had become more animated and loud, until now they were earnestly gesturing and talking so as to be distinctly understood at a distance. It seemed that one of the disputants was a Phœnician, and was endeavoring to settle an account of long standing with an Alexandrian dealer in Tyrian dyes, to whom these goods had from time to time been consigned. This dealer claimed that several of the consignments had been short in both quantity and quality; and so offered about half the regular price for the whole lot.

The other protested, called Baal and Ashtaroth to witness that his claim was just; said that he had trusted for so long and for so much, that if his accounts were not now

allowed, he would be ruined. He had arrived from Sidon some days before, expressly for the purpose of trying to get a settlement, but had till now been unable to get even an interview with the dealer, who was always too busy to see him, but had at last agreed to have his agent meet him at the khan. This was the meeting. The Phenician had at first quietly represented the hardships of his case with some hope of softening the agent, but, growing desperate, he hotly rose from his seat and exclaimed in a voice that was almost a wail :

“ I shall be undone,—quite undone ! Have you no mercy ? ”

“ Not much,” said the other, “ for some people.”

“ Thou flint ! Before all the gods my claim is just. What shall I do ? My children will starve.”

“ Let them. The fewer such brats the better. Business is business. Take what I offer or nothing. You have only yourself to blame ; you shouldn't cheat so.”

“ *Cheat !* ” exclaimed the Phenician in a transport of wrath that for the moment drank up his tears like a hot blast from the desert. “ *Cheat !* you Cretan rascal ! You are a pretty fellow to advise against cheating ; you who, I verily believe, never did anything else ; nor your fathers either, for that matter. Who does not know what the honesty of a Cretan is worth ? ”

By this time many had gathered around. Turning to them, the Phenician besought their help to make his debtor do him justice.

“ Why not go to the judge ? ” said a by-stander.

“ Ah, my friend, I have been imprudent. I cannot *prove* that my goods were all right ; for I was so careless that I took it for granted that I was dealing with an hon-

est man, and so neglected to have them examined and registered at Sidon. Besides, if I had done this, how could I know but that the packages had been tampered with on their way here? I could not swear that they came into this man's hands in as good condition as they were when they left mine. But *he* could swear to anything. Why shouldn't he? He told me a little while ago, while we were opening our conference with some general talk, that he did not believe in any god or hereafter; in short, that he had no religion of any sort. What is to keep such a man from wronging his neighbor out of his dues when it can be done safely?"

"This man speaks truth," said a substantial looking man hard by; "for, as I was passing here some time ago, I overheard this atheist sneering at all religion. Said I to myself, that man is a rogue. Is cheating too bad a thing for such a fellow to do? Hassan thinks not."

On this another cried out: "Some of us know Hassan. His word is good. I think as he does: that a man who has robbed himself of his conscience would not hesitate to rob a Phœnician of his goods."

"Exactly so," said another just behind, as he gave his neighbor a push toward the Cretan. "A man who does not believe in anything good believes in everything bad."

"Oh, the fellow is an imitation philosopher, is he? The genuine is bad enough, but an imitation is worse—mere husks. And husks are thrown away. Let's throw him away;" and the speaker drew his girdle a bit tighter.

"And *I* would not trust the rascal with a fig," cried another, as he shied a rather sorry specimen of the fruit at the Cretan.

“Hustle him out—hustle him out,” cried several at once, throwing up their hands.

The crowd seemed on the point of doing it. The Cretan turned pale as he saw them moving upon him, and began to retreat toward the gate. Seeing this, some of the people ran and planted themselves in the way. Finding himself intercepted, the man jumped on a bench and cried in a frightened voice :

“Friends, do not harm me. I am only an agent in this matter. I do what I am bid. My principal is MALUS.”

Malus, Malus—the word passed from mouth to mouth in a low tone. It seemed magical. At once the outcry ceased. The billow of angry faces and hands that was rushing toward the Cretan suddenly stood still, and then slowly broke into many little whispering, murmuring whirlpools. The way to the gate was no longer barred, and the Cretan made his way to it precipitately, and disappeared. There was no danger of pursuit.

The Phœnician sat down again, and covered his face with his hands. Our two friends talked together for a few moments in a low tone. Then Aleph rose and went to the man ; and, after exchanging a few words with him, conducted him to Cimon. A long conversation followed. At last Cimon came forward to the edge of the piazza, and beckoned for attention. He already had it—had indeed been having it for some time ; but seeing the gesture, the people came nearer.

“I do not express any opinion,” said the Greek, “as to the justice of this man’s cause. We have not at present the means for judging that. But, unless all the usual marks fail, this is a case of genuine distress ; and one that

is not likely to be helped by a resort to the courts. The man confesses that he has been imprudent. Besides, he is too poor to bear the expense of a suit. And if he could, a suit would probably be in vain. When the weak contend with the powerful, the weak must go to the wall. So, rightly or wrongly, the poor man will lose his debt; his family will suffer, and he will be in danger of losing all heart by losing in his old age the labor of years. I propose that we help him. The sum lost, though large to him, would not be large to us. A small contribution from each of us will set him on his feet again. Who of you will join me in making it, perhaps in righting a great wrong?"

And, stepping forward, he laid a piece of gold on the bench where the Phenician had sat. Aleph rose and put another by the side of it. Hassan promptly came up and did the same. The example was followed by others, until at last Aleph, coming forward and examining the amount contributed, pronounced it quite sufficient to cover the loss. He handed the sum to the Phenician.

The man seemed for a moment almost bewildered as he received it. He then fell on his knees and thanked his gods in a few trembling words; then springing to his feet, he lifted up his voice and wept. At last he found words and composure enough to say to the people:

"My friends, you have saved me. I was ready to die; would gladly have died a few moments ago; but now I can live, because my family can. I bless you in the name of my little children. You may be sure that you have not helped a rogue; the facts are as I have given them. Before the gods I am an honest man, though I could not prove it before your judges. Again I thank you; and,"

turning to Cimon and Aleph, "especially these two friends, who, though strangers to me, have this day stood between me and ruin. If Sansciano ever forgets them, may . . ."

Here he fairly broke down, and suddenly turning to one of the pillars that supported the piazza, buried his face in his hand.

The sudden night of Egypt was now upon them, and the torches began to flame. After exchanging a few more words with the Phenician, the two friends withdrew to their rooms; but not before they had caught glimpse of a Roman uniform entering the little office near the gate of the court. Did it give them any uneasiness? I hope not. Borrowing trouble is poor business. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. And then, is there not a shield broad as the heavens above the good? Trust it, ye strangers, and go to sleep—if ye are indeed good.

Are they good men? For one, I am inclined to believe in them. Not so much because of their good looks, as because they look good. Not so much from what they have said and done during the few hours of our acquaintance with them, as from a certain—well, let the word be written, though deservedly somewhat unpopular of late—*intuition*. There is something wonderfully prepossessing in the look of both these strangers. It is hard to say what that something is that so bespeaks confidence, but that it exists and speaks mightily there is no denying—at least by me. I seem to look right through those frank and fearless yet kind eyes into noble souls. It may be only a seeming. I shall not attempt to justify myself to the philosophers. If they choose to remind me that appearances are sometimes

deceptive ; that virtue is often very cleverly imitated ; in short, that old proverbs declare that “All is not gold that glitters,” and that “Fair outsides often cover foul insides,” I have nothing to say against it. I shall not argue the case with them. They would have the best of it from the arguing stand-point. Intuitions cannot be defended. So I will do nothing but express a modest opinion that such well-appearing people will turn out as good as they look. Even this, no doubt, will look sufficiently foolish to some ; and should they conclude to suspend judgment as to the character of Cimon and Aleph till they have seen more of them in the progress of the narrative, I shall not complain. They are acting sensibly—as the world goes. They certainly are on very safe ground. “By their fruits ye shall know them” is a maxim whose authority cannot be controverted. And if, in the application of this maxim, they shall discover that the two strangers are no better than they should be, or as bad as the worst, I can only hang my head in confusion, and confess that the logic of experience is better than intuition—*my* intuition.

III.

THE BANKER.

Τὰ χρήματα νεῦρα τῶν πραγμάτων.

PLUTARCH, *Cleom.* 27.

Money, the sinews of business.

1. A financial emperor.
2. His greatest treasure.
3. Pharisees and Sadducees.
4. Poor Miriam!

III.

THE BANKER.

WHETHER Cimon and Aleph slept the sleep of the just we must leave to be settled in the progress of the narrative. I am, I again confess, prepossessed in their favor. At any rate, they slept so soundly that most of the guests of the khan had gone off on their various affairs before the two friends made their appearance.

Perhaps, too, they were delayed by a cause that did not delay many of their fellow-guests—morning worship. It seems that they acknowledged Jehovah and a revelation from him ; and it is to be presumed that such people began their day in the reasonable and old-fashioned way. When have devout believers not acted on the principle that prayer and provender hinder no man's journey ? Besides, they breakfasted in their own room ; whereas most inmates of the khan patronized the cook shops that abounded in the neighborhood.

After the meal they went out and seated themselves on the bench they had occupied the evening before.

“ The first thing to be done,” said Cimon, “ is to find a suitable banker and open an account with him for such Alexandrian funds as we may need. As one of our objects requires that we be unknown, and especially that our connection with your father should not reach the ears of

Malus, we cannot use our draft on him except in case of absolute necessity. We must depend on the jewels. And they are too valuable to be trusted to any but the best hands. If the Jewish family that held the alabarchate when I was here last is still in business, this would be the one to apply to. They were as noted for their integrity as for their immense wealth and influence at Rome. I will go and ask our deputy-host whether they have now any representative in Alexandria."

After a short absence the Greek returned with two canes in his hand, and with the information that the old banking-house was flourishing more than ever in the person of Alexander, the son of the old Alabarch; that the son had succeeded to all his father's honors and more than his father's wealth; and that, as the imperial banker, his influence at Rome was supposed to be even greater than among his own people for whom he had lately enriched the nine gates of the temple at Jerusalem with gold plates of enormous value. It was generally understood in the city that he had lately prevented certain oppressive measures against the Jews of Antioch by threatening to withhold a loan. Some went so far as to tell how many millions of sesterces each minute brought him, and even supposed that he had discovered the art of turning base metals into gold.

"I am sorry that we did not ask Seti about the present Alabarch," said Cimon; "but I have no doubt from what I know of the family that he is the person to whom we should apply."

"I have also learned two other facts," he continued. "One is that the greatest galley in all the three harbors is Malus himself, and that the Cretan of last night is one

of several small tenders that wait on the great ship and do its meaner work—which means that the oversight of the harbors and of the import trade has mainly fallen into the hands of Malus and his agents, and that the fear of him is on all small dealers, whom he could easily crush, especially as he is on the best of terms with the Roman authorities of the city. The other fact is that a Roman soldier was at the khan-office last night to inquire whether two men (describing us) were staying here. The deputy said that he managed not to enlighten the man much—as it was always safe to assume that what a Roman wanted to know ought not to be known.”

“Would it not be well for us,” said the young man, “to make some changes in our dress so as to embarrass such inquiries? . . . I am glad to see that you have brought in your hand something to help us discourage unpleasant recognitions,” he added with a smile and a glance at the canes. “They have a tough and serviceable look.”

“They certainly may be useful on occasion. But every gentleman in Alexandria is in the habit of carrying a cane; for us to do the same will help ward off notice as well as assault. Dogs and donkeys abound; and some of them walk on two legs. A stout stick, with your skill at fence and thrust, will be almost as good as a sword. . . . As to making some changes in dress, I think your suggestion a good one. I also think that it would be well for you, at least, to dress somewhat more richly to-day, inasmuch as you must be the one to do our business with the banker. Till one is known appearance goes far. Meanwhile I will brush up my knowledge of the city and its people. We will meet here late in the day.”

Cimon then produced his tablets and drew on them a

rough plan of the city—one central street, two hundred feet broad, running between the lake and the sea from the gate of the Moon to the gate of the Sun, and called Emporium Street : this crossed in the middle at right angles by another street of similar breadth, but of much less length, called the street of Canopus, ending on the west at the gate of the Necropolis, and on the east at the gate of Canopus : these two main streets cut at right angles by all the rest : here, in the south-east, the Jews' quarter, occupying two of the five divisions of the city : there, north of this quarter and extending to the two harbors Eunostus and Kibotus, and including all the frontage on these harbors called Bruchium, the Greek and Roman quarters. These latter also include a narrow section of the city lying along the whole length of Emporium Street on the west. Just west of this section is Rachotis or the Egyptian quarter, in the southern part of which, on the highest ground in the city, stands the Serapeum, the famous temple of Jupiter Serapis.

“ Entering at the gate of the Moon,” continued Cimon, “ you are to pass up Emporium Street till you come to the street of Canopus : here turn to your right, and, after a short walk, you will find by inquiry the place of the great banker.”

Surely, the way was so plain that no guide would be needed. So, after making some changes in his dress, Aleph took his cane and set forth.

By this time the whole Alexandrian world, the most industrious and bustling world known in ancient times, was in full movement. Such tides of men surging from sea to lake and from lake to sea—such tides of donkeys and horses and camels going and coming—such a menage-

rie and roar of sounds from the tramp of thousands, the shrill calls of traders hawking their wares, the cries of the animals and their drivers, the infinite clatter from the tools of artisans of every name pouring out from the open shops far and near! Slowly on went the young man, with eyes full of grave interest, along the splendid thoroughfare for two miles, till he came to the ornate square, half a league in circumference, from the centre of which one could, without changing his place, see the lake on the south and the harbors with their dividing mole (Heptastadium) and its Pharos on the north, as well as the sands of the desert at both ends of the street of Canopus. Turning down this street to the east under one of the magnificent colonnades that skirted it on either hand, he noticed as he advanced not only that the leading places of business were held by Jews (a fact that he had noticed on the other street), but that the farther he went the more people he saw with Jewish features.

Before he had gone very far, two young men with caps and black gowns, something like the present English university dress, hurried by him; one saying to the other as they passed:

“The earlier at the Alabarch’s the better. First come, first served, you know.”

Aleph quickened his pace so as to keep near them. They soon came to what seemed a fortress rather than a private dwelling or place of business—solid stone, no windows on the first story, length on the street several times that of an ordinary dwelling. Solidity and strength rather than show was the impression given—no elaborate carvings, no pillars of porphyry and cornelian, but plain, massive, mob-defying marble; in short, an architectural

safe. This structure was on a corner. Turning the corner, the young men came by a few steps to a small door. Aleph followed closely ; and when the door opened to the others, he entered with them and was ushered into a reception-room close by, where many others were already waiting their turn to be called into the presence of the financial magnate.

Soon a servant presented on a silver salver tablets to the new-comers, on which each should write his name. When the tablets came to Aleph he noticed that the names of the two young men who had just written were *P. Cornelius, Serapeum,* and *Q. Metellus, Museum.* What did *he* write ? After a moment's hesitation he wrote *Aleph, the Chaldean, khan near the gate of the Moon.*

There were several academic uniforms in the room (each with a conspicuous gold badge in front) that seemed well acquainted with one another, and not disposed to lose the time of waiting, possibly long, in silence. Some talked together with great enthusiasm of a boat-race that had come off the day before on the lake : others discussed the merits of various recent performances in the palæstra, especially those of a certain noted athlete and trainer who had just arrived from Rome : two agreed that there was nothing worth living for but the noble art of fencing, and that the greatest living master of the art was one Draco of Rhodes, of whom they were taking lessons. A knot of dudes were comparing breast-pins and finger-rings and experiences at the last fashionable party ; or boasting of the successful tricks they had played on the lecturers at the Museum, and of how they managed to evade many of the lectures and delude their parents and other friends at home with the idea that they were hard at work digging

into all the sciences and philosophies and living like hermits on crusts and water. Some were ready to burst with merriment over some practical jokes they had played on some citizen or new-comer at the Museum ; or at the way in which they had baffled the police in a midnight brawl.

The two students who came in with Aleph seemed better to deserve the name. They had just come from a lecture by Philo, a brother of the Alabarch ; and found much to commend in his ingenious attempts to Hellenize the Hebrew writers or to Hebraize the Greek—they were uncertain which way to put it. They agreed that he was a very broad man and ready to do justice to great men of other nationality than his own. They were also hearing lectures on astronomy and Hipparchus in the observatory rooms at the Serapeum, as well as on the physics and metaphysics of Aristotle at the Museum.

Aleph was not sorry to have this little insight into student life in Alexandria ; and, considering the number of persons in the room on his arrival, he was expecting to have a still longer time to observe and listen, when, to his surprise and apparently to that of others around, a special servant came to conduct him to the banker.

After passing through a large room occupied by many persons busy at desks, and crossing a broad passage from which rose a flight of marble steps, they came to a small room plainly furnished, in which were seated two men. What was his surprise to recognize in one of them the Egyptian Seti ! The pleasure he felt sprang at once to his face, as he advanced with a warm but modest greeting which the aged man cordially reciprocated, and then presented him to the Alabarch as “ the young man of whom we have been speaking.”

Alexander was a Jew to the slightest inspection. But his features though national were royally so, and might have belonged to Solomon. Their whole expression bespoke one accustomed to great thoughts and plans; while yet a certain watchfulness, like distant pickets about a royal encampment, looked out from far back in his frank and friendly eyes as of one who knows that all sorts of characters will come to a banker, and who knows how to protect himself on occasion. His manners were polished and courtly—as might have been expected in one who dealt only with the highest and most cultured classes, and was even a companion of princes. In watching him one felt sure that the man was larger than his wealth, however large that might be. He was still in the prime of life, and without a thread of silver in his dark hair and beard.

Alexander received the young man graciously, though with wide-open, all-observing eyes.

“I happened,” said the Egyptian to Aleph, “to be with my son when your name was brought in; and, though you gave me no name yesterday, I fancied that the Chaldean was the friend I have occasion to remember, and that his first business would naturally be with a banker. I had just finished explaining how we met when you came in.”

“That I am as glad as surprised,” returned the young man, “to see you here and in such a relation, you doubtless have already discovered. Perhaps I am the more glad because my business with this gentleman is such as may call for a word of friendly prepossession in my favor from one who is known here. For the present I am compelled to remain unknown. I can only appear as Aleph, the

Chaldean, in company with his preceptor and friend, Cimon the Athenian. So I have no papers to present on which to ask an open account for him and myself, within certain limits, with a banker. I have only certain jewels to place in his hands, of the value of which he must judge"—and he drew from the bosom of his tunic a small box which he opened and handed to Alexander.

The banker was surprised. In all his wide experience he had never fallen in with such brilliants—so large, so beautifully and variously hued, with such soft and mystic fires playing about them and raying out from their inmost depths. A pearl, a ruby, a sapphire, and a diamond—that was all; but, as Alexander turned the box this way and that, there flashed out upon him such lovely lights as he had never seen in the imperial treasury at Rome, enriched as it was with the regalia of many nations.

After carefully taking out each gem and examining it on all sides, and then as carefully replacing it in its luxurious bed, Alexander at length fetched a long breath and slowly said :

“If any common stranger had brought me these remarkable jewels I should have demanded to know his name and station—in short, that he is the rightful owner of such a treasure. This would only be common prudence. But I happen to have an uncommon father-in-law, who has a notion that he has a gift of reading character in faces and bearing, and who thinks so favorably of yours that he might quarrel with me if I should deal with you on strictly business principles. I should be sorry to have him do that. Besides, to tell the truth, I have something of his weakness for a good face and figure, and whatever else that indescribable something about you is that de-

mands confidence. So I think I will venture"—and he threw an arch look and smile at Seti.

And he drew two sheets of papyrus toward himself. After writing for some time, he read over to himself carefully what he had written, and then handed the sheet to Aleph, saying, "Is this satisfactory?"

The young man read a full description of the box and its contents; an acknowledgment of the receipt of it as basis for credit to the extent of 200,000 aurei or staters, to be drawn upon at pleasure in large or small sums; also a promise to restore the jewels on repayment of sums advanced with a moderate interest.

Aleph pronounced the paper entirely satisfactory, and far more favorable than he had any reason to expect—adding, however, that he had no idea of making any large drafts on the sum pledged; as one of the objects he had in view in Alexandria would compel him to live in a very quiet and inexpensive way, even if it were not a matter of choice.

Alexander then proceeded to copy the document, and to affix his signature and seal to it and to the copy. He retained one and gave the other to Aleph, with a parcel of small slips of papyrus each already signed by himself, but otherwise blank, saying:

"Whenever you wish current money, fill in one of these with the sum desired, in your own handwriting and with your name as given to-day, and present it in the room through which you passed in coming here. . . . Now I will put this treasure where it will be somewhat safer than it was when walking the streets of Alexandria under the protection of a cane"—and he rose and took the box and his copy of the paper he had just executed to

carry them into an adjoining room whose door, massive with iron, proclaimed the very citadel of the financial stronghold.

“Will you add this small parcel of valuable documents to the box?” said Aleph, as he again produced from the bosom of his tunic an elaborately tied and sealed parcel.

Alexander had hardly resumed his seat, after a few moments' absence, when a light step was heard descending the stairs in the neighboring passage, the door softly opened a little, then wider, and after a moment a young lady advanced into the room. Seti and Aleph were so seated that they could not well be seen from the door; and the maiden seeing none but Alexander went hastily up to him, put her hand on his shoulder, kissed his forehead, and said :

“Father, word has just been brought me that my poor nurse Miriam, who has come back to the city sick, is now dying, and wants to see me. May I take a servant with me and go? In the absence of my mother and brothers, I thought I had better come directly to you, as I may need to be gone for some time, and you would be alarmed at my prolonged absence.”

“Certainly I would have been. Take two servants : then you can send one of them back for anything that may be needed. Let the woman have every possible help and comfort. But, Rachel, you do not notice your grandfather!”—nodding his head toward Seti, who had risen and was coming toward her.

Rachel turned suddenly, with a faint exclamation of surprise, and sprang into the open arms of the Egyptian, exclaiming :

“When did you come? I thought you were still in Upper Egypt. How glad I am to see you, my dear grandfather—as glad as one can be whose foster-mother lies dying!”

“I will not keep you from her—only to answer your question by saying that I reached the city safely last evening, thanks to a young friend of mine. No particulars at present. Perhaps I will step in at Miriam’s on my way home (I accidentally heard of her whereabouts this morning), and see if the leech has done his best, and, if not, whether old Egypt can do better.”

“Do, grandfather,” she pleaded, “and come soon: for I verily believe that the priest Seti knows more of the healing art than all the rest of Alexandria—the daughters of my people not excepted.”

As she glided toward the door her eye rested for a moment with a startled look on Aleph. He had till now been unobserved. The tall form of Seti had been interposed. She hesitated a moment, as if to make sure that the young man was not some one whom she ought to recognize, and then hastened away.

Ah, those great, lovely eyes! It was but a second that their inquiring look rested on him; but they at once made him forget every other feature. He had not failed to notice her faultless figure, the queenly carriage of her head, the easy grace and even majesty of her every movement; and when she turned to greet Seti he had had full view of an exquisite face, hesitating between girlhood and womanhood—a face wonderfully luminous with a certain spiritual and lofty loveliness—but the moment her eyes shot their fires into his, all previous impressions vanished, and he saw nothing but *eyes, eyes*. In talking over the

events of the day with Cimon at the khan in the evening, he could not, for the life of him, remember distinctly whether she was tall or short, dark or brown-haired, light-complexioned or otherwise—he could only remember the glorious *eyes*. But the young man was in Alexandria for a purpose, and a great one : and what had he to do with a maiden's haunting eyes? Just nothing at all. So he turned his own eyes to the business in hand : and the effulgent twin stars that had just risen above his horizon, contrary to the order of Nature, silently sank back again and disappeared—almost.

He rose to take leave. But Alexander said, *Wait a little*, and touched a string. A servant appeared, to whom he gave some directions in a low voice. When he had dismissed the man, he said that he had just sent to notify those in waiting that no more business would be done to-day. He added that he usually closed business earlier on the sixth day of the week out of regard to the sacred seventh, and that so he had some leisure for conversation ; if the young man would resume his seat.

“Speaking of our Sabbath,” continued he ; “reminds me that I ought to invite you to our place of worship for to-morrow : for I learn that you are not a worshipper of Belus ?”

“Hardly,” said Aleph with a smile.

“Nor a fire-worshipper ?”

“By no means.”

“Nor a worshipper of the sun, moon and stars ?”

“I was not so taught,” emphatically.

“But you were taught to worship the One God who made the heavens and the earth, and who spake by Moses and our other prophets ?”

“Even so: our family religion for generations has been that of the Hebrews—as being the most credible and satisfactory within our knowledge.”

“Our common friend here could not tell me quite as much as this,” said Alexander with a gratified look, “but I am glad to hear it, and hope to learn at some future time how your family came into possession of our faith. You observe our sacred day?”

“I do, as does also my companion. Though a Greek by birth, he is a Hebrew in religion. We will be pleased to accept your invitation for to-morrow. Where shall we find your place of worship?”

“We Jews are 300,000 strong. So there are several synagogues in the city; but two of these are much larger than the rest, and stand for two different schools of doctrine among us. The one with which I am connected is the *Diapleuston* and is on the street of Canopus, not far from here. The other is on Emporium Street, and is not so large as ours, but still has many substantial adherents, of whom Malus, our chief shipping merchant, is the most prominent. Indeed, I think that he is now the chief ruler of his synagogue.”

“May I ask,” inquired Aleph, “what the doctrinal difference between the two synagogues is?”

“The chief difference,” answered Alexander, “relates to the degree of authority to be allowed to our Sacred Books. We of the *Diapleuston* say that their authority is final on all matters of which they speak—that their writers were so guided and guarded by Jehovah in composing them that they were at first perfectly free from mistake of all sorts: while the other school maintain that, while properly enough said to be of divine origin, our Scriptures

have always been more or less mistaken in their teachings and need to be sifted by learned men."

"Do these men offer any criterion by which one may separate the reliable from the unreliable?"

"They do not *agree* on any. One says that all important Scripture statements are reliable; another tells us that all are reliable, save in the domains of history and science; another excludes as unreliable all but positively *religious* statements."

"Of course they differ widely as to what *are* important or strictly religious matters."

"Certainly. Whatever statements are unsatisfactory to a man for any reason he is apt to think of small consequence."

"And I should suppose the other test might be equally elusive. Is there not room for considerable difference of opinion as to what deserve to be called moral and religious statements?"

"So it seems: and, as a matter of fact, Malus and his synagogue agree only in discrediting those parts of the Scriptures that are in the narrative form and a large part of the remainder. Especially are they prepared to admit the possibility of mistake to almost any extent in Moses and the earlier Scripture writers. Not a few deny that we have any Moses. What passes under the ancient name is really the invention of recent times."

"This is the result I should expect. One seems to be left at liberty to take as much or little of the Scriptures as suits him: for if parts of them are unreliable, and we have no sure way of determining where these parts are, we will be likely to locate them where our prejudices and inclinations say. The larger part of the Book may easily

be considered secular or unimportant by one who wishes as much."

"Very true," said Alexander; "and see what the other synagogues have actually come to! Some reject the doctrine of angels, some that of a human soul distinct from the body, some that of personal responsibility, and nearly all that of miracles and all other forms of supernaturalism in history, as well as that of a future state of settled character and destiny for men. And so on. Really, between them all, there is very little of the sacred Book left. The sum of their doubts and denials would cover almost the whole of it. What is left is the brief revelation that Malus, the Sadducee, uses. His maxim is to discard what anybody doubts."

"This seems to me a sad state of things," said Aleph, fetching a long breath that was almost a sigh. "It would be almost unimaginable in the house of my fathers. Practically these people are without a revelation. The only revelation to each is that bundle of guesses and notions which he calls his knowledge or judgments: and there are about as many different revelations of this sort as there are men; and, to my thinking, they are all about equally worthless. It is sad that circumcised people should hold such uncircumcised notions."

"A sad state of things, indeed," consented Alexander, "but we may console ourselves with the fact that this sad sort of people are a minority and a small one, and have been quite unknown among our people till quite recent times. I trust they will soon become unknown again. When the Messiah, whom we are daily looking for, comes and, accrediting himself by signs and wonders, declares

that not one jot or tittle of the law shall fail, even Malus will have a revelation that is worth the having."

"May He come quickly!" said the young man devoutly.

Alexander looked intently for a moment on the kindling and abstracted face before him, and then as devoutly said *Amen*.

During this conversation Seti maintained an unbroken silence—his arms folded, his face impassive, but his eyes as watchful as eagles'. He seemed to be hearing as well as seeing with those ancient eyes of his that never once left the face of Aleph.

They both rose at the same time—Seti saying that he would walk along with the young man and point out the Diapleuston in passing.

The Alabarch courteously escorted them through the now vacant rooms to the door; saying to Aleph, as he parted, "Remember—at the third hour to-morrow. Come half an hour earlier."

Turning into the street of Canopus, and going westward under the colonnade, they soon came to a corner on which stood an imposing structure of white marble. As Aleph glanced down the side street he saw that the length of the structure was immense: as he passed to the front he saw that its breadth was nearly as great. A central part raised on a lofty pediment, surmounted by a gilded dome, and supported in front and on either hand by immense monolith columns, was surrounded on all visible sides at a little distance by low marble cloisters—save where a broad flight of steps led up from the street to the great doors. From the wide platform at the top the great

columns rose in elaborately wrought clusters, each supporting an ornate capital, architrave, frieze, and cornice; while, behind, the whole front was alive with spirited sculpture in relief of the Feast of Tabernacles.

I must not forget to add that at one angle the low cloisters swelled into a graceful and lofty tower that ended in a parapet.

“From behind that parapet,” said Seti, pointing, “are sounded the seventy silver trumpets that summon the Jews to their worship; for here is the Diapleuston to which you have been invited.”

They passed on to another crossing.

“Let us turn down this street,” said the Egyptian. “It is less crowded than the thoroughfare, and equally direct for both of us, as I learn that you are staying for the present near where we landed yesterday. Besides, I wish to stop for a few moments with the sick woman. I am afraid of these Alexandrian leeches. Once in every five or ten years they get a new fashion of treating diseases and call it science.”

They turned south and soon came to a humble house, where Seti knocked. The door was opened by a shiftless looking Greek who, on request, pointed to a door within which the sick woman could be found. On entering, they found her on a rude bed, supported almost in a sitting posture by the daughter of Alexander, who sat behind her. She was a woman of middle age, very emaciated, eyes closed, lips parted, chest laboriously heaving, apparently unconscious.

“Oh, grandfather, I feared you would not come,” exclaimed the maiden in a subdued voice, “feared you would be too late,—I am afraid you *are* too late. The

leech says that nothing more can be done"—and the tears dropped fast from the lovely eyes.

The rich dress worn at home had been exchanged for one exceedingly plain and suited to her present sad and humble surroundings. But the change did not detract from her superb loveliness. On the contrary, the exquisite graces of feature and figure became all the more apparent in the absence of the distractions of extrinsic ornament; and a new light born of a heavenly pity and self-forgetfulness was shining in her face.

Without replying to her words, Seti advanced to a casement and door, and threw them widely open on a small open court.

"But the leech, grandfather, said that the fresh air must be excluded."

"Did he bring this?" said the Egyptian, taking up from the bed a partly unrolled manuscript. He read aloud: "*The Psalms of David translated by the Seventy.*"

"That is mine," said Rachel. "I brought it with me, and have read from it to Miriam while she could listen. It was her only comfort, besides prayer."

"What have you learned about her case?"

"You know that she left us two years ago to marry a man whom we could not approve: and until yesterday we did not know what had become of her. Then I had a message from her husband, who is a Greek, that she was sick at this place. I went to her at once and found her very weak and low with this fever; and gathered from her with great difficulty that she had led a life of hardship and exposure since leaving us, had sometimes been in the extreme of want, but was ashamed to make her

situation known to us after having rejected our counsel. So she had gradually been worn down by want and disappointment until this fever seized on her and found an easy victim"—and the fair head drooped with a sigh to the hot forehead that rested against her shoulder.

"Has she asked for nothing?" inquired Seti.

"Not of late. When I first came she wanted water, and asked for it almost constantly. But the leech said she must not have it. It would chill her and finally make the fever worse. He would only allow her lips to be moistened occasionally with a sponge."

"Her lips are trying to move now. Can you hear anything?"

"Nothing."

Seti stooped and put his ear close to the lips of the dying woman. He shook his head.

"Old age," said he, "has its disadvantages, and dull ears are one of them. Perhaps my young friend here can help us"—and he beckoned to Aleph, who had remained at some distance.

The young man at once came forward, and, kneeling by the bed, laid his ear close to the twitching lips. For a few moments he seemed not to breathe at all. As Seti looked down on that noble head with its wealth of youth and strength in broad contrast with the sharp, worn features of the sick woman, he said to himself: "It is the head of Horus, the sun-god."

At length Aleph rose. "She says *water, water*—that and nothing else."

"Give her water, then," commanded Seti.

"But the leech, grandfather!" interposed the maiden anxiously.

“No matter what the leech says. I too am a leech. Let her drink freely.”

Aleph took up the water-jar that was standing by the bed, poured into a large cup that was near till it was almost full, and held it to the lips of the woman—saying to Rachel as he did so: “It is the way of my country.” The dry lips closed spasmodically over the rim of the cup, and did not release it till not a drop was left. She opened her eyes. A faint sigh of relief reached the younger ears.

“Give her another cup,” said Seti.

She drained that also: then whispered *Heaven*—so that they all heard, and almost a smile hovered upon her wan features. Great drops stood on her forehead, and she quietly sank into sleep.

“Now lay her down softly,” said the Egyptian to the maiden, “and let her sleep. She will do well. What has she eaten?”

“Nothing since I have been here. The leech said that food would not nourish her: it would only nourish the fever.”

“Has she never asked for anything in particular?”

“The woman who was here when I came tells me that before nurse became so weak she asked for fried lampreys and onions. But the leech said that she could not ask for a worse dish. It would kill her outright. And, what was worse, it would kill him too; for it would ruin his practice to allow such a thing. It was against all rules.”

“Never you mind his rules. Tell the woman—but here she is; I will tell her myself,” and he turned toward a peasant woman, who had just softly entered and was standing embarrassed at the presence of strangers. “When

this sick person wakes let her drink all the water she wants. Then ask her if she can think of anything she would like to eat, calling over to her all the eatables you can think of, and whatever she chooses get for her, even though it is fried lampreys or fried dragons. Do you understand?"

"Yes, my lord ; but the leech . . ."

"Will see that these instructions of Seti are obeyed. If not, send word at once to this lady. . . . Now, Rachel, you ought to go home at once. Though you are not unaccustomed to such work as this, I can see that you are tired and worn. If you were of the fainting sort I should hold out my arms to catch you from falling—your cheeks are so white and your eyes so——"

She would have fallen had she not hastily staggered toward him and caught his arm.

"Yes, grandfather, I think I had better go home as soon as possible," she said in a low and trembling voice. "The closeness of the room till you came, together with the anxiety and excitement, has been too much for me. But the open air will set me right."

"Ought not the lady to have a sedan?" inquired Aleph. "I saw a stand at the last corner as we came."

"Certainly," said Seti: "and where are the two servants, Rachel, who came with you?"

"Are they not at the door? I left them there, to be within call."

"I did not notice them when we came. Did you?"—turning to Aleph.

Aleph shook his head. "Allow me to go for a sedan," said he, "and we will see the lady safely home."

"Thank you—that will do."

Aleph hastened away. During his absence, which was short, Rachel reclined ; and on his return with a chair and two stout porters he found her much revived and quite disposed to dismiss the vehicle as being unnecessary. But this Seti would not permit. And she speedily found that he was right ; for, on trying to walk to the door, she found it necessary to accept support from both men. But the open air of the street seemed to recall her strength at once, and she entered the sedan without help.

Seti walked before the vehicle to guide. Aleph walked behind—every now and then quieting the motion of the bearers by a word, and once or twice venturing to draw aside the curtain and inquire in a grave, sympathetic way how the lady was enduring the jolting. The answer was satisfactory and cordial : and when the house of Alexander was reached she professed to feel as well and strong as ever, and proved it by darting up the steps without aid. Turning, as the door opened, she threw down thanks and adieu with the gesture of a goddess and disappeared.

“There goes the Gem of Alexandria,” murmured Seti to himself.

Aleph said nothing, but he thought that, whatever the gem, it was a wonderfully fine casket that contained it. He was sure that he had never seen a finer. And those *eyes!* As he turned away the twin stars again ventured to show themselves above his horizon in all their dewy splendors. But what had he to do with a maiden’s starry eyes? Just nothing at all. So back they timidly sank to the horizon’s edge ; but refused to go farther. They must wait till they had burned a path through.

That evening at the khan Cimon and Aleph compared experiences. Cimon had revived his acquaintance with

the city, but had not found any of his old acquaintances. Thirty years and more had dismissed all of them to new homes or to the Necropolis. No directory made it possible for him to be sure but that, somewhere in the great city, some one whom he had known as a young man was still living with whitening locks ; but no doubt nearly all of his generation were dead. That was the way of things in Alexandria : as it is everywhere else. Cimon was sad that night. O Time, thou mighty thief, when will Government apprehend thee and bring thee to justice ! Or, better still, when will it take thy scythe from thee, and put thee into some Reformatory to learn giving instead of stealing, addition instead of subtraction, flowing instead of ebbing, the art of ever setting poor men forward from strength to strength instead of backward from weakness to weakness ! Well, that is what will be done some day—for some. For whom ?

IV.

THE SYNAGOGUE.

Καὶ ἀρίστους δὲ καὶ θεοφιλεστάτους.

—XENOPHON, *Memorab.* iii. 9.

That the best men are most observant of Divine worship.

1. Is it a recognition?
2. Diapleuston the magnificent.
3. Has the Messiah come?
4. Procul este profani.

IV.

THE SYNAGOGUE.

IF the reader is curious to know how the two friends passed the long Sabbath morning, before it was time to go to the synagogue, I can inform him. They prayed apart, they prayed together; they produced a copy of the Septuagint and read what the prophets had written about the Messiah. They found many mysteries, and much material for conversation, until the dial in the centre of the court told them that it was time to be moving.

On their way up Emporium Street they kept to the right side for two reasons—because the right was first reached, and because on that side the current of people was in their own direction. And a strong current it was. Men, women, and children, with Jewish faces and apparently dressed in their best, in great numbers were leisurely moving northward. Aleph was tall enough to look over the heads of most of the people before him and noticed in the distance the living stream turning into a building. It occurred to him that this building was probably the synagogue of Malus, of which the Alabarch had spoken. He was confirmed in this idea by the light behavior of most about him. The principle of reverence was neither in their feet nor in their faces. And as to their tongues—these seemed to have the freedom of all the days of the

week. They were talking shop, talking ships, talking fashions, talking gossip—talking everything but politics and religion. These last topics they prudently left to the Romans and “whom it might concern.”

When they came to the synagogue they saw that it was large ; though by no means as large and imposing as the Diapleuston. They lingered a little among the many standing on the street in order to get a better view. Just then came up a group of persons more richly dressed than the rest, and for whom the rest made way with special deference as they mounted the steps. One of these, whose dress was particularly showy, turned when he had reached the last platform, and looked down among the people as if seeking some one. His eye rested on Aleph. Both Cimon and Aleph noticed an involuntary start. It could hardly have been greater if the man had received an unexpected blow.

He was a man of middle stature, somewhat past middle life, and more than middlingly obese. His face was a curiosity. It was as round as a full moon, and as pocked : but the great peculiarity of it was its characterless or wooden expression. It neither laughed nor cried, it neither promised nor threatened, it was neither happy nor miserable, it was neither saint nor sinner. Yet one hesitates a little over this last statement. There was a certain thin, very thin, something about the face that asked to be considered religious. But to the eyes of our friends it seemed sanctimoniousness instead of sanctity, a gauze white veil which, however well worn, is no part of the person and can be put off at pleasure. Perhaps they were mistaken. Sudden judgments sometimes shoot wide of the mark. And it was but a moment they had in

which to study his face before he disappeared within the synagogue.

Cimon turned to a by-stander, and asked: "The ruler of the synagogue?" The man bowed assent.

"I wonder," said Cimon, musingly, as they passed on, "whether Malus recognized your father in you. You resemble him strongly—as he was, thirty years ago."

As they came up to the Diapleuston there burst from the summit of the side tower a chorus of trumpets—rich, soft, yet far-sounding. Looking up they saw seventy men standing behind a circular balustrade and chanting through silver trumpets toward all points of the compass.

"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts," went sounding broadly forth over the city.

They were met just within the doors by Alexander himself—to whom Aleph presented his "preceptor and friend" Cimon. The Alabarch received them with great courtesy, and thanked the young man for the service rendered to his daughter the day before; and when Aleph expressed the hope that she had quite recovered from her indisposition, he said:

"Quite so, she tells me; and so I have brought her with me to give thanks for the good news this morning received that her nurse continues to mend."

And he led the way toward a distant canopy not far from the centre, near which his daughter was sitting. She was simply dressed and closely veiled; but Aleph had no difficulty in recognizing the exquisite shape and bearing of the Gem of Alexandria.

Alexander then said that he had asked them to come somewhat in advance of the congregation, partly in order that they might have time to look about them, and to get

familiar with the building before the services should begin.

“Walk about freely,” he continued, “until the trumpets cease summoning; then return and occupy the seats yonder (he pointed). They are reserved for visitors in accord with us. Meanwhile I have to meet the elders.”

He bowed himself away; and they began to look about them. But few people had yet come in. It was the largest and finest synagogue in the world. Just before them, abutting on the east side of the building, was a low platform surrounded by a delicate silver railing and surmounted in part by a canopy of cloth of gold. Under this was an ornate seat curiously wrought in various precious woods. Near the front of the platform stood an equally elaborate reading desk, with several rolls upon it. By the side of the platform was a door by which Alexander had disappeared; and in front of the platform, arranged in several semicircles, were the famous seventy gilded chairs for the seventy elders of the synagogue. Back of these were the seats for the families of the elders with a narrow aisle separating the males from the females. On the first seat to the left of this passage sat Rachel. Behind these seats, and skirted by immense columns on either hand, ran a broad aisle from end to end of the synagogue. The building was so long that the signal for the responses had to be given by a flag to the more remote worshippers; for all were expected to join vocally in the prayers as read at the centre, though addresses to the people were made simultaneously at several other platforms placed at convenient intervals. The walls were covered with Scripture verses in both Hebrew and Greek, beautifully done in mosaic—one wall with prayers, an-

other with praises, a third with the Ten Commandments, a fourth with the leading Messianic prophecies. One mystery of the building was the pleasant illumination without any sign of windows or sources of artificial light.

While they were lingering over the Messianic inscriptions they suddenly awoke to the fact that the synagogue was becoming thronged and that the summoning trumpets were about concluding their sonorous chant. So they made their way back, as rapidly as the incoming stream of belated worshippers (not wholly unknown in any age) would allow, to the seats which had been shown them.

AMEN, sang the trumpets in long-drawn note from their tower. AMEN, answered the packed multitudes on their knees. The door at the side of the platform opened; and the seventy elders, with Alexander and another younger man, who strongly resembled him, at their head, entered in long flowing robes elaborately fringed and decorated on the breast with phylacteries lettered in gold. The leaders ascended the platform: the others passed on to the gilded chairs. The Alabarch seated himself under the canopy: his companion advanced to the lecturn, bowed his head upon it for a moment, then placed the *tulith* on his head—and at once the service began.

Began with a doxology — spontaneous, universal, mighty; flooding the whole temple with rhythmic billows of uplifting sound. As the last note died away, the man at the desk began to read from a roll that vivid picture of the consequences to Israel of both obedience and disobedience contained in Deut. 28th—read them sonorously and with great distinctness, but not without something of the artificial and professional in his tone—read them with

here and there a word of comment which did not always content itself with the literal sense instead of an allegorical and mystical one. This reading concluded, he waved a small flag ; and all the people broke out again into a doxology—this time the entire psalm, beginning with, “ Praise ye the Lord ; praise the Lord, O my soul ; while I live will I praise the Lord,” in a rapid and triumphant march of unified sound. He then proceeded to read on his knees, the people all kneeling, the prayer contained in the psalm that begins with “ Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock, thou that dwellest between the cherubims shine forth ;” at the conclusion of which he waved the flag again and a universal AMEN arose. This was followed by readings from the prophets of selections commonly understood to point to the Messiah. Again the flag waved, and the people exclaimed as with one voice, but in a plaintive tone :

“ Though he tarry long he will surely come.”

The reader then became a preacher. His theme was the Messiah. He spoke of the certainty of His coming, of the time and other circumstances of it, of the character and functions that would belong to Him, of the way in which He would prove Himself, and of the universal current expectation of Him among their own people. He showed that from the beginning of the race hints of Him had been given—hints that gradually enlarged and brightened as the ages rolled on, until, in the later prophets, all veils were removed and the dimmest eye could see the King that cometh in the name of the Lord. As to the time—he shared the common belief of the present and the last generation that the time was near, if not already arrived. How could the dates of Daniel be reconciled

with any other view? To be sure, some allowance should be made for round numbers: it would not do to say that this or the next year is the time for the Coming; but after all it is safe to say in a general way that we are living in the times of the Christ. It ought not to surprise them if He should come to-morrow. As to the family from which He is to spring, the place of His birth, the forerunner Elias He is to have, there is and can be but one opinion. Exactly how He will prove himself to the people it were hard to say: perhaps by a supernatural beauty and glory of person, perhaps by a mysterious inward voice speaking to the whole nation as it spoke to individual prophets, perhaps only by His wonderful success over all obstacles in becoming our Redeemer and King.

The preacher evidently did not deem it wise to be at all specific on this last point—the conquering and kingly character of the Messiah—in a city held by the Romans for the Cæsars. He contented himself with glittering generalities. He spoke ornately and enthusiastically of the prosperity and felicity of Israel in the golden age that was sure to come. What the Gentiles call by that name was a poor thing compared with that which was knocking at the doors of the Chosen People.

He, however, cautioned his hearers not to allow themselves to be impatient in their waiting for this good time. Their faith might be tried. They must be on their guard against pretenders. It would not be strange if the current expectation should itself produce false Christs. It would seem indeed as if this had already happened. At this moment, as most of them knew, there was a man in Judea who was making much noise with his claims, but

whom the principal men of the nation did not feel able to accept. When the true Messiah comes he doubtless will commend Himself to the natural leaders of the people. Meanwhile the people should rest quietly in their various places and occupations.

When the orator had finished, the Alabarch rose and gave the usual invitation to approved persons to speak—immediately adding, however, that he saw that one of their own elders, Simeon the son of Simeon, had returned from Jerusalem, and that whatever account he could give of religious matters there would be acceptable.

A venerable looking man rose from among the Seventy. He brought salutations from the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. They had been much disturbed over the case of Jesus of Nazareth to whom the preacher had just referred. The multitude were disposed to listen to him; attributing to him many signs and wonders, and asking whether he is not the Messiah. It was not clear, however, that he himself had put forward any such claim. His Messiahship seemed to be merely an inference of the multitude from his wonderful works at a time when all are on the lookout for the Shiloh. As to the reality of these wonderful works, the brethren of the Great Council and the principal men generally do not seem to call it in question. They concede that Jesus has, with a word or a touch, cured all sorts of incurable diseases; given sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, wholeness to the maimed, reason to the insane, and even life to the dead. Two of them, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, a cousin of the great teacher Gamaliel, go further than this, and affirm that no man could do such mighty works unless God were with him. “If such deeds could not prove a Divine

mission, they were at a loss to see how such a mission could ever be proved. How was Moses authenticated?" But the rest agree in ascribing the marvels to magic and evil spirits; especially as there never has been known a time when so many people seemed possessed with demons. They say that they are compelled to resort to this explanation, not merely by the fact that Jesus speaks so unfavorably of the ecclesiastical authorities and of their oral traditions, but still more by the fact that he does not answer in origin, appearance, or aims to the Messiah. The Messiah comes from Bethlehem, Jesus from Nazareth: the Messiah comes from the royal family of David, Jesus from a peasant family of no property or social standing; the Messiah is a mighty King and Deliverer, Jesus is plain in his appearance, associates even with publicans and sinners, and has nothing of the warrior and statesman about him—in fact, says that his kingdom is not of this world. He has even been understood to give out that his mission here is to teach and suffer rather than to conquer and reign. Such a person differs so widely from what they have been accustomed to expect and from what the Sacred Books have been supposed to promise, that the leading brethren in Judea, with the exceptions mentioned, are unanimous in ascribing the miracles of Jesus to the Evil One, and in trying to break his influence with the people. Whether they will succeed seems doubtful. But their determination to do so is very strong and will probably lead to severe measures. He was sorry not to be able to judge of the man from personal observation; but Jesus at the time was in Galilee, and could not be reached in the time at command. Besides, it was evident that a visit of Simeon to Jesus would be

looked upon as a discourtesy by the chief men—so decided have their views become, and so high runs the tide of feeling.

Such in a few words was the purport of what Simeon said in more.

The reading of the psalm beginning, “Give the king thy judgments O God, and thy righteousness to the king’s son ;” the waving of the flag ; AMEN and AMEN by the people, as with one voice, concluded the service.

The congregation rapidly disappeared through the many doors that suddenly revealed themselves ; for the architect had thought it possible that occasion might arise for a hasty evacuation of the premises—had also thought it possible to have the means of egress as unnoticeable by a stranger as were the means of light. But a few of the elders, among whom were Alexander and the preacher, gathered about Simeon, whose chair stood near the daughter of Alexander. Cimon and Aleph had also lingered ; it may be with the idea of making some inquiry of Simeon or the preacher. Seeing this, the Alabarch beckoned them near, and, simply introducing them as co-religionists, proceeded to say to Simeon :

“I am sorry that you were not able to see and hear Jesus for yourself.”

“My desire was strong to do so : and I did my best to get as near as possible to personal observation. I sought reliable information from all quarters. There seemed to be no difference of opinion, even among his greatest enemies, as to the reality of his miracles.”

“What do you understand,” inquired another elder, “to be the general character of his teaching ? How does he treat our Sacred Writings ?”

“With the highest honor. It is agreed on all hands that no word has fallen from him that savors of irreverence toward the Law and the Prophets : on the contrary, he makes them final authorities on all matters of which they speak ; and when he rebukes the leaders of the people it is in their name. He does not belong to the synagogue of Malus.”

“That is a great point in his favor,” said another. “But are his own manners and morals blameless in the view of the Law?”

“I must confess that I heard nothing to the contrary—not being able myself to see wrong in a religious teacher eating and drinking like other people, or in his being accessible to the lowly and sinful.”

“Have not I heard you say, brother Philo,” said Alexander to the preacher, “that the chiefs of the people charge Jesus with blasphemy? Blasphemy can hardly be considered a point of good behavior.”

“I spake as I heard,” said Philo. “Perhaps Simeon can tell us whether I heard correctly.”

“It seems,” said Simeon, “that Jesus has sometimes spoken of himself as the Son of God ; and, in a mysterious way, of a certain unity between himself and his heavenly Father ; and, probably, it is this lofty way of speaking of himself which has given occasion for the charge of which you speak.”

“Do not the prophets sometimes use language equally strong about the Christ?” asked Cimon deferentially.

“For example,” said Aleph : “His name shall be called Wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father.”

“Such passages, I believe, have always been under-

stood by many among us as declaring that the Christ will not be a mere man, but will have something of a Divine quality about him," said Alexander reflectively.

"Perhaps, then," added Cimon, "it is not so much the magnificence of the claims of Jesus that has led the fathers at Jerusalem to view him as a blasphemer, but rather the striking contrast between such claims and the humble appearance and circumstances of him who makes them, and which have already led them to decide against him. Of course, if he is not the Christ, such lofty pretensions are blasphemous—not otherwise."

"But it appears to me," said another elder, Ben Abner, whose dress was specially showy, phylacteries specially many, and air specially haughty, "that the humble condition of the man is itself decisive against him. Our wise men, for generations, have understood from the Scriptures that the Messiah would appear in great splendor as a conqueror and king. For my part I expect no other Messiah, want no other, will have no other. I hope they of Jerusalem will away with the impostor." He spoke with flashing eyes.

"So I think," said half a dozen voices with emphasis and gesture.

"Possibly the friends of Jesus would say," returned Simeon coolly, "that great endings sometimes have small beginnings, and that there is time enough yet for the outward splendor. Indeed, I happen to know that this is what some of his friends do say. But others claim, and I must confess that this is what Jesus himself seems to teach, that the prophets have been misunderstood; that the kingdom and the glory and the conquests of which they speak are spiritual and so perfectly consistent with a

lowly and even suffering Messiah. And for evidence they appeal to the prophecies of Isaiah, and other Scriptures. Perhaps our friend Philo, who believes so thoroughly in the allegoric and spiritual meanings of our Sacred Books, will not blame this interpretation as severely as some do."

Philo smiled at this, and said that he never intended to spiritualize *away* the Scriptures. It would be very hard for him to give up the brilliant hopes that had so long been entertained as to the times of the Messiah and what he would do for his Israel.

"I should not have so much difficulty," said Alexander, "with the present humble condition of Jesus, and the spiritual character of his claims, as with the apparent fact that he was not born in Bethlehem and is not a son of David—as the Messiah must be."

"That has been my great difficulty," said Simeon. "It is everywhere claimed in Judea that Jesus is a Galilean, a Nazarene, and of parentage so humble that he is on that account in disfavor with even the people of Nazareth."

Aleph ventured to inquire whether some branches of David's line had not, in the course of centuries, sunk into a humble condition ; and whether it was not possible that Jesus belonged to some such decayed branch—also, whether he might not have been born in Bethlehem, though brought up elsewhere ?

"I think," said Simeon, "that we are hardly entitled to say *No* to either of these questions of the young man. I myself was born in Jerusalem, though brought up in this city. The family of David is now lost among the common people ; and, though it can be recovered in our genealogies, I never could learn that the enemies of Jesus

have taken the pains to examine them with reference to his claims. Having settled in their minds that such a Messiah as Jesus is neither what they expected nor wanted, they easily accepted without examination such rumors in regard to him as agreed with their wishes and foregone conclusion. So, at least, it seems to me."

"Can you tell us about what the age of Jesus is?" asked Cimon.

"He appears, I am told, somewhat less than forty; perhaps he is not much more than thirty years. I took special pains to inquire about this; partly because of an experience of my father's some thirty years ago, and partly because of wide-spread rumors at that time of a remarkable birth which had just taken place in connection with celestial phenomena. However, the matter was kept as close as possible from fear of Herod. My father at that time was living in Jerusalem—a very old man and as saintly as 'old. For a long while he had expressed to his family an assurance that he should live to see the Christ. One day he came home from the temple with a radiant face, saying that he was now ready to depart, for he had just seen and held in his arms an infant which an inward Divine voice told him was the Messiah. He then lay down, calmly closed his eyes, and departed in a peaceful sleep. This I had from my sister, for I was in Alexandria at the time. All this was widely known at the time, but was spoken of by the people under their breath on account of the jealousy and cruelty of the rulers. Now at that time Jesus must have been an infant."

"And we happen to know," said Aleph, looking at Cimon, "that the name of the infant concerning whom such remarkable things were told was Jesus—though we

may not at present tell how we came by the knowledge."

As Aleph said these words he could not well help noticing three things—the cordial look that Simeon gave him, the look of exasperation on the face of Ben Abner, and the start made by Rachel, whose attitude of earnest attention throughout the conversation would have been evident enough even if her veil had not been gradually drawn somewhat aside as she watched the speakers. Alexander also noticed the start. Perhaps he feared a return of yesterday's faintness. He bent over her, and spoke in a low tone. She shook her head.

"However, we will go home," said he, "as soon as I have put off these vestments."

He retired to the vestry, followed by the other elders.

Aleph approached the maiden and said that he had been glad to hear from her father that her nurse continued to mend, and expressed the hope that she herself was none the worse for her indisposition of yesterday.

"Not at all," said she promptly; "but I was absorbingly interested in the subject of the conversation, and was, I confess, startled by what you said of your knowledge of the infant Jesus. You were not then born."

"No, lady; my knowledge is altogether second-hand, but is none the less certain for that. My friend here has some original knowledge in the case; but both of us have, in addition to this, sources of information that are beyond all question."

"I very much fear," said she with a sigh, "when I hear Ben Abner and others, that our people will be found treating a new prophet as they have ever treated prophets. What do you think?"

“ I also have my fears.”

“ But you also have knowledge ; and if at any time it becomes consistent for you to share your knowledge with others none will welcome it more gladly than I. Till then I believe in it and—in you ”—and her eyes, which till then had been unconsciously and half-wonderingly perusing his face as she spoke, sank before his, and the lovely color deepened on the loveliest features that the Chaldean, or even the more experienced Greek, had ever seen.

What was that ? A confused sound as of struggle and disputing voices came from the direction of the great door on the street of Canopus. This was soon followed by the noisy tramp on the marble pavement of what seemed in the distance a body of soldiers. As they came nearer they were seen to be indeed some twelve Roman soldiers in full armor, carrying at their head a standard—the legionary standard, consisting of a pike surmounted by a silver eagle, on whose spread wings stood an effigy of the emperor, with this superscription in large capitals—*DEUS TIBERIUS CÆSAR.*

The soldiers were followed at a short distance by a weeping, groaning, threatening crowd of Jews who had tried, it would seem, to prevent the entrance of the party with their desecrating symbol, and were now following them with lamentations and execrations.

As the band came near, Aleph easily recognized in the leader of it the drunken officer whom he had disarmed on the Nile. Almost as soon the two friends were recognized by the Roman ; and, with an oath, he at once led the way to where they stood (they had planted themselves in front of Rachel), although at that moment Alexander and his elders were hastily coming forward from the vestry.

“I have found you at last,” the man cried, as he disposed his soldiers in a semicircle, “and you will not easily escape me.”

Alexander had now come up.

“As the head of the community worshipping here, I demand to know for what purpose you have come into their sanctuary with standard and arms?”

“To give you and your friends,” the officer replied with mock solemnity, “an opportunity, which no doubt you will gratefully accept, to pay an act of religious worship to the great god Tiberius Cæsar—after this manner,” and he kneeled before the standard, and, with both hands lifted, cried, *Great God, I worship thee.*

Rising, he exclaimed, “Now I have set you an example—copy it, every one of you!”

The crowd behind groaned and hissed.

The officer shook his fist at them and shouted, “Be still, you snakes and swine; your turn will come shortly. Let your betters lead off. It is their privilege. Come, begin, Pontifex Maximus!”—turning to Alexander.

“I demand of you by what authority you make this demand on us,” demanded the Alabarch.

The Roman pointed to the image of the emperor.

“Do you mean to say that an order has come from Rome for violating the sanctuaries of the Jews, and revoking the edicts which from the founding of the city have guaranteed to us our own religious views and usages?”

“The Roman senate has decreed Divine honors to the emperor; and his image has been received and worshipped in every place of worship in the city, saving the synagogues of the Jews. Now you shall have your turn.”

“That is no answer to my question. The Jews have

always had special privileges in this city, and one of them is to refuse worship to every god but their own. Again I ask, has this privilege been recalled by the emperor since yesterday : for yesterday I received a personal letter from him in which he promised to abate nothing from our privileges."

The Roman made no answer, but conferred with one of his men in a low voice. After a moment's delay, Alexander continued :

"It is plain that you have no authority from the emperor for this outrage. Have you for it the authority of the governor, or of the prefect of the city ? I await your careful reply."

"We are carrying out the wishes of the representatives of Rome in Alexandria," said the fellow sullenly.

"And *that* is no answer to my question. Are we to understand that Avilleus Flaccus, or Urbanus Civicus, undertakes on his own responsibility to set aside the decrees of kings and emperors for four hundred years, those of the reigning emperor included, and has expressly sent you here to-day for this purpose ?"

"We did not come here," said the officer with a face that was fast becoming purple, "to be catechised."

"You came here," said Alexander sternly, "to commit an outrage—came as a private venture of yourself and a few mischievous companions, and without authority from your superiors. You deserve heavy punishment, and I hope will get it. Now *begone* from the sanctuary which you have profaned."

"*Begone!*" echoed the elders. "BEGONE!" shouted and screamed the mob from behind.

"Whatever privileges you cursed Jews may have, they

certainly do not belong to these men"—pointing at Cimon and Aleph. "These are no more Jews than I am. And for aught I know the same is true of this woman. We will see"—and he stepped toward Rachel to lift her veil.

"Stand back," said Aleph sternly, as he placed his hand on the breast of the man and sent him staggering back on his men.

Before the man could recover himself, Alexander interfered: "This lady is my daughter; and as for these men, they are of our faith, and as co-religionists are entitled to our immunities."

"And if it were not so," said Aleph, "it may be well for this man to know that under no conceivable circumstances would we pay religious worship to the emperor, though quite ready to pay the magistrates all due observance."

"We will see," cried the Roman in a transport of fury, as he rushed on the young man with his drawn sword. "Down on your knees to the standard this instant, you renegade, or by Jupiter, I will put you on your knees for the rest of your life," and he struck at his knees.

Aleph caught the blow with his cane. Whereupon the officer lost all self-restraint and made a rapid succession of strokes and thrusts that sought life. But Aleph had evidently learned the art of fence: his cane was as good as a shield and met the sword at every point. At last, after a desperate lunge, the sword went flying aloft; and both Cimon and Aleph had seized its master.

"EXPEL THEM!" shouted Alexander to the crowd of Jews that was now surging and roaring like a maddened sea, "Expel them with your canes and your hands! They have forced an entrance into our sanctuary, they have pro-

faned it with an idol, and now they have sought to stain it with the blood of unarmed men. EXPEL THEM, I say!

The mob needed no spur. They threw themselves on the soldiers, already cowed by what had passed, and in a moment were dragging them, disarmed and unresisting, behind Cimon and Aleph with their prisoner. Had it not been for the example of coolness and forbearance set by our friends and an occasional moderating word from them, the people might have torn their prisoners limb from limb. As it was, the soldiers had no gentle handling. They had little armor left on them when they reached the great doors. They had gotten many an accidental elbowing and tripping. Somehow people had stumbled heavily and found it hard to recover themselves. There were few parts of those Roman bodies which had not become intimately acquainted with both the point and broadside of a cane. Their captain suffered least—in fact, suffered nothing beyond the shame and uneasiness of being held fast in iron hands.

When those hands were taken off, just outside the great door, he suddenly drew a knife from a fold in his sash and made a pass at Aleph. But both friends were vigilant; and Cimon, while beating off the knife with one hand, with the other dealt the rascal such a blow on the head that his helmet flew off and went clattering down the steps into the street. He followed staggering. The people behind, seeing only the cuff and the result, cheered, and very cheerfully followed the example supposed to be set them. Each soldier received such a hearty cuff and push as he went down the steps as made his descent little less than a fall.

Once down, they were not allowed to linger. The

blood of the people was up ; and they followed the soldiers in their precipitate flight a long distance with menacing cries and gestures, and with such missiles as they happened to find in the street.

Meanwhile the friends had been called within the synagogue by Alexander, and the great doors fastened. What consultations took place it is not necessary to record. There *were* consultations ; and that too of a very political and secular sort. The situation of the Jews was always delicate. There was much reason to fear that the morning's disturbance would seriously embroil them with the authorities at both Alexandria and Rome. What should be done ? If any one has light let him speak out at once—*though it be Sabbath.*

But none had scruples. The ideas of the Alexandrian Jews of the first century were not exactly like those of some of their ancestors in the time of the Maccabees who refused to defend themselves against their enemies on the Sabbath because self-defense was work, and that too of the severest sort. The children had become wiser if not better. They had come to believe that self-preservation is a work of necessity, not to say of mercy ; and were ready to fight the idolaters seven days in the week if necessary for even a less matter than self-preservation—as we have seen. They would not consent to be martyrs till they had tried hard to be victors. They would not be idolaters, and they did not want to be rebels. They wanted to preserve their religion, and also wanted to preserve themselves. Was it possible ? *Let us see*, said the Seventy, as they resumed their gilded chairs. So the men who did not hesitate to fight a battle on the Sabbath did not scruple to consult on that day how to prevent the bat-

tle from souring into a defeat. Were they wrong in this?

Cimon and Aleph answered in the negative. I am not sure but that I agree with them. Doubtless a council of war *may* be as holy as a prayer-meeting. I once knew of one that was holier, but that began with a prayer.

But a narrative is like a star—it perishes if it stops moving. So let us proceed.

V.

THE UNIVERSITY.

Ο δὲ παῖς, πάντων θηριῶν, ἐστὶ δυσμεταχειριστότατον.

—PLATO, *Leg.* vii. 14.

Of all wild beasts, a boy is the hardest to manage.

1. Breakers ahead.
2. Behold the Serapeum!
3. Another school quite as good.
4. A Messianic partnership.

THE UNIVERSITY.

EARLY the next morning Cimon and Aleph transferred themselves and their effects to a small khan in the Egyptian quarter of the city. This was done for the following reasons.

The events of the Sabbath seemed to make it prudent to withdraw from public notice as much as possible. Of course, the son of Flaccus was a source of danger : and then the seeming look of recognition on the face of Malus, which both of them had noticed, was not a pleasant feature of the situation. It was the silent lightning on the horizon. They felt it even more important, just then, to keep out of the sight of the Jew than it was to keep out of the sight of the Roman. Especially after an incident that occurred on their way back from the synagogue.

As they came down the steps of the Diapleuston, they noticed a Jew across the street, watching them. Before they had gone far, Aleph, happening to look behind, saw the man following, and spoke of it to Cimon. They walked slower—at length very slowly. The man slackened his pace to suit. They walked faster—at length very fast. The man quickened his pace correspondingly. It was annoying.

“Let us go to meet him,” said Cimon, “and see if he will retreat.”

Accordingly they turned and, for a moment, it seemed as if their shadow would turn too. But he thought better of it; and only stood still, in some confusion, till they came up.

“Can we do anything for you?” inquired the Greek. “If so we are at your service.”

“I certainly owe you an apology,” stammered the Jew. “The fact is, I was in the synagogue at the time of the disturbance, and was so struck with the very great likeness of this young man to one whom I saw many years ago that I determined to wait for his coming out and to follow him—in hope of finding where he was staying, or at least of getting a better view. And I have gotten it,” he added laughingly, “in a way I did not expect, but certainly deserved. However, I will not complain; as I now have an opportunity to thank you both for standing up so boldly and effectually for us to-day.”

“Well,” said Cimon, good-humoredly, “since we have now gratified your curiosity, perhaps you will not refuse to gratify ours by telling us who you are, and whom you suppose this young man to resemble.”

“That is but fair,” returned the Jew. “I keep a khan at the east end of this street, near the gate of Canopus, as did my father before me. When I was a youth, there came to our place from Judea a caravan of eastern people, evidently of great distinction, on their way homeward by the Red Sea route. It was in this company that I saw a man whose appearance made such an impression on me that if I were a painter I could put him on canvas

to-day : and this young man is his double—perhaps somewhat brightened by youth.”

“I have to confess,” said Aleph with a smile, “that I am a Chaldean ; and also that all Chaldeans have a certain likeness to one another. But you must not forget that the imagination is a powerful faculty, especially among us orientals, and has sometimes been known to see things that did not exist. But you can see for yourself, without any help from your imagination, that the peculiar way in which this conference has come about has attracted the notice of the street, and that the curious are beginning to thicken about us. So now let us separate : but, as soon as our affairs permit, we will seek you out and hear further about the pilgrims of whom you speak.”

So they parted. But the incident, especially after reflection and conference early the next morning, determined the friends to withdraw as fully as possible from the Jewish and Roman quarters of the city, and to hasten certain inquiries as to Malus.

There are two kinds of prophecy—the natural and the supernatural. The latter is a spark from the Divine foreknowledge, granted occasionally to certain privileged persons. That our friends had anything of this I am not prepared to say ; but they were reasonably well furnished with such foresight as reason and experience can give ; and what they foresaw was very considerable annoyance and even danger if they should remain at their present quarters. So they determined to remove. This was not valor, certainly. As certainly it was not cowardice. But it was that good thing which we call prudence, and which sensible people think to be almost or quite as good as heroism itself. It was a wise precaution—the tacking of the

ship when breakers are seen ahead, the putting on of armor when the arrows begin to fly, the striking tent and removing to higher ground when the morning sky is red and lowering, and there is a sound of abundance of rain.

Have I said that the strangers were in the habit of asking each morning for Divine guidance during the day? If not, I ought to have said it. And the habit was no empty form. When they had risen from their knees they seemed free from anxiety as to what might happen, though not free from forethought and a disposition to be very active in pursuit of their objects. Queer people, were they not? Some would say they were very absurd as well as queer. However this may be, it is certain that Aleph and his friend did not stir a step that morning even in the matter of planning, till they had sought leading from a wisdom above their own. And what they did that morning they may be counted on to do every morning while we follow their fortunes. Will it be of any service to them? Perhaps they have found in their Septuagint several passages like this, "Commit thy way unto the Lord and he shall direct thy paths."

Perhaps Cimon found more difficulty than his young companion in keeping free from anxiety on account of what had occurred. He felt a responsibility for both.

"It seems unfortunate," said he, after their devotions, "not only that we should have been brought again into collision with the Romans, who can do so much to hinder at least one of our objects, but that it has come about in such a way as to attract to us the notice of the whole Jewish community. For, of course, yesterday's events will be public talk to-day, and everybody will be inquiring and surmising about the strangers. And I am very

much afraid that Malus has already caught a spark that in such a gale will set all his suspicions and craft on fire. But as these seemingly untoward things could not well have been avoided by us, I cannot but hope that the untowardness is only in seeming. I have lived long enough to know that a Divine leading can brighten seeming perils and disasters into blessings. But it seems a reasonable condition of Divine guidance that we try to act as prudently as we can, from the human stand-point. And prudence seems to require that we at once remove to the Egyptian quarter ; that you matriculate in the University, and thus secure its immunities for yourself, as well as meet the wishes of your father that you hear for yourself the scholars of the west ; and that I proceed without delay to make the inquiries we need to make in regard to Malus. These inquiries will have to be made as quietly and rapidly as possible ; for if he should take the alarm his craft and influence are evidently such that he might seriously embarrass our movements—if not baffle them.”

And so it came to pass that the early morning found them established in a quiet khan almost under the shadow of the Serapeum.

This does not localize them very definitely ; for the Serapeum cast a very great shadow. The temple, or rather collection of temples, was, by all odds, the most imposing structure in Alexandria. It was built on an elevation, partly artificial, the ascent to which on three sides was by broad flights of steps and successive platforms ; while on the north side the ascent began at the harbor and advanced by a grade easy for vehicles to the great Propylon. This was purely Egyptian. To the right and left of it rose walls of red syenite, high and massive enough

to be the walls of a city, decorated with many towers, and inclosing the whole levelled summit of the hill with their somewhat irregular lines. Within these, at a little distance, and built of the same, though much finer and carefully wrought, stone, rose the complicate structures of the temple proper. It was a little city by itself. And, towering above all other structures, it seemed to protect Alexandria and defy the seas beyond.

Like most Egyptian structures it was most successful in giving to beholders the ideas of massiveness and vastness. Yet the airiness of the situation, combined with a mingling of the various Hellenic architectures with the Egyptian, seemed to relieve the ponderous pile of any air of heaviness. For Pharaohs and Ptolemies, Mother Isis and her vagrant daughters Doris and Ione and Cora, were all represented in the confused mass of templed structures designed to welcome all the classical creeds.

The most striking features of the temple, to one looking up to it from the street, were, perhaps, an enormous canopy that seemed to overhang the whole pile of buildings and a tower by its side that rose still higher. This tower was the famous observatory where Eratosthenes and Hipparchus had made their observations; and in the spacious halls at its base was deposited the greater part of the then existing Alexandrian library—consisting of some 200,000 works collected by the Ptolemies, together with 300,000 parchments brought from Pergamos by Mark Antony for Cleopatra.

The Serapeum was under Egyptian control, but was greatly revered by devout Greeks and Romans as well as by Egyptians. Each nation regarded the god to whom the temple was dedicated and whose statue of mingled

marble and silver and gold was there enshrined, as being the chief of all its gods—the Egyptians calling it Osiris, the Greeks Zeus, and the Romans Jupiter. For some reason, of late years, this statue had been kept in a dark room, and was seldom, if ever, shown to the people at large. They worshipped without the presence of any visible symbol of deity. The priests were numerous and of the highest rank. The chief of all was primate of all Egypt.

To its religious character the Serapeum added that of an institution of learning. Its priests had among their own people the reputation for wisdom which belonged to the ancient Egyptian priesthood among all nations—and not without reason. Their priestly duties being light, they spent much time in studying the sciences and philosophies as then known, and in training young priests to the same. In addition, the more eminent among them taught on certain topics in the Alexandrian School. They were recognized by the Ptolemies, and afterward by the emperors, as in all respects peers of the teachers located at the Museum.

Indeed, among people religiously inclined their standing was altogether superior to that of the secular professors. They were far more sober and practical in their teachings. They more boldly recognized religion and taught on lines parallel with it. They had stricter notions of what could properly be called science and philosophy. A few facts blown up into prettily colored bubbles, and then tossed into the air on exhibition, and then collapsing, and then succeeded by another output of pretty emptinesses, and this by another, and so on—such were the substance and history of the better part of the ever-chang-

ing teaching of the Museum. The worse part had no foundation in facts at all. In fact, facts were scorned. They were vulgar. The lofty name of wisdom should be given only to great general intuitions and the logical deductions from them. And as the teachers were by no means careful in either their premises or their processes, their conclusions were apt to be worthless when they were not pernicious. In short, the Museum was the child of Athens and the mother of Germany.

Accordingly, many of the noblest families in the neighboring countries turned their faces toward the Serapeum. They were disgusted at the laborious trifling. They were alarmed at the decay of faith. If their sons could not have something that deserved to be called knowledge, and knowledge without impiety and all the terrors, they did not want them to have it at all. But if they could have it thoroughly leavened with religious ideas—why, they would welcome it, be very glad of it, pour out for it their shekels or sestertii or staters freely. Such people found what they wanted in the priest-teachers of the Serapeum; and said to themselves that if religion is the supreme wisdom then are the ministers of religion the supreme professors.

All this Cimon recalled and spoke of when he found himself in the neighborhood of the temple. And he proposed that Aleph should matriculate there instead of at the Museum—as being the nearer and more conservative branch of the University, as well as more remote from the Roman headquarters.

“I do not think,” said he, “that you will need to confine yourself very closely to the routine of lectures. Many of the more advanced students do not. You are already familiar through me with the main subjects dis-

cussed in both the Athenian and Alexandrian Schools : and I do not imagine that you will hear much that is new ; only you will hear the old said in a new way, with new illustrations and personal modifications, which is not without its advantage to a young man. And you will have what, perhaps, is a still greater advantage, that of mingling with and studying the leading young men of the West. As to the present preliminaries for admission to the School, you had better apply to Seti for information."

"And why not ask his advice, also," said Aleph, "as to how you had better proceed in the affair of Malus? It would be a safe thing to do. The priest is not in love with the trader."

"Perhaps," returned the Greek, "this is the best thing to be done. Still I feel reluctant to do it—at least till I have proved it necessary. It is a good rule not to call on others to help you till you have tried to help yourself. We must spare our friends as much as possible. And I do not see that any harm can be done by my going directly to the custom house and inquiring on what terms abstracts from the records can be made, or by my going to leading dealers and asking how the prices of certain goods have ruled in Alexandria for a term of years. Let me cautiously feel my way about to-day by myself : by the evening I shall be better able to see whether we need to call in help from outside."

As soon as Cimon had gone, Aleph inquired of the landlord at what part of the temple he should present himself. Climbing successive flights of steps that began almost at the khan, he came to the broad carriage-way of which we have spoken. As yet very few people could be

seen upon it—none who seemed moving to the temple. This led him to think that very likely he was yet too early for the temple habits, and had better linger a little before seeking admittance. So he sat down on one of the stone seats, placed at intervals by the wayside for the convenience of the weary and the idle, and proceeded to study at his leisure the stately façade of the temple. While thus engaged he heard voices just back of the wall against which he was leaning.

A voice laughed heartily.

“Have you been at your cups so early?” said another voice testily. “I should have thought that these leeks and onions would set you to crying. That is what they do to me.”

“I couldn’t cry if I were up to my eyes in the onions of Nautieratis,” said the other. “Oh, it was such a capital thing! Why, the very gods themselves must be shaking with laughter—at least our Egyptian gods.”

“Who ever heard of an Egyptian god laughing? Our deities never did that in the best days of the country. They who were as grim as fate when Thebes was in its glory are not likely to smile now when Thebes is dead, and a Roman garrison is in Alexandria, and a Roman Governor in the palace of Seti.”

“That is just it—now you are coming to the point!” cried the other; “it is just *because* there is a Roman garrison in Alexandria and a Roman Proprætor in the ancestral palace of Seti that our gods, calm and grave as they generally are, must have had a merry time of it yesterday.”

“There, take that, you provoking Sphinx!” (and Aleph heard something strike against the wall). “If you

do not expound your riddle right away it will be, not two onions that your empty head will get, but a whole basket of them."

"Do you pretend to say that you have not heard what took place yesterday at the Diapleuston? Why, the whole city is ringing with it—at least the Jewish Quarter. The Roman Quarter will be silent enough, I warrant."

"Have heard nothing. Was in Canopus yesterday—came back before people were stirring this morning. What is it? Out with it, man!"

"An you be a true son of Egypt, now open your ears and mouth! Yesterday the Governor took a hundred soldiers and tried to make the Jews at the Diapleuston worship an image of the emperor. A magnificent young man in shining armor suddenly appeared on the scene, disarmed Flaccus, and encouraged the Jews to give the whole party a good drubbing. Which they did. The Romans were pommelled within an inch of their lives, then tumbled headlong into the street, and then chased on a full run quite to Bruchium. Gods! what a treat to see Flaccus run! I would have given ten years of my life to see it. And now it is said that Alexander, the favorite banker of the emperor, and heavier with him than all the pyramids put together, has just written to the governor demanding an apology for his behavior; and threatening to report him to the emperor."

"Give us your fist, old fellow! Here goes my cap—to the moon, for aught I care. This *is* good news, capital news, news fit for the gods, news—almost too good to be true! But it *ought* to be true, and so true it must be. Let the gods laugh till the skies crack. To see the Romans soundly thrashed and running away with their

tails between their legs must have been a treat for heaven and earth. I could give that young man a chaplet—who is he? ”

“ Just what everybody is asking. ”

“ And just what, in my opinion, nobody will ever find out ; for he must have been at once rapturously spirited off by the celestials to their own country for the good service done us. Perhaps he was a celestial to begin with. ”

“ That reminds me that I did hear some Jews debating whether he might not be the Wonderful Deliverer whom they are expecting. ”

Was there any danger that Aleph would be unduly exalted in his own estimation by such a very complimentary account of himself? Perhaps he was saved from this peril by the several large exaggerations of the story. What more natural than for him to say, “ And I, too, am an exaggeration ! ”

At any rate, he wasted no time in arguing the matter ; for he now noticed that the postern at the side of the great gate was being opened to a comer. So he rose, advanced leisurely to the postern, and plied the knocker which hung from a small window above. The door opened. He told the porter that he wished to see the priest Seti.

“ I suppose you mean the *high*-priest Seti ! ” said the man with dignity.

“ Very possibly, ” said Aleph. “ Is there here more than one priest of that name ? ”

“ I know of no other. ”

“ Then I wish to see the *high*-priest Seti. Please have him informed that Aleph the Chaldean wishes to see him. ”

The porter glanced outside, as if to see whether there was any fine equipage, with servants, before the great gateway: then said:

“You probably will not be able to see him this morning. I doubt if he would see the prefect of the city.”

“But I am *not* the prefect—as you have just seen. I am a visitor more likely to be acceptable to the high-priest: for I come by his express invitation. So I will enter and stay in the hall till an answer comes to my message”—and he advanced on the man with so decisive and commanding an air that he gave way and admitted him.

“Now if you will send my message at once, you will do no more than your duty,” said Aleph coolly.

So a servant was sent off; who after a few moments returned and, with an air of great respect, said, “The high-priest will see you. I will conduct you to him.” But he was spared the trouble, for just then Seti himself appeared, received his visitor in a way that astonished the servants, and conducted him to his own private rooms.

“You see,” said the young man with that modesty and deference of manner that are so graceful and winning in the young toward age and station, “that I have very soon availed myself of your permission to call upon you. It is the wish of my father that I should, while in Alexandria, hear for myself the scholars of the west; though the Greek preceptor, who has conducted my education and whom you have seen, has already made me acquainted in a general way with the western literature and learning as it was taught in his youth, both here and at Athens. And, as I am told that the Serapeum stands for a branch

of the Alexandrian School, I wish to join it here ; and have come to you to learn in what way I may do so, and become entitled to such privileges and immunities as membership confers.”

“ I am glad that you propose doing this,” returned the high-priest ; “ especially because I have heard from Alexander of the events of yesterday. No doubt there is danger abroad ; but if any class among us is specially exempt from espial and interference by the civil and military authorities it is that of the students. So we will have you booked without delay. Where are you now lodged ? ”

On hearing of the transfer to his own neighborhood, Seti added :

“ That is just what I was about to propose. The Romans have less to do with this part of the city than with any other. Neither my son nor myself anticipate any trouble from the authorities on account of what occurred yesterday. They probably will disavow all connection with it, on account of my son’s influence at Rome. At the same time they, no doubt, are in full sympathy with the rascals and will let them off without punishment, if not with secret commendation. This everybody is sure of—I mean everybody who knows that the leader in the affair was the son of Flaccus. Your chief danger will be from that reprobate. After the lessons he has had he is not likely to attack you in front ; but you will need to be on your guard against all mean and dishonorable ways of attack. He is the greatest scoundrel in Alexandria—after his father and Malus, who have all his vices and hypocrisy in addition. But come, let us lose no time in matriculating.”

Seti then led the way to a large hall with a platform and seats.

“This,” said he, “is our chief lecture-room ; and here some of the professors who live and lecture at the Museum come at stated times to repeat their lectures. This door opens into the tower from the top of which our astronomers observe the stars ; and sometimes other things nearer home, as, for example, the flight and pursuit yesterday along the street of Canopus. The doors on the other three sides open into the library with its 500,000 different works on papyrus and parchment. Let us pass into it.”

Aleph now found himself in a room, or rather a suite of rooms, lighted wholly from above, whose sides were shining with the copper cylinders which contained the literary treasures of many lands and centuries. What would our modern bibliopoles not give for the same privilege ? At central tables and in recesses were scholars poring over open rolls—also professional scribes copying manuscripts with careful exactness and a beauty of result wonderful to see. Seti led his companion freely within the bronze railing that fenced the collection from the general public ; taking down and exhibiting some notably rare or beautiful rolls—among others the entire works of Berosus and Manetho and Sanconiathon, of which, unfortunately, we now have only a few fragments.

At length they stopped before a small open office, within which sat a uniformed official. He rose respectfully. Seti asked for the University register.

“Write your name, as you wish it to be known, here,” he said, pointing to a page, “and then pay to this man as initiation fee one gold *stater*. Then when I have writ-

ten my name as sponsor over against yours on the opposite page, you will be a member of the University and entitled to wear its badge conspicuously on your tunic—also, whenever you please, the University toga. But this latter is usually reserved for special occasions, and can be procured at your leisure.”

Aleph followed directions and received a large gold badge, which he was told was only one *stater* additional. Seti himself fastened it conspicuously on the tunic of the new student. He also received from the registrar a syllabus of the lectures for many weeks at both the Serapeum and Museum. Glancing it over he noticed that Seti was one of the lecturers and Philo another—the one on history and ethical philosophy, the other on Plato and comparative religions.

“Now,” said Seti, as they were returning through the lecture room, “I have hurried you through these formalities for two reasons—one of which is that I wish you to have as soon as possible the benefit of being a recognized member of our University. The other reason is that I wish to get you to do me a favor. Just before you came I had a message from Rachel, my grand-daughter, that the Greek leech, who is employed for her nurse, has gone back to his old treatment and that the woman is again rapidly sinking. It seems that the husband not merely supports the leech in his course, but absolutely requires it of him. I suspect that the brute wants to get rid of her. Now, I have an important engagement this morning, which will prevent my going personally to look after the case at the time she mentions—I see by this clepsydra that the time is near—and as the matter is urgent I could wish to have you go in my stead and deal with both the

husband and the leech as you may find occasion in order to save the woman's life. Can you do me this favor? I think there is no lecture to-day."

"Certainly," said Aleph, "I will do what I can, for your treatment is that of my own country; though, I confess, I do not at present see how I am to enforce your wishes in case the leech and the husband should both prove obstinate."

"That is a difficulty," returned the Egyptian; "but I must leave you to solve it as you best can. This will be no disadvantage to your education. The young man who has learned how to deal with difficult men in difficult circumstances has graduated at a higher university than teaches in the Serapeum and Museum. So take a lesson in the university of human nature; and, perhaps, when I join you, which will be as soon as my business will allow, you can reproduce the lesson for me."

Aleph could not well help noticing the change that had come over the manners of the porter as Seti and himself approached the postern in close conversation. The man had exchanged impudence for obsequiousness. He was all deference and humbleness. His bow was so low, as he set the postern wide open, that one might reasonably have feared that the hinge in his back had entirely given way in favor of a prostration. Has it not been noticed in all ages that impudence and servility are near of kin to each other and are never far apart?

In due time Aleph presented himself at the house of the sick woman. The same forbidding looking man who had acted as porter before now answered to his knock, but only opened the door a hand breadth.

After waiting a moment for an invitation to enter,

which he did not get, the young man said, "Will you not permit me to enter?"

"What is your business?" demanded the fellow in a surly tone, making the opening of the door still less.

"A friendly one," said Aleph. "I will explain it more fully when I have entered and delivered to you—that is, if you are the husband of the sick woman—some money which I have for you."

The word money seemed to throw a shade of uncertainty into the man's face. At length he said: "I am her husband. Why cannot you deliver the money to me here?"

"Of course I can," said Aleph. "The only difficulty lies in my disposition. The gold is in my pouch, my arm is long enough to reach it, and your hand is near enough to take it: but you see, man, it does not suit my humor to give gold to a man who is rude enough to shut his door in my face. I hardly think you yourself would be liberal under like circumstances—would you?"

"My wife is very sick—it may be dying. Your coming in will disturb her."

"Dying people are not apt to be disturbed by a step and voice as light as mine will be. Besides, if the woman is dying you will need the gold all the more. Death and burial in Alexandria must be expensive. I suppose there are some people here who cannot afford to die."

"Well," said the man, slowly and after a pause, "you can come in; but I cannot let you remain but a few moments."

Aleph promptly stepped in as the door opened; and, while the man was closing and fastening it, made his way to the room he had before visited. As before, the air was

close and almost stifling. As before, the woman lay on the bed, in about the same death-like state. And, as before, Rachel sat behind her, supporting her head and caressing it with her hand—her own face a picture of lovely distress. A man at a table was, apparently, preparing some medicines. He was not a bad looking man, save as a certain pretentious and stubborn look is a bad one on a face somewhat stony and unsympathetic. One would say that his sympathy with his patients would not be likely to interfere with his health or his meals. His whole bearing seemed to say, “I am a leech, and I understand my business;” and yet his dress was too poor to suggest the idea of a prosperous business. All this the observant eye of the young man took in at a glance.

Rachel looked up. A look of glad recognition sprang into every feature, but especially into her welcoming eyes. They smiled on him through tears. He bowed profoundly in acknowledgment of the silent greeting; and, advancing to her, said in a low voice, “From your grandfather.”

Facing about on the husband, who had closely followed him, he put a piece of gold in his hand, saying as he did so, “For the sick woman.”

Then turning to the leech, he said in a courteous tone :

“I think I am speaking to the physician in charge of this patient. If so, will he allow me a few words with him in private? Perhaps we can step out into this little court for a few moments”—and he at once quietly moved to the door leading to the back court, opened it, and passed out without looking behind him—passed to the farther side of the inclosure, as if sure of being followed. He *was* followed, though with some backwardness.

“I wish,” said Aleph, as he turned and confronted the

leech, "to confer with you about this poor woman. I come from some of her friends. Perhaps you know who these friends are?"

"Is not her husband a friend?"

"He certainly ought to be. As to whether he is, I have my doubts. At all events he is not one of the friends of whom I speak and from whom I come. Do you know who that young lady yonder is?"

"The daughter of Alexander, the great Jewish Banker."

"Do you know who Seti is?"

"He is the Egyptian high-priest and primate."

"Well, these are the friends in whose behalf I have come and for whom I speak. They wish to save this woman, and believe it can be done by the treatment which was so successful for the short time it was tried. Will you tell me why it was discontinued?"

"Because it was contrary to all the medical rules; but mainly because the man who employs me insisted on a return to the old treatment."

"You mean the husband of the sick woman?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure that your employer is able and disposed to pay you for your services?"

"He evidently is poor; but he says that he has rich friends who can be depended on for all expenses. This seems to be true; for the house has been lavishly supplied for the last few days with every possible comfort by some friends."

"Whom do you suppose these friends to be?"

"The family of Alexander the Alabarch."

"Certainly these are friends worth having," said Aleph

with emphasis ; “and no doubt they can be depended on to meet all expenses—if they will promise as much. And this they are ready to do, and more, provided you will meet their wishes in certain respects.”

“What do they wish ?” said the leech after quite a pause.

“That you will take them for employer instead of this vagabond ; accept such compensation for your professional services as they are accustomed to pay ; and then, in the interest of science, suspend for a little your way of treating this case in favor of the one you have just abandoned. We will assume all responsibilities. If the experiment does not work well, you can return to the old treatment. You had better have the patronage of the Alabarch and the Egyptian primate than that of this scoundrel—for such he is, unless his looks greatly belie him.”

“I have no very high opinion of him, I confess,” said the leech. “I have seen more tender husbands than he ; and the woman’s talk about him in her delirium is far from complimentary. But if we change the treatment he will be troublesome. He was very violent when he discovered the first change.”

“Did he tell you by whose authority it was made ?”

“He only said that a strange man had been meddling with what did not concern him.”

“Then he did not tell you that this meddler was Seti ?”

“Certainly not.”

“Nor did the nurse ?”

“No—but she is mortally afraid of the man, and that may have kept her silent.”

“Nor did the young lady ?”

“No : but she had some difficulty in getting admission

to the house, as I think you had ; and it is possible that the man would not admit her till she had promised not to interfere, and had sent away her servants. Indeed, I thought I overheard as much."

"No doubt the fellow will be troublesome. The only thing to be done is to keep such a force here as will be able to control him. As long as we are here we can do this ; but when we leave we must leave behind others who will make our places good. I think I can arrange for this. . . . Now that we have come to an understanding, let us go in ; but do you take the lead, as is fitting, in making the changes."

When they re-entered the room they found the man standing where they had left him—with anything but amiability in his face.

"We have agreed," said the leech to him, "in order to satisfy important friends, to try for a while a change in the treatment. Sometimes the failing powers will rally wonderfully under a complete change of conditions. At any rate we will try it."

He at once set wide open door and casement. Then going to the water-jug, he poured out a large cup full of water and brought it to Aleph, who had kneeled at the bedside and was listening again at the parched and twitching lips of the unconscious woman. He let a few drops fall upon them. He gently tried to part the locked teeth, and dropped more. At last he put the cup to her mouth.

"STOP!" shouted the husband, as he rushed up—his face white with passion and a demon looking out of his eyes—and with his clenched hand struck the cup aside, spilling a large part of the water on the woman's face—"STOP! I say : this woman is under my protection."

In a moment, Aleph was erect and confronting him :

“And *such* a protection !” he scornfully said. “Such a protection as the thunder cloud gives to the tree it strikes—such a protection as you have been giving her, ever since you enticed her away from her friends under the pretense that you were a man and not a brute. To my eyes the very shadow that you cast, and a very black shadow it is, is that of a wild beast of the meaner kind. I have not listened at these white lips in vain. I know something of your story, and expect to know more shortly—know enough now to say that this woman wishes no such protector. Death would be a better one. After having made her life miserable you shall not go on to put her to death—as you seem to wish. Now, do you understand that we shall proceed to treat this woman as the leech has said, and if you interfere, or make any disturbance whatever unsuitable to a sick-room, we will find such ways of quieting you as may be necessary—for quiet we will have, even if we have to turn you over to the police as a dangerous character.”

Aleph said this, not loudly, but in so determined and commanding a manner, and with such rebuking and threatening eyes fastened on the hateful face before him, that for a moment that face took on a shade of fear and shame among its other shades—of which it had not a few. But it was only for a moment. He reinforced himself, as such fellows are apt to do, by a mighty oath and seemed about to spring on the young man ; but noting again his watchful eye, the cane in his hand, and his whole attitude so full of lithe and conscious power, he thought better of it, and fell back on the fighting resources of his tongue.

“This is my wife, and this is my house, at least for

the time being ; and I will do with them as I please. Because you are an aristocrat, and belong to the university, and wear better clothes than I, you think you can treat me like a dog. But a dog can bite, especially one of my breed ; and if I had as many heads as Cerberus they should all have a bite at you. So help me all the infernals !”

He flung out of the room. They heard him fiercely unfastening the street door and then fiercely slamming it behind him as he rushed into the street.

Aleph at once followed him and secured the door. Returning, he resumed his work at the bed as if nothing had happened—no more color in his cheek, no more excitement in his eye, no less steadiness in his hand as he again held a cup of water to the woman’s lips. Her eyes were now open and fastened on him. Perhaps the water with which her face had been flooded had freshened her back to consciousness. Perhaps, too, the stormy scene that had just passed did something toward summoning back her retreating vitality. While she drank, cup after cup, as if it were the nectar of the immortals, she never took her eyes, eyes that seemed full of wonder, from the calm, compassionate, restful young face that bent over her. She afterward said that it seemed to her the face of some benevolent and protecting divinity.

Her skin grew moist. Great beads of sweat came out on her forehead. By degrees her eyelids drew together and she slept—slept as sleeps the infant, or as sleeps some still landscape after the drenching shower has passed.

“What food did she ask for yesterday ?” said the leech to the nurse, who had just come in from another room. “Make ready the same for her against she awakes.”

“And the lady Rachel,” said Aleph, “will excuse me for suggesting that she ought now to relieve herself from her burden. The woman will do quite as well if laid quietly down.”

So Rachel softly disengaged herself, and gently placed the thin, worn, but now placid cheek on the pillow. She then went to the casement and stood there a moment reflectively. Then, turning to Aleph, she said :

“I think I will step out into the open air, and perhaps you will be kind enough to follow me.”

Of course he followed her. Such a vision of loveliness and grace as glided past him into the court is not apt to summon even a philosopher in vain. I am not sure but that he would have followed her to Britain had she asked him, instead of to that rude bench in the farther part of the court where she seated herself and invited him to do the same.

She said that he must not wonder that she wanted to thank him for standing between her and insult yesterday at the synagogue—also must not wonder that she had a woman’s curiosity to know by what means he had managed to gain admittance to the house, and then to carry his point so fully with the leech. Would he explain? So he gave a modest account of his dealings with both the husband and the leech; and then smilingly demanded reciprocation. The lady must not wonder that he too had some curiosity to know something of her experience with the same rough customers. He found that, as the leech had surmised, she could not get admittance to the house till she had sent back her servants and had promised not to interfere personally with the treatment. She was very reluctant to do both things; but she felt that she could

not desert her nurse at such a time. Besides, she was expecting Seti, and encouraged herself with the hope of his speedy arrival. However, she was almost afraid to come within doors—the man was so rude and surly. And she did not fail to tell what a weight was lifted from her mind as soon as Aleph made his appearance.

But what did he propose? Would not Miriam's husband come back and break up all that had been done? And such a desperado! What threats! She trembled to think what he might do. Must not Aleph be on his guard? How sorry she was that his unselfish efforts for others should bring him into such perils! Her lips quivered, and she looked at him with moist, anxious eyes.

Aleph acknowledged that he thought the fellow capable of the worst. He *would* be on his guard. At the same time he did not think that they need fear his return. If he should come back he must find men in the house able to control him. So the leech and himself would remain till the coming of Seti; who perhaps would accompany her home and return with two strong and resolute men to take their places. So by alternation they must secure the patient till she could be taken elsewhere—which he thought would be very soon. What did the lady think of the plan?

She thought favorably of it; and had no doubt but that her father would do the same. But what trouble and danger Aleph was taking on himself in all this!

“Do I look as if troubled by it?” said the young man cheerfully. “You see, I am here partly for educational purposes; and I consider the opportunities which may daily come to me for dealing wisely and helpfully with

men as so many valuable teachers; and, as to personal danger, I am quite willing to pay that price for my tuition. But pardon me, lady, when I say that you who leave your palace for such a place as this, and submit to bad air, and rude treatment, and risk of health for the sake of a very humble person who can never repay you, ought not to be surprised at my conduct. I am comparatively selfish in my conduct. In purity of motive, I fear that you have greatly the advantage of me. Still I hope that you will not on that account refuse my interested help in your disinterested work. By and by, when my education is finished, I hope my motives will be as unselfish as your own." He smiled as he added, "But I should be sorry to have you think that I am, even now, quite without pity for suffering, and indignation at injustice and wrong."

After a moment's pause, during which his face resumed the serene gravity of expression which was habitual to it, he went on :

"But, lady, besides wanting to complete my education, I have another want in regard to which you may perhaps help me, and so amply compensate me on commercial principles for all I have done or may do for your friend. I am very much interested to get accurate information from Judea about Jesus. Any news that may reach you about that remarkable person will be to me like waters to a desert. Your father's position is such that information will naturally come to him and to you."

"I am not sure of that," returned Rachel. "We get, it is true, a plenty of rumors and opinions about Jesus; but they come to us, I fear, shaped and colored by the strong prejudices and seeming interests of the chief peo-

ple of our nation, who are mostly hostile to him. These are about the only ones with whom my father is in communication. But now and then we meet with a man, like Simeon, who heartily wishes to know the truth, whatever that may be."

"Such was the impression he made on me," said Aleph.

"Speaking of him," said the maiden, "reminds me of a piece of news which he brought us this morning, and which my anxiety about Miriam had almost driven from my mind. He said that he had just heard from a friend whom he had engaged to make certain inquiries for him that in the birth-registers of Bethlehem is recorded the birth, some thirty years ago, of one Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary, both of whom are said to be descended from David. He also said that the same friend reported some additional particulars in regard to the reformer John, who made so great a stir a short time before Jesus became generally known, and whom many for a time took to be the Christ."

"Pray tell me of him," said the young man, with a kindling face, "for I have heard absolutely nothing. And yet the Sacred Books say that the Messiah must have a forerunner like Elijah in character, if not in name. I have had a difficulty here."

"Perhaps, then, what I have to tell may help you as it has helped me. Simeon learns that this man, who for a time filled the eye of the whole people and was then put to death by that Ahab whom we call Herod, was exceedingly like Elijah in austerity of life and fearless denunciation of sin, and that he distinctly forbade the people to count him more than the forerunner of the Christ, and

even introduced Jesus to the people as being the Christ they were expecting. And this agrees with the reports that reached Alexandria at the time."

"Many thanks for this information ; it adds another link to the chain of evidence I am seeking."

"So it has been with me," said the maiden, while a shade of deeper thoughtfulness, if not of sadness, came over the bewildering beauty of her face as she added, "and I begin to fear that our chain when followed to the end will conduct us to some new and very unpopular interpretations of the prophets."

"I have for some time been prepared for that," said the young man, calmly and even cheerfully. "The great thing is to get at the truth : and I whom you have suffered to read your face as we have talked together need no further assurance that we think alike in this matter. We are both young ; and youth can accommodate itself more easily than age to new views if they must come. May Aleph, the Chaldean stranger, venture so largely as to hope that in his search for the Messiah he may still have the aid of one whom he knows to be the first lady in the land in position, and whom her grandfather, who ought to know, and whom I am far from being disposed to contradict, pronounces the Gem of Alexandria?"

"You do well to smile," said the maiden, blushing. "My grandfather is very poor authority on such matters. I happen to know that Alexandrian gems are of very poor quality and mostly fictitious. But, seriously, whatever a Jewish maiden can properly do to help in your matter she will gladly do, both for her own sake, and for his sake who has been in this city, perhaps three days, and has as many times befriended me and mine."

Here a loud knock was heard at the street-door. They at once returned to the sick-room—and Aleph went on to answer the knock, hoping to find Seti. And Seti it proved to be. Before conducting him to the others, Aleph briefly and in a low voice explained the situation and received the full approval of the Egyptian. On entering the sick-room they found the patient awake with intelligence in her eye, and her arm about the neck of Rachel, who had kneeled at the bedside. The nurse was standing at a little distance with a bowl of food.

“I am afraid of Antis,” they heard murmured as they came near.

“You mean your husband?” inquired Rachel.

“Yes,” feebly articulated the woman; “he is a fearful man—a murderer. Do not leave me with him”—and her arms clung still more closely about the fair neck as if for protection.

“He shall not trouble you more,” said Seti emphatically, as he showed himself. “But now take some food,”—and he beckoned the nurse forward.

Supported by Rachel from behind, Miriam supped from a spoon at intervals with apparent relish, till at length her eyelids again crept slowly together and she was gently laid back to her unfinished slumbers.

“She will do well, but must not relapse again,” said Seti: and turning to the leech, “Keep on as you have begun—we will take the responsibility. I confirm all that this young man has promised. He will, I understand, remain with you till I can accompany the lady home, and come back with some men to relieve him and you. Of course, after what the sick woman has said of her husband, we are justified in excluding him from the

house. Do not allow him to enter under any pretense. If he insists, threaten him with the police."

As Aleph put up the bars of the street-door behind Rachel and her escort, he felt as if he were barring out a sunbeam. There is nothing like a human face of the diviner type to light up a poor and dark house. Aleph did not realize how poor and dark that sick house was in itself till Rachel had left it and he had again placed himself at the bedside. Here he sat for quite a time lost in thought till, suddenly, he became aware that Miriam was awake and with wide eyes of placid wonder was gazing at him. At a sign from him the nurse came forward with more food and drink, supported her while he gently put to her lips at intervals a little of both, and then gently laid her down, her drooping eyes still seeking his face, to renewed slumber. This occurred again before Seti appeared with three strong and resolute looking men—who being old servants of Alexander and well known to Miriam in former days, were thought most likely to give her a sense of security by their presence.

Seti and Aleph returned to Rachotis together.

They had scarcely turned away from the house before Antis came out from a recess across the street and stole after them—at a distance, but so as to keep them in sight. And they were not without particular notice from others. Two such commanding figures as to stature and bearing were not a common sight in Alexandria; and so the men whom they met would sometimes turn and gaze after them. One of these did more than stop and gaze. He followed—followed on one side of the street as Antis was following on the other.

I wonder what he meant! Was he a friend or an

enemy? Or was it merely idleness and curiosity that prompted the following?

These latter make a motor of considerable power; sometimes even of fully as much power as any of our celebrated modern motors, or those mysterious ones used in the construction of the pyramids. And it certainly was in daily use in Egypt among all classes at the time of our narrative, and long before. Before the Ptolemies, before the Pharaohs, before the Dispersion, before Tubal Cain—in fact there is some reason to think that this motor was invented by the first man (some say by the first woman; but this is a base slander), and was from him handed down to all ages and countries. How else can we account for its omnipresence!

So it is by no means incredible that the following of Aleph just spoken of was not due to hostility. I hope it was not. I hope it did not mean mischief. Still I confess to some fears. Somehow I begin to feel an interest in that young man; and if any harm should come to him it would trouble me not a little.

VI.

THE CUSTOM HOUSE.

Οὐκ οἷα βούλεται τις, ἀλλ' οἷα δύναται.

PLATO, *Nipp. Mag.* 26.

Not what one wishes, but what he can.

1. News by the way.
2. A commercial catechism.
3. Python wide awake.
4. No time to be lost.

VI.

THE CUSTOM HOUSE.

ALEPH found Cimon already at the khan; and, after giving an account of his own experiences, received the following from his friend.

Cimon went first to the khan they had just left for an article that had been forgotten, and to learn what he might of the ways of the neighboring custom house.

He found that he was yet considerably too early for the business hours of the chief official; and so lingered, making inquiries of the inn-keeper about the chief traders of the city, especially in the line of eastern goods. Who are they? Where are their places of business? How long have they been established? What reputations do they bear? These questions were freely answered—with some vagueness and reserve, however, as to the last of them; as was to be expected from a man who speaks about his neighbors to a stranger. Cimon found that Malus was by far the largest and most successful dealer in the city.

“How did that happen?”

“Well, you see, he has the most capital: so he has the best goods, the cheapest, and the greatest variety; and then his positions as harbor-master and farmer-general of all imports from the south give him special ad-

vantages for turning trade in his own direction. As harbor-master he is the first one to meet the owners of goods on their arrival, and can hasten or delay the passing through the custom house: as farmer of the duties he has less duty to pay than his rivals, even if he makes none of the illegal exactions with which some charge him. However this may be, it is certain that he has very great opportunities of befriending those who deal with him, and *can* make it for their interest to patronize him rather than others. People lay much stress on this. So he has crushed out many small dealers. Still, not a few manage to maintain themselves against him, though they make small profits where he makes large ones. There are yet many people who for various reasons prefer to go elsewhere than to Nos. 110, 111, 112 Emporium Street. We are among them"—and the man shrugged his shoulders.

Cimon took out his tablets and made some entries.

While he was doing this, who should come in but the Jew who had so curiously followed him from the synagogue! The man was surprised, and apparently delighted, to see Cimon. It appeared that he was a brother of the absent landlord, and had come to bring news of him to his family. He had left him in Judea a few days before, and expected that he would soon be able to return. He then turned to Cimon and inquired about his young companion of yesterday.

"That young man haunts me," he said. "His face meets me everywhere; if I read, his features come between me and the papyrus; if some one enters my house I look up to see if it is not he; if I am walking in the street I forget my errand and look for him instead. For

example, while on my way here I forgot what I was coming for, and found myself opposite the Diapleuston waiting for him to appear, and, had he appeared, no doubt I should have acted as ridiculously as I did yesterday.”

Cimon explained that they had seen occasion to remove to another part of the city; but were still proposing to seek him out and hear about the eastern pilgrims of whom he had spoken. Perhaps he would not object to give some particulars now—reserving to some future time, when his young friend could be with him, a fuller account. Could they not pass into the court and seat themselves where they would not be exposed to interruption?

The Jew readily consented: and this was the substance of his narrative.

When he was scarcely more than a boy there came to the khan on the east of the city, then kept by his father, a large caravan of eastern people, on their way home from Judea. It was led by three men—all remarkable for dignity of manner, richness of apparel, and other signs of great distinction, if not of princely rank. Two of them were old men; but old after the manner of Moses. Their eyes were as bright, their forms as erect, their steps as firm and elastic as one ever sees in the young. But the third was comparatively young: and a finer specimen of humanity in all respects the khan had never seen, though it had seen, first and last, a wide variety of people from all nations.

Ah, that young man knew how to walk—how to ride too! When he came and went, whether on foot or on his Arabian, the servants would run to every conven-

ient outlook to wonder at the easy grace and majesty of his movements.

On the arrival of the caravan the khan happened to be quite without guests. The pilgrims at once took all the vacant rooms, and remained several days in the city—examining it fully in every direction; its temples, palaces, harbors, markets, warehouses, manufactures, libraries, schools. They evidently were very devout persons; not as the idolaters are, but after the Hebrew manner. Every morning and evening they gathered all their servants, and read from copies of the Law and Prophets, and prayed most reverently to the Invisible; and on the Sabbath they went separately to the synagogues; and when they left the city they carried away with them many copies of the Greek Scriptures—also, it was said, a Greek young man, well taught in all the western learning and accomplishments, but who had lost his parents and other near relatives, and so had few ties to detain him here. This was what was *said*: the Jew could not vouch for it, as he had never seen the young Greek.

But these were not the most important facts about the pilgrims. Some in the caravan spoke the Greek language and the people of the inn used to listen with wonder to the story that gradually came to them.

For generations it had been widely understood in parts of the East that a great king would some day appear in Judea in whom all the families of the earth would be blessed. But lately it was revealed to each of the three chiefs that the birth of this king was about to take place, and that when it had taken place the fact would be signified to them by the appearance of a new star-like body in the western sky, and that on seeing it

they should journey westward to carry the homage and presents of the East to the new-born monarch. So they conferred together, made ready their caravans, and watched the heavens nightly for the promised sign.

At last it came. The day had faded away into the night, when lo, a glorious beam shot to the watchers, and they saw a great star hanging low in the west—a star wholly unlike the evening star, or any other star ever seen in that quarter of the sky. The signal was promptly and joyfully obeyed. Meeting at a place before agreed upon, the chiefs joined caravans and proceeded toward Judea—the star appearing and going before them whenever their journey needed special guidance. So at last they came to Bethlehem, where the meteor sank low and blazed over the house where a young child was. Then they knew that they had found the King; though it was in no palace, but in a very humble home bare of all but the barest necessaries.

Was it a beautiful child? Even as Moses, exceeding fair. Was he afraid of the bearded men as they kneeled before him and presented their gold and frankincense and myrrh? Not at all. There were the dawns of a kingly repose and welcome in his eyes as he fearlessly stretched out his little hand and laid it on the thin white hairs and on the dense brown locks that were successively bowed low before him.

And then they heard of things even stranger than those they had themselves experienced. For the mother told them of angels who came to predict the Messiah and his forerunner: and many people of Bethlehem, attracted by the star and the stately caravan, came hastening up and told how their shepherds had seen and heard

on the night of the Birth a glory of angels that shone and sang above them like a descending heaven, and sent them to a manger to find their long expected King.

The youngest of the three chiefs was so much impressed by the story of the shepherds that he put it into a song which some in the caravan learned and often chanted.

“Did you hear it?” interrupted Cimon.

“Yes: and our father would have us commit it to memory. I think that even now I can recite it word for word.”

“Please do so.”

The Jew, after a few moments of recollection, proceeded to recite as follows:

“No tongue can tell the sacred pomp,
That swept from Heaven one day,
And trailed its glory past the spheres,
To where the Infant lay—
Lift up your eyes in vast surprise,
Ye shepherds, on the scene,
And see the flaming forms that hang,
The heavens and earth between!

Upon their heads are golden crowns,
Their robes are white as snow,
Soft lightnings from their faces flash
Upon the vale below;
Before the glory of the Lord
The stars turn pale and flee—
Oh, what a sight that gracious night
For shepherd swains to see!

Through all the still and scented air
There comes a deeper calm,
As if from fear lest it should hear
Naught of the coming psalm:

And now the air grows sweeter still;
Slow beat the balmy wings;
Clear o'er the mute and raptured earth
The choir of angels sings.

Sings praises in the highest song
That highest Heaven can raise;
Sings praises to the highest king
That hears the voice of praise;
To Him who to the earth descends
In pity and in love,
And o'er its warring tribes extends
The white wings of the dove.

And far across Judean hills,
Swell out the storms of praise—
I would that tempests such as this
Might gladden all my days!
For lo, 'tis Paradise to hear
The glory of that sound,
That swells so grandly to the skies,
So humbly seeks the ground.

Full many an age will vanish,
Full many songs be given,
But ne'er again such wondrous strain
Will shake the arch of Heaven;
And yet each year our hearts will see
A glory on the wing,
And still each year our hearts will hear
That winged glory sing.

And ever as we give our gifts,
And deck our homes with green,
Our souls will kindle in the blaze
Of that strange midnight scene,
And sing His praise in joyful lays,
By whom the Child was given,
Whose advent here sent mighty cheer
Through all the choirs of Heaven."

There were tremblings on the tongue of the Jew as he closed his low chant, and tears in the eyes of the Greek; but the latter said nothing for a few moments, and then merely asked that the narrative might proceed. So the Jew resumed.

The chiefs would willingly have lingered long in Bethlehem; but the same Divine Word that had brought them almost immediately sent them away. The next night the message came, "Let them return—and return by another way." So they returned by way of Egypt and the Red Sea.

Shortly after the pilgrims had left Alexandria, news came that Herod, in a fit of jealousy, had massacred all the male children in Bethlehem under two years of age. It was like him. Everybody believed the story. But could it be that the Messiah of whose triumphs and reign so many prophets, in so many ways, had spoken, had perished in his infancy? Could the promises of God be broken by the cruelty of man? Was Herod strong enough to defeat the Almighty?

The khan had hardly begun to ask these questions before there appeared at its gate a man leading an ass, on which was seated a young woman who carried in her arms a little boy. The mother was interesting—the boy was wonderful. Never had the landlord seen such a child. It was not merely that he was comely in the highest degree—it was the mystery of expression in his face. As one looked on it nothing seemed too good or great to be believed of him. His body seemed a thin veil through which flashes of inexhaustible treasures of wisdom and goodness and power were continually struggling. You who have seen a light shining through thin

alabaster—you who have seen a gem in whose heart rainbows seemed imprisoned—you who have seen a soft, white cloud around whose edges have crept suggestions of an intolerable glory within and behind, can have some idea of how that wonderful Child impressed the people of the khan. By degrees they learned that the family had come from Bethlehem, that fear of Herod was the cause of their leaving, that the eastern princes had been under their roof—at last, when confidence was full-grown and all reserve thrown away, that they had among them the very Star-Child to which the journeying East had brought its loyal homage and tribute.

It was strange to see the mixture of tenderness and awe with which the mother dealt with her son—strange to see the mixture of weakness and power, of humbleness and superiority, of dependence and independence with which the son dealt with his mother. At one moment it seemed as if she was acting the part of a Providence to him; at another as if he was acting the part of a Providence to her.

The house was a different house from the time that Jesus (for such was his name) entered it. A new element had come into its air; a new light seemed to rest on every object; never had its inmates found it so easy to pray and lead a good life. It was as if a new life had silently come under their own; and, like a broad wave, was lifting it heavenward. The eyes of Jesus, from their fathomless depths, seemed to invite to all that was holy and to forbid all that was sinful.

But even Alexandria was too near Herod. So, after the sacred family had well rested from their journey, they went still farther south. It was a sad day for the

khan when they went away. The host would take nothing in the way of compensation—save a smile from the young mother and a touch from the child for each child of his. How that touch thrilled them through and through as with some mysterious healing! They think they can feel it to-day.

The khan kept its secret. After a while news came that the Holy Family went as far as Mantarééh, and remained there till the death of Herod, when they returned to their own country. After that, ears were kept wide-open toward Judea; for it could not be thought that such a beginning would end in nothing—that man and circumstance would be allowed to defeat God.

But the waiting was long. Ten years passed, twenty years, almost thirty, and yet no further news came of Jesus. The khan was sorely puzzled. It knew not what to think. Yet it still clung to faith and hope. At last it began to hear vaguely of strange excitements and movements in Judea. The eyes and ears of the whole family turned in that direction as never before. And soon they learned that a great reformer had burst suddenly on the people from the wilderness—austere, fearless, mighty of speech, smiting the sins of high and low with the sword of his mouth, baptizing, followed by immense crowds, who inquired, Is not this the Christ?

And this, too, was the question that was asked at the gate of Canopus. But they reflected that, according to the prophets, Christ must have a forerunner of just this Elijah-like character; and so they were prepared to hear, as they soon did, that the reformer's name was John the son of Zacharias, and that he distinctly told

the people that he was not the Christ, only his forerunner. Then came rumors of Another ; at first low-voiced and vague, then more distinct and emphatic—that John had introduced him to the people as the Greater One for whom he had been preparing the way ; then that John himself had been slain by Herod ; then that the new prophet whose name was Jesus was drawing the multitudes after him by a sublime teaching and a course of miracles such as had not been seen since the days of Moses, if ever. Of course the Alexandrian friends then felt sure that they had recovered the long lost Child. The king of whom they had heard from the Chaldean sages, whose star had conducted that most memorable of all pilgrimages, and whose sublime childhood they had been permitted to look in upon, as by a window into heaven, was now being manifested to the nation at large. And though he had not come in the way the nation at large was expecting—was appearing as a king of wisdom and mercies, instead of as a king of battles and conquests—they felt sure that at last the Messiah had come to his own ; and that, beyond all doubt, Jesus was he. In the joy of this great conviction the father died.

Such, in substance, though not in words, was the narrative of the Jew. As he proceeded in it he gradually came to speak with profound emotion. He ended with a voice that trembled and eyes that wept. Cimon was hardly less moved. They sat for a few moments in silence. Then Cimon said :

“This has been the fairest of mornings to me. Though a Greek by birth, I am a Hebrew in faith and expectations ; and never did David so long for the waters of Bethlehem as I have longed for news of that Son of

David and of Bethlehem, your Messiah. I say *your* Messiah; but I have reason to think that he is mine also; even to think that he belongs to all nations. Sometimes, perhaps, when my young friend is with me I will explain further. But I may now say that, from what you have just told me, and from what I knew before, I am satisfied that the Christ has at last come and that Jesus is he. God be praised! Some difficulties still remain, and perhaps will always remain. Hard questions, questions that I cannot answer, stare at me out of the night. And yet, God be praised! The King has at last come."

The Jew grasped the hand of the Greek and murmured *Brother*.

"Let me tell you another thing," the Jew added, after a moment. "I have *seen* him. Yes, I have seen Jesus and recognized in the full-grown man the unutterable something that spoke so powerfully to us in the child."

"When and where?" demanded the other.

"Not in dreams, though I scarcely dream of anything else, but with these bodily eyes. You see that, as news of the wonderful doings in Judea thickened upon us, I became too restless to remain quietly here while the world was being shaken only a few days' journey away. My brother, who long before the death of our father had taken this khan, felt very much as I did; and so we agreed to go together and see for ourselves, instead of having the facts filtered to us through the imaginations and prejudices, it may be, of other people. Accordingly we went; and not only recognized him, as I have said, but were at once recognized by him and called by our names. None of our acquaintances were about him, we

knew not a soul in Capernaum, and yet, as soon as he saw us, he said 'Shaphan and Nathan, sons of Reuben, welcome.' . . . We were with him several days and heard him teach the people as surely people were never before taught. We said, as did his other hearers, *Never man spake like this man.* And then the things that he did! Oh, it was good and yet awful to be there! How mightily and easily he did things which God alone can do! We saw lepers white as snow turned into sound men at his simple word: also one man who had lost a hand had it instantaneously restored in our presence. In passing through the country we met many who testified that they had been cured by him of the worst forms of disease in their last stages—cured in a moment, and without the use of any natural means whatever. Indeed, the land is full of such cases, so that not even the worst enemies of Jesus pretend to doubt his miraculous powers."

"Tell me of the man whose hand was restored," said Cimon.

"A company of us were passing through a street when some blind men met us and cried to Jesus for help. We halted just before a butcher's stall where a man was dividing some meat with a cleaver. Another man and myself were pressed by the crowd close to the block where the work was being done. In his anxiety to see Jesus deal with the blind men, my neighbor laid his hand on the block suddenly, for the purpose of raising himself somewhat to get a better view, when the cleaver descended and struck off his entire hand. The blood spouted. A great outcry was made, and Jesus came up. He calmly said to the maimed man as he held up the

bleeding stump, *Be whole* : and at once I saw a new hand occupying the place of the old. The whole crowd, as well as myself, carefully inspected the substitute and compared it with the original hand that still lay on the block."

"Missing limbs are not suddenly reproduced by human art," said Cimon.

"I am tempted to mention another matter more personal to myself," continued Shaphan. "I have already said that Jesus called us by our names. We found the next day that he knew more about us than our names. As my brother and myself were sitting by the wayside, Jesus came to us and said:

"'You are troubled. When you reach home look again for the missing document and you will find it.'

"And truly we were in trouble. When we were children our father was in partnership with a young man. But this young man gradually drew off into other business, and at length sold his interest in the khan to my father, who paid him for it in full and took from him a paper acknowledging the fact. In process of time this paper was lost. Of late this loss has somehow come to the knowledge of the man, and he now claims that he has never received payment, and demands both the principal and the interest on it for more than thirty years. To pay this sum would ruin us. We had been again and again to our oppressor to ask for mercy. But in vain. So we *were* in deep waters when Jesus put out his hand and drew us out. For since my return I have found the missing paper."

"Who is this oppressor?"

"Malus."

“Has he already begun a suit against you?”

“No: but he threatens to do so within a short time, unless payment is made.”

“Can it be that he is honest, and has merely forgotten?”

“He does not say that he does not *remember* having received the money. He absolutely denies having received it—could make oath to that effect; has a perfect recollection of all the circumstances, and has only been prevented from pressing his claim during all these years by tenderness of heart.”

“Have you yet told him of the discovery?”

“Not yet.”

“Would you be willing to withhold the news from him for a while?”

“If you wish.”

“I wish you would: and perhaps we may be of service in helping you bring this crafty and powerful rogue to justice. But it will be a hard matter. My fear is that the officials of the city are themselves in league with him in some of his practices, and so will be disposed to shelter him in all. . . . But this speaking of Malus reminds me of a matter that I must now attend to.”

Cimon rose. It was time to proceed to the custom house. So, promising Shaphan to see him again as soon as possible: also informing him more particularly where they now lodged, in case he should have occasion to seek them (“and,” said he, “I hope that your brother will soon make occasion by bringing further particulars about Jesus”), he took leave cordially.

The lake frontage was, and had long been, all alive with business. The cry of all nations was in the air.

In the lake itself vessels of all sorts were coming and going; on the wharves boxes, bales, sacks were being handled with the same dispatch and carelessness that men now show in handling the goods of other people. Also, the custom house itself (a long, low building extending almost from the Gate of the Moon to the canal which joined the lake to the northern harbors) was in full swirl and roar, and had been for hours. But the chief official, like people of his sort in more modern times, did not make as early hours as his subordinates; had loitered over the morning meal and news, though not newspaper; and so had only just made himself comfortable in his office when Cimon presented himself—the first visitor.

The Roman looked up from his tablets on which he had been writing; and, seeing before him a very well dressed and dignified person, laid down his stylus and took an attitude of attention.

Cimon stated that he had waited on the chief of the customs in behalf of an eminent trader, to make certain inquiries which could not be so satisfactorily put to lower officials. Would it suit his convenience to hear them?

“What are they?” said the chief politely.

“If my principal were to send here a lot of eastern good (silks, shawls, rugs, jewels), what duties would he have to pay?”

The Roman took down from a shelf a framed schedule and read from it certain figures. He looked up. The Greek was making a memorandum.

When he had finished, Cimon asked, “Can these rates be relied on for some time to come?”

“Doubtless: they have not been changed since the times of the Ptolemies.”

Cimon made another entry on his tablets.

“Can you give me some idea what the course of trade has been in these eastern goods—what its annual amount, whether subject to fluctuations, whether on the whole increasing or decreasing?”

“I cannot,” said the official. “To do this would require much time and labor in examining the registers.”

“Then you register all lots of goods that come to you, and preserve the registers?”

“Certainly. We preserve them till they become too many for preservation.”

“May I ask how long that is?”

“About fifteen years. At all events, we have the registry books for the last fifteen years.”

Cimon made another entry, and then asked whether one willing to expend the time and labor would be allowed to examine the books, and if so on what terms.

After some hesitation the official replied that the theory was that the books should be open to the inspection of suitable persons, but that there were practical difficulties in the way.

“For example,” said he, “the books of this year are in constant use for record and consultation by the officers of the custom house; the books of previous years are often needed by them for reference; and then, of course, an examination of the books by outside parties would have to be made in the presence of an official, and all the officials we now have are fully occupied with other duties from which they cannot well be spared; and one specially appointed would be expensive, if permissible.”

Cimon said that he was ready to charge himself with all expenses.

The Roman hastened to say that even in that case an express permit from the prefect of the city, possibly from the Governor, might be necessary. He would make inquiry, and, perhaps, would be able to inform him within a day or two.

The Greek bowed. Meanwhile would the chief look over the memoranda he had made and see whether they were correct? He passed over the tablets.

The Roman looked them over carefully and pronounced them all right.

“Would the chief oblige him by writing as much on the tablets over his own signature?”

Yes—the chief would do that; and did it.

Cimon bowed again and withdrew.

On his way out he saw Malus entering. The two men seemed to recognize each other at the same moment. Instantly there flashed into the look of each something that told the other that the encounter was not pleasant. On the part of the Greek the flash was one that gave new erectness to his form and new gravity to his features: on the part of the Jew it was a flash of suspicion and alarm that for an instant expanded his eyes and perceptibly checked his movement. For an instant only. Then came a new woodenness into his face, and he seemed to retreat still further behind those small, half-closed eyes which yet lost nothing of their watchful expression. So on they came toward each other—the Greek unconsciously increasing the dignity and firmness of his tread, and keeping his eyes fixed on the approaching face as if bent on improving to the utmost an unwelcome opportunity for reading on that hard page whatever might be read. So they met and passed. Cimon never looked be-

hind him. Had he done so he would have seen Malus standing at the door of the office just left and looking after him.

But the Greek did not need to see this. That steady look into the face of Malus, though brief, was enough to assure him that the suspicions of the man were all ablaze, and that he would not rest till he had found out whatever the custom-house chief could tell him. And probably he would be successful in suppressing any further light from that quarter. Cimon was thankful, however, that he had secured as much as he had. He trusted that it would be sufficient—perhaps it could be used to compel more.

He was now more than ever impressed with the necessity of hastening whatever further inquiries he had to make. It was still high day—why not proceed at once to the dealers in eastern goods whose addresses he had jotted down at the khan, and try to find out what had been the selling prices of eastern goods for as many years as possible? Why not even improve the opportunity of Malus' absence from his warehouse to go there and see what would be said by the subordinates when not overlooked by the master? As soon as the idea suggested itself, he accepted it. He would go to Nos. 110, 111, 112 Emporium Street first of all.

Accordingly, as soon as he had passed through the Gate of the Moon, turning leftward into the Greek quarter to lessen the chances of recognition, he proceeded northward till he thought he might be opposite to the warehouse of Malus, and then struck eastward into Emporium Street again. His venture was successful. Before him stood the establishment he was seeking. As

soon as he presented himself at the door he was politely saluted by a young man and invited to enter. What could he do for my lord?

My lord wished to be conducted to the chief man in charge of the department of eastern goods.

“Certainly, it would be done with the greatest pleasure. Would my lord be pleased to follow?”

This following took Cimon through a large part of the establishment. He could well believe it to be the largest warehouse in Alexandria. It was really an immense bazaar. One could find there almost anything that was bought and sold in the Roman world—from the toys of infants up to the furnishings of a royal palace, and even of a royal person. Messengers were hurrying about, crowds were coming and going, salesmen were crying out and displaying their goods from hundreds of stalls. It was a tempest of assault on the pouches of visitors. And many were evidently being captured.

The department to which Cimon at last came was specially attractive. Here, in an air through which stole the sweetness of the Indian nard and other costly aromatics, were piled or suspended miracles of the loom and needle, on some of which had been expended the labors of a lifetime—veils like sea-foams, embroideries to which the glowing oriental fancy and patient fingers had transferred landscape and legend and history and the starry heavens; gold and silver brocade from beyond the Ganges; silks, tapestries, housings, rugs, shawls from Persia and Cashmere: the whole brightened and multiplied wonderfully by polished steel mirrors judiciously placed. At the centre of the department was the collection of precious stones. In a compartment whose walls

were formed by suspended tapestries richly hued and pictured, in a case whose beauty and strength seemed to certify to the great value of its contents, lay pearls from the Persian Gulf, emeralds from the Caucasus, diamonds from the Oxus, turquoises from Medea, rubies from Bokhara, and many other gems—all skillfully arranged into a stony rainbow.

As Cimon passed close to the sparkling collection, and lingered over it for a moment as he passed, it struck him that the sparkle of some of the brilliants was not exactly that of genuine stones. But he might be mistaken. Something more than a passing glance is needed to enable even an expert to identify paste in its better specimens. But one thing he was quite sure of by this time, and that was that the light in the establishment was such as to make an accurate judgment of most of the goods very difficult to an average customer, while such as to set them off to the best advantage.

But he was now standing before the desk of the man whom he came to see.

“You have this department in charge, I believe,” said the Greek, as he courteously saluted a Jew who was no longer young.

Receiving an affirmative bow, Cimon proceeded:

“I am here in behalf of a friend who is not living in this city, to inquire the prices at which certain goods of the very best quality can be obtained. If you will furnish me with a large blank bill I will specify the articles in writing.”

A large blank bill was readily handed to him, on which he wrote a list of considerable length.

“Now will you oblige me,” said he, after having

carefully read over what he had written, "by setting down opposite these several items the prices at which you could furnish them to-day?"

The man's eyes snapped as he looked over the long list and saw how many expensive articles it included. When he had set down prices as requested, and had handed back the paper to Cimon, he said:

"The figures may seem to you somewhat large; but they are for first-class goods. In fact, I have made the prices smaller than they would be for small lots, considering the length of your list."

Cimon examined the paper carefully.

"The prices are unexpectedly large, I confess," he said gravely. "Have these goods risen in value lately?"

"By no means. The figures I have given you are the lowest we have made in many years."

"Then you have been in charge of this department for a considerable time?"

"For twenty years."

"Are these the bottom prices for so long a time as that?"

"Just so."

"You surprise me. Are you quite sure that there is no mistake in this—that your memory serves you faithfully in regard to so many years?"

"Perfectly sure," with emphasis. "You see, all the business of this department, so far as sales are concerned, has been in my hands for the number of years I have mentioned; and I remember perfectly that never during all that time have we offered or sold such goods as these at such low figures as I have written."

"I think, then," said Cimon, "it would be well for

you to add as much to this paper. Would you object to write at the bottom, 'These are the lowest figures at which the above goods have been sold for the last twenty years?' "

"Not at all," said the man—and wrote accordingly.

Cimon took the paper and courteously withdrew.

In very much the same manner and with like success he dealt with several other establishments in the same neighborhood—obtaining from each a written statement of present prices and of how these compared with the prices of the years immediately preceding. The last place he visited was that of Simeon Ben Simeon. Here, for the first time, he saw himself recognized—Simeon himself being present—and was received in a very cordial way.

"We certainly are under great obligations to you and that magnificent young friend of yours for your spirited help yesterday in the synagogue. I have been quite desirous to meet you again: especially as I saw that both of you were much interested in my report of matters in Judea, and, as I ventured to think, took very much the same view of them as I did. Also, I have something new to tell you."

Simeon then gave the account with which we are already familiar, as given to Aleph by Rachel. And, in return, the Greek related what Shaphan had told him—keeping back, however, the part that related to Malus. And they rejoiced together.

"Tell me," said Simeon suddenly, "about that young man—you know whom I mean. Somehow he has a way of walking into one's confidence and affections after a very wonderful fashion. Who is he?"

Cimon smiled at this downrightness and furious driving at the mark.

“For the present,” said he, “he is only the friend and pupil of Cimon the son of Cimon. I may, however, add that he is one who is quite worthy of the impression he makes. The gold is solid. I have now known him for twenty years—that is to say, ever since he was born—and I have nothing but good and great things to say of him. Is he my son? Of course not—as one can easily see—but though not my son he is a remarkably good substitute for one. I could hardly have a better. And,” he added archly, “I think seriously of adopting him.”

The Jew laughed at the cleverness of the Greek, and forebore to press; only adding, “*I could adopt him without thinking seriously of it.*”

As he rose to leave, Cimon said, “I am really sorry that I cannot at present give you the information you wish about my young friend. But I am under bonds. His father only can release me, and that father is far away. So I must confine myself to saying that, unlike most plants which begin to wither as soon as they are parted from the parent root, this plant daily freshens into a larger life. I am the more sorry that I cannot go beyond this, both because you have already given me information of the highest value, and because I came here for the very purpose of getting still further information from you—provided you can consistently grant it. I wish to get from the leading dealers in eastern goods in this city the present selling prices of a number of articles—also how these prices compare with those of as many past years as possible. I have already obtained written state-

ments from all, save yourself, on whom I proposed to call. Do you see any objection to giving me yours?"

"None in the world. Let me see your list."

So in a few moments Cimon added another to his papers. As Simeon handed it to him, he said:

"I think you can hardly have called on Malus to-day, and yet he has the largest establishment of your sort in the city. He would hardly care to give you such a paper as this. He is much too deep for that."

Without a word, the Greek singled out one from his parcel of papers and passed it to the Jew—who as soon as he had glanced it over, exclaimed:

"Where was Malus when this was given?"

"Absent."

"Of course. *Of course* he was absent—as his deputy will probably be when the master learns of his indiscretion."

As Cimon had noticed no sign of recognition in street or shop, save at Simeon's, he had begun to feel that perhaps his precautions had been unnecessary; so, when he had taken leave of Simeon and saw how large a part of the day still remained, instead of crossing directly into the Greek quarter again and so proceeding homeward, he turned northward on Emporium Street till he came to the great square at the intersection with the street of Canopus. Here, seeing a crowd that seemed greatly interested with something in their midst, he crossed over to them, and finally managed, by a patient use of the impatience of others, to secure a place where he could see what was going on.

And this was what was going on. A number of street boys, altogether Jewish, were busy practicing a

new game. They had drawn on the pavement with a charred stick the ground plan of a large building which Cimon at once recognized as the Diapleuston. Just before him was an unmarked place for the principal door: half way down on the left was a pile of boxes to stand for the main *bema* with its canopy and lecturn: in front of this stood a group of boys pretending to be in earnest conversation among themselves. After this show had continued for a while, all but two of the boys walked off and squatted silently behind the boxes. The two boys left continued the pantomime of conversation for a few minutes, when a noise was heard and lo, another group of boys who had been hid behind the fountain came marching in at the door, two by two, with papyrus helmets on their heads and long, sharpened sticks for spears, trying to keep pace together in soldierly fashion, and carrying in their midst, transfixed on an extra long stick, a very ragged, dirty, and hideous doll. At the head of this company swaggered, perhaps the best dressed, but certainly the ugliest little rascal of the whole lot. He had taken some pains to add to his natural accomplishments such smutches of loveliness as a liberal use of mud and charcoal could give, and would have frightened his own father and mother. About his waist was a rope for a sash: to this was attached a bit of papyrus cut into the shape of a scabbard; in his hand he flourished as sword a short strip of lath that had just come from the shambles and was red enough to be the sword of Mars.

This high and mighty captain at once led his company straight to the two boys, surrounded them, and fell to abusing them with his tongue as only a practiced

street Arab could do. On this, the other boys behind the boxes hurried to the scene of action, and threw in a liberal accompaniment of voice and gesture to swell the interest of the occasion. Soon Captain Mars worked himself into a tempest, flew at one of the two boys, with his bloody weapon uplifted. The other boys so crowded about the encounter with outstretched and swaying arms as to confuse the view of the spectators; but in a few moments they saw the mimic sword flying high in air, and then its owner in close custody in process of being marched helplessly toward the door, followed by his tatterdermalions hanging their heads and staggering about as they were pushed and pulled and cuffed by the screaming and enthusiastic escort that hemmed them closely in. At the door the leader was dismissed with a rousing box on the ear which sent him off on a stagger, which finally ended in a runaway toward the Roman quarter. His followers each received a like compliment with a like result.

The spectators seemed to enjoy this conclusion hugely. They cheered and gesticulated with great enthusiasm; and when the hot chase took place they all hurried off to keep it in view. The last to follow was a man who had been standing just before Cimon. This man, glancing right and left as if to make sure that the ground was clear, directed his course across the square so as to take on his way the two boys who had personated Cimon and Aleph, and dealt each of them in passing a thwack on the head that was none of the mildest. At all events, it was not a mild wailing that the little fellows set up. Luckily, however, Cimon had noticed the movements of the man, and half divining his purpose, had followed him so closely that he was near enough when the

blows were given to follow them with prompt punishment. The two hearty cuffs he gave the fellow were quite equal in value to those he had administered, and seemed very surprising. In the startled and inflamed face that was suddenly turned toward him, Cimon recognized, as he thought, Roman features, though considerably disguised. Could it be that he had again encountered the son of the Governor? But the man gave him no opportunity for a closer examination. He went rapidly off with a Latin oath and a fist-shaking that belonged to all languages.

Cimon consoled the children with a friendly pat on the head and a piece of money for each—such as he had never before possessed. But they hardly needed this consolation—they were so delighted with the summary judgment on their oppressor. Smiles were already rippling over their tearful faces like sunshine over a wet landscape. And when the friendly look and touch and money were added, their sorrows were all forgotten in a caper of delight. But Cimon was really sorry that the urchins had not chosen some other theme for their sport.

“Ten to one,” said he to himself, “this affair, with liberal embellishments, will be carried straight to Bruchium, and will still further stir up ill blood between the sections. There will be trouble here before long. These Jews are too reckless and provoking to be left alone. It may be that their expectation of a conquering Messiah at the door has something to do with their audacity.”

With such thoughts as these running through his mind, he made his way homeward through the Greek and Egyptian quarters. His thoughts ran, but his feet walked—walked very leisurely; for so at this hour of the

day did most of the people; and he did not care to draw attention to himself by doing differently from others. Besides, he wished to study the people, as far as he could—without being observed. And it is wonderful how much some people can see without the appearance of seeing. They could hardly see more if their heads were set with a coronet of eyes. Do they divine the situation? Do they absorb the facts lying about them at every pore as they do heat and moisture? So it would seem. Cimon belonged to this class of men. He did not stare, he did not look this way and that, and sometimes turn about, with curiosity flooding every feature and saying, “I am a new-comer,” but he pursued his way with quiet and equal steps and with “eyes that looked right on, and eyelids that looked straight before him”—and yet nothing escaped him; not even that shadow of a portly man just disappearing within a shop on his left and that ragged little urchin that almost immediately darted out of the same and followed him at a little distance.

What should he do? A thought came to him as he came to a baker’s shop. He turned in and called for a loaf and some cakes—keeping an eye on the open door while his parcel was being made up. Presently the little ragamuffin appeared cautiously peeping within. Cimon held out toward him a large, tempting cake, and beckoned. The boy came in slowly, as if resisting an irresistible magnet.

“Hungry, my lad?”

The hungry eyes and pinched features of the little fellow answered the question before his bobbing head could say *Yes*, as it was not slow to do.

“Had anything to eat to-day, my poor boy? Really,

I do not believe you have," he added pityingly, as he looked more carefully into the thin, dirty face.

The face began to cry.

"And you had no money to buy food with—had you?" inquired Cimon, as he softly patted the curly head.

"He said he would give me some money when I came back," said the boy.

"*Who* said it?" asked Cimon.

"The man who sent me to see where you were going."

"He did not think I was going into a baker's shop to get you something to eat—did he? Come, sit right down here on this bench and eat this loaf and these cakes. Any more hungry ones at home?"

The boy at this began to sob, and at last broke into a perfect canter of sobs. He muttered something which Cimon had to bend low to make out.

"What, poor mother and little sister! Alas, alas—how sorry I am! But do you sit here and eat this; and when you have finished, the baker shall give you twice as much to carry home to your hungry mother and sister, for here is the money. If I could help, they should never be hungry again."

I do not know what the baker thought of this way of treating the little beggar. But I know what the little beggar thought. He highly approved. He soon dried his tears in the presence of kind looks, kind words, and kinder food. What a glorious appetite that was! And while it was being satisfied, or at least gratified, our friend quietly went his way—unshadowed.

VII.

THE MATRICULATION.

Δει δὲ αὐτὰς τὰς μητέρας τὰ τέκνα τρέφειν.

—PLUTARCH, *De Lib. Educ.* c. 5.

Mothers must cherish their children.

1. An ethical lecture.
2. How students examine.
3. Is Jesus a magician?
4. Let Miriam testify.

VII.

THE MATRICULATION.

ALEPH was greatly interested in Cimon's account of his adventures—most of all in the story of Shaphan. He determined to communicate it as soon as possible to the daughter of Alexander. But when would it be possible? On referring to his syllabus he found that Seti would lecture early the next morning. He would attend that lecture, and afterward would go to look after the sick woman Miriam. Perhaps he would find Rachel with her: if not he might learn when she was likely to come, and so manage to meet her.

Before the third hour the next morning, both Cimon and Aleph found themselves in the great lecture hall of the Serapeum. The students came in scatteringly; but at length the room was well filled, for Seti was popular with the young men. This was owing partly to the splendor of his lineage and office, which always weighs much with even the most democratic young men; partly to his repute as the heir of the mysterious wisdom of Old Egypt; and partly to the wonderful contrast between his years and the unabated vigor of both his bodily and intellectual faculties. And then this son of the Pharaohs and supreme Egyptian pontiff was fond of young men, reasonably tolerant of their ways, and knew how to unite

familiarity with dignity in his intercourse with them. But he was specially in favor with the dominant aristocratic element. Some of the other teachers were new men. Nobody knew who their fathers were. The patrician young men from Rome and elsewhere declared that they *had* no fathers. What had the Fabii and Claudii and Scipios to do with such people?

Cimon and Aleph had taken seats well in the rear of the hall. So they had opportunity to notice the bearing of the young men as they came in. On the whole they were pleased with it. While a few had the air of triflers and coxcombs, and here and there one had the jaded look that suggested late hours and early dissipation, the most had in various degrees that regulated and purposeful air which teachers like to see. Among the more thoughtful and earnest looking Aleph noticed one of the two Romans whom he had met at the banker's. He also noticed that the ages of the students seemed to average about the same as his own.

Almost every one who entered seemed to notice the new-comers; and soon there was considerable whispering and passing to and fro among the young men—which continued till Seti appeared. He stopped for a moment to exchange salutations with our friends, and then conducted them to a seat on the right of the bema. This was the customary seat for newly matriculated persons: and was greatly for the convenience of older collegians who thus not only became promptly aware of a new arrival, but could quietly study him up without the fatigue and incivility of turning about in their seats for the purpose. Of course it was at the expense of the lecture. But never mind—there are some things more important

than lectures to young people; and one of them is the discipline of guessing out characters from faces and bearing.

From the seat they now had the friends could see well what they had not before noticed, viz., a small latticed gallery just opposite to them from which came occasionally some hints and glints of white draperies. Though none of the schools of the time distinctly contemplated the co-education of the sexes, there was nothing in public opinion, especially at Alexandria, to hinder the daughters of the professors and other approved ladies from hearing the lectures given to the young men; though it was thought best to place the beauties where they could not be seen. The professors generally favored this invisible presence as being conducive to good order and gentlemanly conduct among the students. The chivalrous instinct was not a medieval invention, nor even an invention of Christianity. The students at the Serapeum in the First Century knew that bright eyes were watching them and behaved accordingly.

The lecture of Seti was on the ethics of truthfulness. It was delivered with a grave and quiet dignity and authority well befitting his years and station, and yet with a subtle fire and force of thought and expression that suited wonderfully youthful tastes. He had no manuscript before him, nor did he seem to have one within him from which he was reading; but he seemed to find his thoughts in the faces and eyes of his hearers as his keen glances went to and fro among them. And the young men felt that they were being perused.

On the way home, the day before, Seti had informed Aleph of a custom among the students. He had matric-

ulated with the *Faculty* of the University: the students would ask him to matriculate also with themselves. Each new-comer was not considered by them as invested with full membership till they had examined him for themselves and settled his grade among them as a collegian. It was possible to avoid the ordeal, if he saw fit; but a cheerful acceptance of it would conduce to popularity, and, if the trial should be well sustained, would give him a commanding influence. What would Aleph prefer? Seti had asked with a shade of anxiety in his face.

“By all means,” Aleph had said with a smile, “let not this custom be waived on my account. I rather fancy the double matriculation.”

So he was not surprised when at the conclusion of the lecture all the students retained their seats. He was, however, somewhat surprised to see that Seti retained his also. But he had no time to speculate on the matter: for a fine looking young man at once came forward and, courteously calling attention to the badge the stranger wore, inquired whether he wished such further membership and privileges among them as an examination by the students would confer.

Aleph rose and as courteously replied that such was his wish; and that he would not on any account have any of the usual formalities omitted.

“This being so,” continued the young man, “your full consent to our ancient custom having thus been graciously conceded, I call on our committee for testing candidates to come forward in proper order and discharge their duty. I will only premise for your information that the examination will ask two questions—first, *What do you know?* and second, *What can you do?*”

Whereupon two young men presented themselves, and one of them said, "I have the honor to put the first question—*What do you know?*"

Aleph smiled.

"Excuse my smiling," said he, "at the exceeding largeness of your question. If I attempt to answer it, I must begin with confessing that my knowledge is very limited. Compared with what there is to be known, it is practically nothing; compared with what I wish to know it is very trifling indeed; perhaps further examination may show that it is also very trifling in comparison with what some of my fellow-students know," and he bowed to the young men. A ripple of laughter went through the room.

"If you find my associate's question," said the other member of the committee, "a little too large to be manageable, perhaps you will tell us what you already know of the various branches of knowledge preliminary to those studied here. Doubtless you have informed yourself as to our curriculum; it not being considered in general a wise thing to leap into the dark."

"This question," returned Aleph, "is not indeed as broad as the other; but still it would be hard to give you a satisfactory answer (I mean one satisfactory to yourself, for this I could wish to do) unless you will tell me what branches of knowledge *you* consider preparatory to this Institution. I fancy there might be a difference of opinion as to that matter—after setting aside a few elementary things. I can read and write and speak the Greek and Latin languages after a fashion: have such acquaintance with the literature in these tongues as, I should hope, would enable me to understand such references to

them as may occur in your lectures; have also had some little practice in moral and mathematical reasoning, sufficient, I should hope, for understanding a good argument when presented. Is there any further preparation needed? I have indeed heard (what I suppose to be true) that a little knowledge of religion—some just and clear ideas of Deity and duty and responsibility—is a good thing in the way of preparation for university life. In regard to that sort of knowledge, I can only say that if I do not possess it the fault does not lie with my parents or other teachers” (he slightly inclined his head toward Cimon). “They have done their duty. But perhaps my questioner does not lay any stress on this last sort of knowledge as a valuable preliminary to the speculations and associations of college life. It is even possible that he considers it a decided disadvantage. I know that such views are sometimes found among students.”

Aleph had drawn his bow at a venture. But the broad wave of laughter that now swept through the hall assured him that somebody had been hit. Was it not the questioner himself, whose color had sensibly deepened?

His mate took up the broken thread. “Certainly we did not all come here with as good a preparation as that: but perhaps you have done more than the preparatory, and already know considerably of the branches of study which engage us here. Such advanced students often come to us for various reasons.”

“I cannot say,” returned Aleph, “that I am altogether ignorant of the subjects discussed here. It has been my good fortune to have as teacher one who in his youth passed much time in both the Athenian and Alex-

andrian schools. And he has attempted, not as successfully perhaps as he could wish, to put his own knowledge into his pupil. What I know I owe to him and my parents: what I do not know I owe to myself. Certainly I do not come here because I know so much, but because I know so little. I hope to enlarge my knowledge, such as it is. In thirty years not a few changes must have taken place here—new teachers have come to the front, new ways of presenting and illustrating old truths are used, and it is barely possible that some things then considered branches of knowledge are now known to be branches of ignorance. So I hope to profit. Is this satisfactory? or would the committee like to have me explain a syllogism, epitomize Plato or Aristotle or Zeno, or expound the astronomy of Pythagoras?" just the glimmer of an amused expression stealing from his eye.

"Not either of these," answered the committee. "Doubtless you are well prepared on what you voluntarily offer. Allow us to ask you for something which, as it is wholly unprecedented on such occasions as this, you can hardly have made special preparation for. We will ask you for an epitome of the lecture to which we have just listened. This is a compliment we owe to our venerable teacher who, I think, has never before honored us with his presence on a similar occasion."

Turning to Seti, Aleph expressed a hope that he would excuse any injustice that might be done to his lecture under such a stress of circumstances, and then proceeded as follows:

"The lecture was on the ethics of truthfulness. It held up to abhorrence the general character of a liar and hypocrite; and said that men must tell what seems

truth to them whenever they profess to tell it. In war, hostile forces do not profess to tell the truth to each other, but the contrary: the very fact of war certifies to all that feints, stratagems, deceptions of all sorts will be used, and they are just as proper as war itself. Under certain circumstances one can properly *withhold* truth from his neighbor without notice given. No man is bound to tell all he knows to all sorts of persons without regard to how they will use the information. A glass house would not be a good one to live in—especially where stones and sinners are plenty. Silence is often both the privilege and duty of a man, as well as his wisdom. Deity himself keeps back much truth permanently from us, and chooses his own times and ways for revealing other truth. In the interest of justice we can properly make inquiries which, if their object were known, would not be answered: we can be silent on what criminals have no right to know. In government, in business, in social intercourse a measure of reticence is indispensable to the wisest living, and even to righteousness. Without notice given, one may never affirm what he thinks to be false: he may without notice sometimes keep back what he knows to be true. These positions were defended by considerations drawn from natural conscience, the general voice of mankind, the testimonies of illustrious teachers, and the grave difficulties that would arise were the world to accept and act upon other principles.”

Aleph folded his arms and looked inquiringly at the committee. The committee looked inquiringly at Seti.

“May we ask the venerable Seti whether this is a satisfactory account of his lecture?”

He bowed assent: and a general cheer went up from the benches.

“I perceive,” said the master of ceremonies, “that it is the mind of our community that I pronounce the first part of the examination well sustained. Accordingly I so pronounce.”

Another round of applause.

The young man continued, addressing Aleph, “As you have doubtless perceived, our object has been not so much to find out how much you know as your powers of knowing. I think we have gotten sufficient light on that point. May we get as much on the point that still remains to be inquired into, viz., your powers of *doing*. Our community lay considerable stress on physical accomplishments, and, we think, with good reason. An efficient mind does its best in an efficient body. We but follow the traditions of more classical times when we ask whether you can run and ride and row, can leap and lift and shoot and wrestle and fence—in short, protect your mother and sisters and such maiden as the gods may give you.”

“I have had some teaching in all these matters,” replied Aleph: “whether I have duly profited by the teaching it does not become me to say.”

“Are you willing to appear in our palestra for a testing; and if so, do you choose to compete with the good or the better or the best in each department?”

“I am willing to appear: and defeat would be less mortifying to me at the hands of the best,” said Aleph with infinite composure.

“But one thing remains to be attended to here,” continued Publius Cornelius (for this was the name of the

young Roman who acted as master of ceremonies). "According to our rules, when a young man has elected the best competitors—which indeed rarely happens—it is necessary that he stand face to face with them in our presence, that he may fully understand what he undertakes, and have an opportunity to recede from his choice if he thinks best: also that we may judge whether his choice is a reasonable one. Our best will now please present themselves with the candidate in front of the bema."

A number of young men rose in different parts of the hall, and made their way to the open space before Seti. Aleph also advanced and stood near, facing them.

There was a profound silence for a few moments as the confronting parties surveyed each other, and were closely surveyed and compared by the rest (many standing on their seats for the purpose). Then burst out an almost deafening cheer.

The fact was that as long as Aleph stood by himself his extraordinary physical advantages had not fully displayed themselves. But when he came to stand with others everybody at once saw that in that group there was no face so noble and winning, no figure so majestic and exquisitely proportioned, no bearing so lofty and poised and full of suggestion of power and leadership as Aleph's. So evident was all this to the "best" themselves that they could not prevent the consciousness of it from appearing in their uneasy faces and attitudes—especially after that spontaneous cheer which they well understood.

"Well?" inquired Cornelius, looking at Aleph.

Aleph again passed his eyes naturally and serenely

through the group before him, resting them for an instant on one taller and brawnier than the rest, and then said quietly, "I adhere to my choice."

A young man started up. "Our president has stated that we are to judge of the reasonableness of this choice. It seems to me a very unreasonable one. The advantages are too much on one side. Unless the gods interfere (and somehow they are not apt to do so in these days) there can be but one result to such an unequal competition. It is foreordained. I therefore propose, in the interest of our Best, that the candidate be at once passed to his matriculation with all the honors and with no conditions whatever. This course, it is true, is unprecedented; but then the circumstances are unprecedented. Those of us who know a good thing when we see it, are, I think, quite prepared for this action."

Action, Action was exclaimed from all parts of the hall.

Cornelius stepped on a bench, and looking about the assembly called out, "Is there any objection on the part of any to the course which Quintus Fabius proposes?"

After waiting a moment for responses that did not come, the president proceeded, "Let every one who regards the examination as already sufficient, and would at once admit the candidate to full membership in our body, stretch forth his hand."

And *such* a showing of hands! They flew out and up as if from a catapult. Some voted with two hands. Some, not content with a simple uplifting, made their hands shake and triumph in the air. Even the Best voted with the rest.

"Your mind is clear," cried the president. "By

your vote, and without dissent, this gentleman is now a member in full of this university. In your name" (as he advanced toward Aleph with outstretched hand) "I, Publius Cornelius, offer greetings and fellowship to"—and he hesitated.

"Aleph the Chaldean," said Aleph, as he gracefully took the proffered hand.

Seti remained sitting for a while longer, keenly watching, as many of the young men gathered about Aleph and were introduced to him by Cornelius. Among these were the Best; who were at first somewhat backward and awkward, but whom Aleph so welcomed with frank and unpretending cordiality that they were soon quite at ease. Seti watched and admired. He saw that the young man had quite won those who might easily have become his enemies—in short had fairly conquered the position he had coveted for him.

Aleph lingered till the other students had left that he might inquire of Seti whether he had heard from Miriam that morning. He had not; but was not sure but that he might hear something by going to his rooms. Would not Aleph and his friend accompany him?

As they approached the apartments of the high-priest they saw before them in the distance what seemed the fluttering of female robes: and, as soon as Seti had opened his door, he found himself in the arms of his grand-daughter.

"Mother-father" (this was her favorite style of address), she exclaimed, looking up fondly into his face, "are you not very tired after such a long session? But what a good lecture that was, and then. . . ."

"Ah, child," he hastily interrupted as he patted her

check, "what a flatterer you are! Why not begin to practice on my lecture by telling me the truth? Tired! Antiquity is never tired. The tired ones are your moderns—such young men as you may see behind me."

Cimon was surprised at the magnificent beauty that now disengaged herself from the arms of Seti and stood blushing before them. Aleph had indeed spoken of her as beautiful, but with no particularity and effusion: and so he was not prepared for the lovely vision. It seemed to him for a moment as if he had before him one of the Hellenic goddesses—a sort of compound of Aphrodite and Athene and Artemis. As to Aleph—such a look of glad recognition sprang to his face at the unexpected meeting that she could not but notice it. It gave her courage to advance and give her hand to Cimon, saying, "The daughter of Alexander gratefully remembers our friend of the Diapleuston"—to then turn to Aleph with a welcoming look and a new flush on her cheek as she said, "You see one has to make much of her grandfather, especially when she has but one. Perhaps you, too, have a mother-father and know how good it is to have him."

"The lady has guessed rightly," returned the young man. "The last thing I did when leaving my country was to bow my tearful face on the shoulder of a white-haired man whose form was not bent, nor eye dim, nor natural force abated, though he had long passed his century; and who laid his hand on my head and sent me away with the blessing of a grand sire. God willing, I shall see him again. The mother-fathers of Chaldea live long."

"May the God of Chaldean Abraham grant it," said the maiden devoutly.

“And grant also that I may carry back to him the news he has so long waited for—that the Desire of all nations has at last come!”

“Amen,” said Rachel; “and, according to my promise, I have something new to tell you touching that matter. So come with me, all of you—I mean *you*, mother-father,” and she threw a graceful gesture at Seti as she led the way to seats near a window.

While the young people had been talking, Seti, with folded arms, had kept his eyes fastened on them as if by some irresistible attraction. Rousing himself at the call of Rachel, he said to Cimon with a smile, “In these days the Egyptian is in bondage to Israel,” and added as he closed the door and followed, “and is not very discontented—certainly not enough to make an exodus.”

When they were seated, Rachel said to Aleph, “I promised that if I obtained any new facts about Jesus I would communicate them to you. And this is what I have heard this morning.”

She then proceeded to say that on her way to the Serapeum she had seen Miriam, found that her husband had not appeared, found that she had improved so much that she was able to tell her sad story since her marriage. She had first gone with her husband to Tyre, where he professed to have property. After a few days he removed her to a small house near the city. This was the first of a succession of removals east and south. They never stopped long in a place—never lived in any but the poorest and obscurest part of a place. She never knew her husband do any work, or seek for any. She often wondered at first how he obtained such scanty and irregular supplies as they had. Once when she asked him about

the matter, he said that he was living on his property; and accompanied the information with such a storm of abuse that she never after dared to refer to the subject. She did not need to do so. He was abroad much at night; and she noticed that when abroad during the day he shunned thoroughfares, and sometimes disguised himself. Moreover, the men whom he brought to the house were of the lowest sort, and she could not well avoid overhearing enough of their talk to assure her that they agreed in thinking that property was robbery and might be taken wherever it could be found. After the first few weeks he cast off all semblance of regard for her. He would often leave her for weeks without any means of support; and had it not been for the compassion of the poor people about her she would have starved. As it was, her suffering from exposure, privation, and remorse reduced her almost to a skeleton. Ah, what days those were! She shuddered when she spoke of them. Such wretched living as they had was gotten by robbery, and sometimes by murder. He no longer pretended the contrary. She came to know that their frequent changes of place were made necessary by his crimes. As soon as he found himself an object of suspicion, he went to a new place and there repeated his thefts and burglaries until his safety required him to move on. In this way they slowly drifted from the Phenician coast to the Sea of Galilee.

She now thinks that she could not have lived through that awful pilgrimage had it not been for one thing. Wherever she went she met with poor people who had been cured of some incurable ail by the new prophet Jesus—cured by a touch or a word. Sometimes it was a

palsy, sometimes consumption, sometimes leprosy, sometimes blindness or deafness or a lost limb, sometimes devils or death. And he asked nothing in return for such wonderful deliverances. Of course all mouths were full of his praises. They told of his gentle and compassionate ways; how he did not disdain publicans and sinners, saying that he came to seek and save the lost: how he took little children in his arms and caressed and blessed them; how patiently and wisely and wonderfully he taught the humblest as well as the highest—told of such things till her heart burned and ached to see him, to be near him, to pour out her oppressed soul into his pitiful ears.

At last her wish was accomplished. One day, while they were living at Chorasin, after some new tempest of abuse and wickedness from her husband, she slipped away into the fields to give vent to her grief and despair. There she saw in the distance a number of people on an eminence: and, on mounting a rock, she saw that others were moving toward the eminence from all directions. It flashed upon her that perhaps Jesus had come, and that now was her opportunity. She at once made for the hill—determined that if indeed Jesus was there she would get as near to him as possible. She felt as if some mighty loadstone was drawing upon her. Being unencumbered, she sped along quickly, passed many who were carrying sick people or were sick themselves, and was not long in assuring herself that it was indeed Jesus toward whom all the streams of infirmity and suffering were setting.

She quickened her steps into a desperate haste. She flew rather than ran—flew to the side of the hill where

the people were fewest, pressed through them as if on an errand of life and death, saw one who was plainly the central figure, fell down before him panting, disheveled, eyes streaming, and tried to look up through her tears into his face. And she dimly saw there such gentleness, such pity, such insight, such power, that a great wave of rest swept in on her soul as she murmured, *Lord, thou knowest*. And he answered, in a voice strangely sweet, that somehow seemed to penetrate every fibre of her being.

“Yes, I know, thou daughter of many sorrows. Wait patiently for the hour of deliverance which will come in thy own country by the hands of those whom I will send. Meanwhile go in peace—thy sins be forgiven thee.”

She rose—all the harshness and bitterness of her soul gone, a calmness and strength and peace within that were indescribable. She did not withdraw from the scene; only fell back among the crowd. And there she saw with her own eyes the wonderful things done of which she had been hearing ever since she landed in Tyre. It seemed as if the whole country about had searched out its desperate cases and brought them together to test his power and pity. And she saw that no case was beyond him. Not an ail in all the throng but had instant relief as he touched or spoke. The number and variety of the miracles almost took her breath away. When the last sufferer had been helped she could no longer contain herself, but, as if filled and pressed irresistibly by a heavenly breath, burst forth with song, “O give thanks unto the Lord, for he has done marvellous things:” and all the people joined their voices to hers till the country side rang.

She went back to her husband, but not to her misery. The memory of that look, and that voice, and that promise was like a strong man under her cross. Her husband was no better; they still drifted from place to place, but always with a compulsion by circumstances toward the south and west. Her strength grew less as they approached the seacoast, and quite broke down at Joppa as she saw her husband, as he was hurrying her aboard a vessel for Alexandria in the night, rob and kill a man; yet even then the memory of that divine hour in Galilee was a mighty peace in her heart, and she felt that she was on her way to deliverance.

Said Seti to Rachel, after the few moments of profound silence that followed her narrative, "Did you ever notice in Miriam in former days any tendency to—exaggeration?"

"Never," she replied. "On the contrary, Miriam was noted for great care not to overstate facts. You may depend upon it, grandfather, she is fully up to the standard of your lecture."

Seti seemed not to notice this sally, and the accompanying shadow of a smile that flitted across the shining face, but said, "To say nothing of his marvellous deeds, the attention which Jesus pays to the lowly and unimportant, rather than to the great and powerful, is very unlike what one would expect in a scheming impostor."

"That he is not that," said Aleph, "is still further confirmed by what my preceptor and friend here heard yesterday. I am sure you will agree with me if he will tell the substance of what Shaphan of the gate of Canopus related."

All wished to hear. So Cimon proceeded to relate

the story of Shaphan—omitting, however, the circumstances bearing on Malus, and one or two other particulars.

When he had finished, Rachel exclaimed, “How wonderful all this is! Surely there is but one thing to be said, unless we are prepared to discredit all human testimony! I have heard my father speak of Shaphan as a very good man: I must see him and ask him many questions.”

“Would it not be better,” said Seti, “to first question some expert magician as to what he can do by his art? It is not incredible that there should be beings between the Supreme and ourselves who can do very wonderful things.”

“No, my dear grandfather; but if these superior beings are good they will not lend themselves to a great religious imposture; and if they are bad they would fight against themselves by endorsing such teaching and doing such works as those of Jesus. Would Satan cast out Satan?”

“Hardly. Still, have not magicians sometimes been good men? Perhaps our friends here can throw some light on that matter. Time has been when Chaldea was famous for its magicians”—and Seti looked toward Aleph.

“In my country, as in Egypt,” said Aleph, “the name magicians has always been used to cover all students of extensive knowledge, especially all students of the powers and processes of Nature. As to such persons as profess by certain arts to enlist the powers of mightier spirits in their service there is, at least at present, but one opinion among us, and that a very unfavorable one.

It is that of the Hebrew Scriptures which denounce and forbid all magical arts under heavy penalties. However it may be with others, those who profess to accept these Scriptures and at the same time use magical arts, it seems to me, cannot be good men, or other than very bad. This is the case of Jesus. As I understand it, he professes to hold faithfully by Moses and the prophets. This being so, if he is a magician he is one of the worst of men—especially as he solemnly declares that he works his wonders not by magic, but by God.”

‘And consequently,’ added Cimon, ‘all evidence we have that he is one of the best of men is evidence that he is not a magician.’

‘And what evidence of this sort have we?’ asked Seti.

‘At least we can say,’ returned the Greek, ‘that no evidence *against* Jesus has yet reached us, while we have heard much for him. We have heard that his miracles are wholly beneficent and his teachings wholly righteous; and that the worst thing his enemies can say of him is that he does the very thing the prophets said the Christ would do, viz., stoop to the humblest while claiming with the highest. For myself, I would also lay considerable stress on the impression which the mere personal presence of Jesus makes on such a man as Shaphan. It is plain to me that this man would profoundly believe in the worth of Jesus, even if he had not seen a single miracle of his, nor heard from him a single word. Is this unreasonable? Two or three times in the course of my life, I have been similarly impressed—I have had merely to look into the eye and watch for a few moments the play of the features to get an immovable confidence in the character that lay behind them. Ordinary good-

ness, I confess, does not manifest itself in this royal way; nor does extraordinary, except under certain physical organizations; but there *are* organizations through which it is self-revealing—through which it looks forth as through pure crystal and shines by its own light, as does any mathematical axiom—through which it is able to put forth a heavenly atmosphere into which at least a sympathetic soul cannot enter without feeling its heavenly character.”

“So it seems to me,” said Seti. “I, too, have met a case or two of that sort.”

“The venerable Seti,” said Aleph; “has doubtless met with many so-called magicians in this land of the strange and mysterious. May I ask whether he has ever met one who has *claimed* to do his prodigies through the Supreme God, or to do them in such vast variety and magnificence as are conceded to Jesus?”

“Certainly not,” answered the Egyptian; “and I am quite sure that if we could get together all the professors of the magical art that are or have been, they could not, all together, make out such a list of wonders as is conceded to Jesus.”

“I would also ask of the venerable Seti,” continued Aleph, “if he will not express his views more fully as to the suggestion of the lady Rachel, viz., that it is incredible that bad spirits of vast intelligence would lend their powers to give currency and authority to a system of teaching whose whole stress they must see to be to defeat and destroy their influence.”

“It *is* incredible. She only needs to show that the teaching of Jesus is plainly and thoroughly against the feelings and objects of evil spirits.”

“Why, my dear grandfather, all the accounts agree that Jesus teaches altogether in the line of our Scriptures, though with new fullness and illustrations—and no one knows better than you how holy the teachings of our Sacred Books are—exposing the devices of Satan, denouncing him and all his works, calling to watchfulness and prayer against him, rebuking and casting out his demons, assailing the very foundation of his kingdom in disloyalty to God, binding our consciences to a perpetual war on sin in both life and heart, threatening it with the terrors of an avenging heaven.”

Seti inclined his head gravely toward the maiden, whose earnestness was now glowing in her face and adding to it new charms, but was silent.

“The lady has expressed my thought,” said Cimon. “It used to be a part of the Roman law, and I presume is so still, that when a man is accused of doing what would neither suit his passions nor his interests, the accusation may be dismissed at once. It is incredible. Neither men nor devils act against all motive.”

“Now, great teacher,” cried Rachel, “it is time to sum up, as you do sometimes in your lectures; and (she brightly shook her finger at Seti) be careful to sum up on the right side.”

“Which of course means *your* side,” said the Egyptian, with a slight lifting of his eyebrows. . . . Well, how will this please you?

“Jesus, it is universally conceded, has done many things far beyond mere human power: he claims for them a divine origin: they are worthy of such an origin in the grandeur and beneficence of their character: such an origin agrees with certain ancient predictions appar-

ently relating to these times: unless they have such an origin, neither had the miracles of Moses and the other prophets; and indeed it seems impossible for God to furnish reliable credentials to any messenger; for, so far as we can see, his credentials must be miracles and could not well be greater miracles than Jesus has wrought: unless they have a divine origin they are demoniacal—which is wholly inconsistent with the apparent (say certain) character of Jesus and also with his teachings, which are such as no evil spirit could reasonably be supposed willing to promote. . . . Is this satisfactory?”—turning to Rachel.

“I think you could do better; but that will do—will do very well for the present,” she returned smiling; “especially as you have gratuitously supplied some missing links to the chain. Go on, O illustrious house of Seti and heir of all the Pharaohs, I have great hopes of you yet.”

“You see, gentlemen,” said Seti, “what comes of teaching our daughters to know and argue like other people. As soon as we furnish them with arms they turn them against us. And this they call gratitude!”

“But,” he added gravely, seeing Cimon rising to take leave, “if your affairs now call you away I wish to make an inquiry of you—if you will step this way.”

Cimon followed him to a distant part of the room.

After a little hesitation, Aleph said to Rachel, “Your grandfather has surprised me very much in this conversation. From the position he holds I should have thought such views on his part impossible.”

“There is a mystery about the matter, I confess,” replied the maiden; “but then this is not the only right-

eous mystery in Alexandria to-day"—and her eyes laughed into his in a very wonderful way.

"Let us hope," said he with an answering gleam from eyes quite as wonderful though mysteriously different, "that they both will clear up satisfactorily in due time, as the mystery of Jesus seems to be doing. I am grateful to you for what I have heard to-day. But I would be glad to speak with Miriam myself. Do you think she will be strong enough to bear another talk to-day?"

"Perhaps so. I return to her as soon as my sedan comes; and if you will accompany me we will see what she is equal to. If you do not object, I wish to be present when you question her."

"That would be delightful to me (and a new light sprang to his eyes as he said it)—especially since I have come to know that you have mind as well as beauty, and can inquire and reason with the best."

He said this as if half soliloquizing, and with such an air of glad heartiness that she at once felt that the words had in them nothing of the emptiness of mere compliment.

She hastened to say timidly, "If we find that she is not able to talk with us to-day, we can arrange to see her to-morrow when she is fresh. Perhaps, too, she will then be able to bear removal to our house and—could I count on your aid in transferring her, for my brothers are away and my father has gone to Rome?"

"How gladly I agree to this the lady Rachel, I trust, already knows. At the same time, I must confess, I have some doubt as to what the morrow may bring to me; and so I would fain do as much as I can to-day."

“You do not mean—I trust you do not mean *danger?*” and she looked anxiously at him.

Before he could answer a knock was heard at the door and a servant entered to say that the sedan of the lady was waiting at the gate. Rachel hastily prepared for the street. Going to Seti, who now stood by the door, she kissed him and—stood embarrassed.

“Well, what is it, my Gem of Alexandria?” said Seti. “What can we do for you? Do you want the old man to send you off with a formal blessing? The blessing of a heathen is not worth very much.”

“You are no heathen,” rejoined the maiden; “and I have already a great store of your blessings carefully laid up at home among my treasures. Give your blessing to-day to these friends of ours who, I fear, are in danger, and who have deserved well at our hands. You are wise and powerful—protect them, or you and I will have to part company. I hate ingratitude”—and she shook her finger at him.

“By the way,” she added, “do you think that so valuable a jewel as the Gem of Alexandria ought to pass along the street without an escort?”

“I was about to offer the lady my escort on her way as far as Miriam, whom I wished to question: but it seems that I am a person who himself needs protection,” said Aleph with a smile.

“Judging from what we have seen, Aleph the Chaldean is remarkably well qualified to protect himself, to say nothing of others,” said Seti with great composure.

“Yes, against a fair enemy,” protested the maiden; “but against others one needs all the help he can get from both earth and heaven. What I want of you,

grandfather, is to see that earth does its part. If you do not, I promise you that you shall see how a woman can bestir herself."

"Just as if Seti needed all this eloquence, child!" he said reproachfully.

"Mother-father, I am ashamed of myself. I know that you mean nobly. But then you men are so manly that you are not so quick as a woman at divining the presence of danger, though far better at meeting it when discovered. At least, so I am told; and I shall not deny it till necessary. So forgive me, and—do as I say."

"I am not sure," said the Egyptian thoughtfully, "but that both of you are right. If Rachel must return by way of Miriam an escort may be a protection to her, as Antis is capable of the worst; and to be seen in the streets with the daughter of Alexander may in the end be a protection to Aleph the Chaldean, for it will show whom it may concern that he is not without friends. So go, you two—but I will ask our friend Cimon to remain a while longer."

VIII.

THE ESCORT.

Ουδ' ἄλλο δυσφύλακτον οὐδὲν ὡς γυνή.

—Anon.

Nothing is so hard to guard as a woman.

1. Twin serpents from Tenedos.
2. News from Galilee.
3. An escort dealing with escorts.
4. Home at last.

VIII.

THE ESCORT.

IN going to the Serapeum, our friends had noticed near the gate of the khan the Cretan who, as agent for Malus, had dealt with the Phenician dealer in dyes. They recognized him readily, though he turned hastily away as they approached him. The *catspaw of Malus!* they both thought; and would perhaps have thought no more of it had not——

But, on going a little farther, whom should they see but Malus himself coming toward them! They could not be mistaken—the same obese figure, the same waddling gait, the same wooden face and gimlet eyes. He stopped almost immediately at a fruiterer's stall, and seemed busy in selecting some fruit as they passed. After they had passed he turned and watched them. They did not turn to notice the fact, but they knew it all the same—knew that Malus had tracked them to their quarters and made sure of a close connection between them.

When Aleph came out with Rachel to her sedan, he very naturally looked about to see if he was still under surveillance. But he saw only the porters of the rich conveyance that waited for the daughter of Alexander. Nor did he, on the way to Miriam's, as he walked by the side of the chair and occasionally exchanged a word with

its inmate, observe anything but that courteous general observation which a very distinguished looking man in honorable attendance on a great lady might be expected to draw.

There was one interruption on the way—a pleasant one. Rachel, through her curtains, happening to descry Shaphan at a distance, stopped her bearers and begged Aleph to beckon the Jew to them. He promptly crossed the street. The lady gave him her hand and said that she had been hearing with great interest the story of his visit to Judea, but wished to hear it again at first hand. Could he not go with them a short distance to where her nurse lived and there gratify her? He could: in fact, his brother, who had just returned from Judea, and himself were even now returning from the Egyptian khan near the Serapeum, whither they had gone for the purpose of seeing the young Chaldean (he bowed to Aleph) and his friend, and communicating some new information about the Messiah.

Aleph expressed his gratification at the meeting, and warmly seconded the lady's request. So Shaphan beckoned to his brother, and the two followed the chair to the house of Miriam.

They found the door guarded by a stout servant of Alexander, and by bars still stouter. It appeared that Antis had lately been there, demanded admittance, and, on being refused, had become violent, tried to break open the door, and finally had gone away threatening to return shortly with authority and force that could not be resisted.

Aleph suggested that the sedan be brought within the house. Should violence be used it might be well to add the porters to the resisting force.

They found that Miriam had been so agitated by the attempt of her husband that she was unfit for the further conversation that Aleph desired. But with so many friends now about her she was in a restful state; and when Rachel proposed that, if it would not tire her too much, Shaphan and his brother should give an account of their visit to Palestine and Jesus, she declared that she could well endure it. Indeed, it would strengthen her. To hear of Jesus again would be as cool water to a thirsty soul.

So Shaphan told again the story with which we are already familiar—told it, however, with omission of the part relating to Malus; for Aleph had suggested that all the servants, excepting the door-keeper, should be present at the recital. “This was a matter that concerned everybody.”

When Shaphan had finished, his brother Nathan added substantially the following account :

After the departure of his brother, he had remained a few days longer with Jesus, listening to his teaching and seeing further examples of his wonderful power. Two of these examples were specially impressive.

One day, as the night drew on, Jesus, who had been teaching the people from a boat belonging to his disciples, was overheard saying to them, *Let us go over to the other side.* Whereupon they put out into the lake and headed for Gadara. Some of his hearers, of whom Nathan was one, hating to part company with him for even a short time, immediately sprang into another boat and followed. Soon the night shut down—one of the blackest nights ever known. Jesus’ boat could no longer be seen. Suddenly the wind rose into a gale. It wrestled with the sea

like a giant ; and the sea rose in its wrath and wrestled back again with a mighty outcry. For a moment they would lie breathless in each other's arms ; and then, reviving, fling themselves madly at each other in mortal duel. It was an awful scene. It seemed as if all the demons were abroad. The waters which, when they embarked, were almost without discernible wrinkle, were now furrowed into mighty chasms by the plow of the storm king. Up went the little boat to heaven on the thundering billow ; down it went into a hell of waters as thunderous. The watery monsters shook their white manes and lashed their black sides and leaped at and over their prey with open jaws. They laughed to scorn oar and rudder and seamanship. They shouted, and howled and shrieked, and seemed to swear by the Eternal to the helpless crew, " We have you now ; nothing can save you ; tomorrow your corpses will be drifting silently about ; no, nothing can save you, not even the mighty Christ." Such blaspheming, frantic, frightful madhouse of the elements—who ever saw the like ! Not Nathan and his companions. It seemed to them as if hell had emptied itself on the sea of Galilee ; and that all the fiends, astride of whirlwinds and crested billows, were fiercely battling together for the privilege of drowning every living thing. They struggled. They prayed. They were in despair. Drenched, rudderless, oarless, they clung to the sides of the fast filling boat in a paroxysm of horror and helplessness. In a few moments all would be over. They commended their souls to God.

What noise was that ? Off at their right, hidden in the darkness, evidently was another crew of affrighted and sinking men, crying out in their extremity. Can

they be Jesus and his disciples? Are they too in the very jaws of death? Cannot he who has done such great things manage to save his own, to save himself? Or are these raging, howling elements a field to which his power does not extend? Such thoughts flashed through the mind of Nathan even as he seemed on the point of being swallowed up. But just then he distinctly heard (for the boats had neared each other) a distressful voice which he recognized as that of one of the disciples, exclaiming, *Lord, save us, we perish!*

“Can he do it? If so, why has he not interfered before? Why permit such a horrible fright to his friends? No, he cannot do it. Jesus has at last found his master. There seems the exultation of conscious omnipotence and universal mastery in the leapings and thunderings of this hurricane-tossed sea!”

Such thoughts rushed upon Nathan as fiercely as the tempest itself—as if Satan himself were riding the storm and dashing them into his face with the spray and foam.

Still he was all ear for what might follow that cry for help. Clinging to the side of the boat with both hands, he kept his face set toward where the other boat seemed to be, and almost stilled his heart-beat as he listened. It seemed as if his soul had gone to his ears, and was leaning forth, as men sometimes do from a casement, to catch the faintest word that might come from the Master in answer to the despairing cry of his followers. And there came—a faint ripple of speech, a shadow or ghost of articulate sound almost lost amid the deafening and majestic outcries of the storm? No. A wailing prayer for help to One above the clouds? No. A quavering, hesitating voice as of one doubtful of himself and of the issue? No.

The voice that came was so clear, so penetrating, so dominant among the wild noises of the storm, so full of calm decision and unquestionable authority and sovereign forces, that one felt sure in advance of what the result would be.

PEACE—BE STILL!

No sooner had these words gone forth on the wrestling, roaring winds than they fell dead in full career. No sooner had these words gone forth on the wrestling, roaring billows that went charging against the sky with their crested battalions than they sank in their places as sinks the ox when smitten on the forehead by the axe of some mighty man. And there was a great calm. Hardly a ripple was left in sea or air. What a sudden silence! In an instant the demons of the storm had not only taken flight, but were already beyond hearing and sight. And, looking up, Nathan and his companions saw that even the clouds had wholly fled, and left the stars looking down on them as peacefully as if nothing had happened, or ever would happen again. And off, a little way, the starlight was softly shimmering on a summer sea, on gently plashing oars, on a boat and boatmen, and in the stern on the eminent form of Him who had now shown himself King of Nature as well as King of men.

Nathan and his companions reached the shore very soon after Jesus. They had scarcely landed and joined him when, from one of the cave-tombs that skirt the shore, there rushed toward them a figure that seemed scarcely human. He came as if driven by the tempest that had just maddened the lake. He was himself a tempest of the most frightful kind—as appeared when he drew near. He was quite naked. His face and body were covered with

scars and filth and fresh blood. In his hands he carried sharp stones, with which he beat and cut himself as he shrieked and ran. His long hair streamed in the wind and seemed like a cluster of flying serpents biting at his brain. And when he came near—ah, what an expression in those fiery eyes and tormented features! It was as if hell itself, with all its fiendishness and misery, had been condensed into that awful face. Nathan had seen not a few demoniacs before, but never such a specimen as this. The very recollection made him shudder. The possibility of such suffering and such wickedness as were pictured in that face had never before entered his mind.

The man came directly toward Jesus with frantic leaps and cries, as if to destroy him—as he seemed well able to do; such were the wonderful activity and strength he displayed. But Jesus, standing a little in advance of his disciples, calmly awaited the coming. His face was another wonder to see. It was sublime—it was divine. Such unutterable calm, such boundless pity, such inexhaustible resources of force and authority and sovereignty spoke in every feature that Nathan could not but say to himself, *LO, GOD IS HERE.*

The monster sank on his knees under the spell of that divine gaze—uttering a fearful cry as of many voices crushed into one.

“What is thy name?” said Jesus.

And through the parted but unmoving lips of the madman, and as if from deep within, came a mystery of speech that said:

“My name is Legion, for we are many. What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God most High? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? If

thou cast us out, suffer us to go into yonder herd of swine."

Jesus said, *Go!*

Promptly at the word, the crowd of evil spirits that had captured that body, bound its inhabitant, and seized the reins of power, fled headlong. Nathan knew it from the mighty change that at once flashed over the demoniac. The monster became a man. The face just now terrible with the lightnings of hellish passions, more terrible than the storm on the Sea of Galilee or any other sea, suddenly became a new face—transformed almost beyond recognition into repose, sanity, sweetness, joy. Nathan was astonished at the transfiguration. He could not help crying out, *Glory to God!* and his heart cried louder than his lips. He had seen dispossessions before; and they were delightful things to see. But he had never before seen a man delivered from an entire synagogue of devils, from the Nemesis of a whole army of evil spirits. That was a deliverance past speech. That was an exodus to bring out the sun in the face of a man.

The man was saved, but the swine were lost. For the whole herd of about two thousand, just now stolidly feeding along the steep bank, pricked up their ears, stood snuffing the air, and then, as if possessed by as many whirlwinds, rushed headlong down the steep into the lake and perished. The disciples understood the judgment as well as the mercy. Those swine, kept contrary to the law, and serving as a standing defiance of the law through all that region, were felt to have been justly confiscated. But the owners were naturally sore at the loss of their property, and others were afraid of like losses; and so they persuaded the people of the district to go in

a body to Jesus and beg him to leave. The people did it—though they saw the man who had been the terror of the whole country-side sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. Strange infatuation! The people themselves were possessed. The evil spirits that had forsaken the man, and forsaken the swine, had entered into *them*—as a legion of fools. Jesus did not refuse their suicidal request. So the two boats immediately returned to Capernaum.

This ended Nathan's visit to Jesus. He left the same day for Egypt—left with stronger faith than ever in Jesus as the Messiah. The absence of all the usual magical preparations for his wonders, the exceeding magnitude and variety of them, the magnificent ease with which they were performed, the fearless manner in which they were exposed to the blaze of public observation, the universal consent to their reality on the part of even his worst enemies, the plain antagonism of his whole teaching to the idea that they were of Satanic origin, together with the sovereign and divine expression that reigned in his mien while doing them, seemed conclusive. It seemed impossible for any fair-minded man to look into that face and watch its expressions without getting the impression of unutterable genuineness and goodness. He could doubt neither the reality nor the divine origin of the miracles of Jesus.

But, somehow, the people at large were not impressed as he was. They were getting used to the wonderful works. And the leaders of the people were industriously encouraging the idea of a Satanic agency in them—and with growing success. About the Sea of Galilee, where most of his mighty works are done, Jesus has very few

who believe in him. He does not conform to the current notion of what the Messiah should be. He gives no encouragement to political unrest ; he makes no attempt to form a political party, collects no military stores, gathers no army, assumes no state. He seems to aim at no worldly grandeur for himself or nation. He has even been understood to say that rejection and suffering and even death await him—that, in short, his kingdom is not of this world. This is very unsatisfactory to the people at large. If he would only proclaim a temporal kingdom, set up the standard of revolt against Rome, and summon the people to rally about it, no doubt they would rush to him at once. But as it is, they will go from him. So it seemed to Nathan as he watched the people ; and so it seemed to him it would be as he read the prophets. The more he studied them the more inclined was he to think that they had been misunderstood.

“I think very much as you do,” said Aleph, “and shall not be at all surprised if Jesus the Messiah should prove a Sacrifice as well as a king. King he certainly is—king of devils, king of diseases, king of the elements, king of teachers——”

Here he was interrupted by the door-keeper, who came to say that through the eyelet of the door he could see Antis approaching with what seemed a police force.

“Oh, do not let him enter,” exclaimed Miriam in great distress ; “if he enters I shall die. You do not know all I know.” And she raised herself in the bed and wrung her hands in an agony of apprehension.

“Do not disturb yourself,” said Aleph calmly. “Though we do not know all, we know enough. But Jesus knew it all, and you have his promise. Trust it and

reserve such strength as you have till it is needed. We will not desert you."

A violent blow on the street-door was now heard.

"I will go to the door," said Aleph, "and if I need any help you will discover it, as I will leave the passage open so that you can hear what is passing."

Taking his cane, he proceeded to the door; and, bidding the door-keeper undo the fastenings, he suddenly set the door widely open and stood in its place.

This was unexpected. Antis was just in the act of repeating his blow on the door, but suddenly finding himself confronted by a formidable looking man instead of a door, he stepped hastily backward.

"What do you seek," demanded Aleph, fixing on the man a stern eye, "that you knock in so unbecoming a manner?"

"I seek the possession of my own house," said the fellow sullenly.

"Are you the owner of this house? I think you will hardly venture to claim that."

"I claim that I have purchased the right of an owner, so far as occupying this house is concerned, for one month, and that it is the will of the owner that I have possession at once."

"Show me that such is the will of the owner."

Antis produced a paper and handed it to Aleph.

After reading it, Aleph said, "It seems that this house belongs to Malus, and that he wishes it transferred to you, and that he has sent this police force which I see behind you to enforce his wishes, if necessary.—Are you the captain of this force?" he added, looking at a man who stood a few steps behind Antis.

“I am,” he said.

“In ordinary cases,” said Aleph slowly, as he surveyed the man—“in ordinary cases we should be warranted in putting you in immediate possession ; but this case is extraordinary—so extraordinary that we have a right to presume that neither Malus nor the chief of the police understood the circumstances when they gave the order just shown me.”

“We have no discretion,” said the captain. “We are sent here to put this man in possession, not to judge of the righteousness of it.”

“Do you mean to say that if you should see reason to believe that your force of some six men is quite insufficient to accomplish your object, you would not be at liberty to return to your superiors for further instructions? Are you not expected to use discretion in judging whether such is the case?”

“Certainly : but such does not appear to be the present case,” said the officer with a chuckle.

Without noticing the manner of the man, Aleph went on, “Do you mean to say that if you should see grave reason to fear that this man in whose behalf you are interfering would use the house to waylay and murder Malus and your chief, you would not be warranted in at least returning for further instructions?”

“Well—in such a case as you suppose, I should of course return : but this is not such a case, nor anything like it,” said the man doggedly.

“Very considerably like it : for I shall show you grave reason to fear that this man” (he pointed his finger at Antis) “is capable of doing all that and worse—that he is a desperado of the worst sort, and——”

Here Antis broke in, screaming out, IT IS FALSE ! IT IS FALSE !”

Aleph fixed on him eyes that blazed calmly into his for a moment, and then said sternly, “ You know it is *true*, you ruffian. It is written in your face for everybody to see. And everybody sees it. If you want to be taken for anything less than a desperado, wear a mask over your tell-tale face. So do not interrupt me again ;” and he gave him another look so full of insight and authority and menace, and at the same time of a certain pitying wonder (as the man who walks easily finds it hard to realize that anybody else is lame, so the good man finds it hard to understand how anybody can be a villain), that he dropped his eyes, grew pale and red by turns, and made no further attempt to speak.

Aleph resumed, turning again to the captain : “ I was saying that I would show you grave reason for thinking this man a desperado of the worst kind ; that he is a robber and murderer by profession ; that if put in possession of this house he will make it a den of thieves and murderers. He is strongly suspected of designs on the life of his sick wife, who for some days has been in a critical condition, and whom he has long abused. It is for such reasons that her friends have excluded him from the house. Do you suppose that your principals, if responsibly informed of these facts, would persist in wishing you to hand over these premises and the sick woman to such a man ?”

“ I admit,” answered the officer, “ that if you can show that he is such a dangerous character, and that putting him in possession will endanger the public as well as the sick woman, or even can show that this is so in the opin-

ion of responsible parties, I ought to return and report the fact to my superiors. Who are the persons who make these charges?"

"His wife, supported by Seti, the Egyptian high-priest, the lady Rachel, daughter of the Alabarch, and myself, a member of the University.

The captain had for some time appeared uneasy. He now folded his arms, shifted repeatedly from one foot to another, fumbled aimlessly with the short sword at his side. Aleph watched him narrowly; and at length said with a grave irony of tone:

"Perhaps you do not consider Seti and the Alabarch as responsible parties!"

But immediately changing his tone and raising his voice, he added, "I call to witness both those before me in the street and those behind me in the house" (half turning as he spoke, he became aware that he had already been followed into the passage by all his friends), "that I have repeatedly informed this officer that this house has been occupied by parties whose responsibility it were absurd to question, for the sole purpose of preventing its becoming a danger to life and a public nuisance, and that if he puts it into the possession of this man he will, in their opinion, imperil the lives and property of the people of Alexandria. I wish you all to distinctly notice this. Take notice, also, that we do not propose to resist the law—only to retain possession till the law can be properly informed of facts that were unknown to it at the time its order was given. And so our very moderate request is that this officer return to headquarters, report what he has heard, and ask for new instructions. If the officials then repeat their order, it will be with full knowledge of

the responsibility they are incurring, and they can properly be held to account for all the consequences : and this must be a very serious account unless the laws and public opinion of Alexandria differ very considerably from those of Heaven."

"It is he of the Diapleuston!" cried a voice from the street. "Give him a cheer!"

And a great cheer there was; for though the street was a retired one, quite a body of spectators had gathered one by one behind the police and were watching the conference with lively interest. They now showed audibly on which side their partialities had settled. That cry, *It is he of the Diapleuston*, opened their mouths, and opened them widely. But, long before they had chosen their side, Antis made a very sorry appearance over against Aleph; and as the citizens watched the lofty composure of the young man and his princely bearing, and caught a glimpse of Shaphan and Nathan and the womanly star in the background, they thought the house was well occupied as it was. And they proceeded to say so. They became very free in expressing their minds.

One cried out scornfully, "Turning out *such* to put in *such*!"

"Go away!" cried a second, as he shook his fist energetically at the police.

"Off with you!" shouted a third, with both hands in the air, and with the air of one driving away a flock of geese.

"Go!" screamed a fourth, "and you may confidentially tell those who sent you that you were not mean enough, as well as not strong enough, to do the work set you!"

And so the cries went on in a very amusing (to the citizens) and significant variety — went on growing in strength and urgency.

The captain plainly saw that but one course was open to him. He must make a virtue of necessity, and withdraw for the present with as good grace as he could. So he said that perhaps it would be well for him to report at headquarters what had been told him, and see what his principals thought of it. Of course, they did not intend to establish a den of thieves and murderers. So off he marched with his detachment—Antis closely following with a face in which fear and mortification and rage were contending for the mastery, and greeted as he passed with many a *See the hangdog* and other like complimentary expressions.

Aleph bowed to the friendly citizens with a smile, got another hearty cheer in return, and closed the door.

Shaphan and Nathan were warm in their congratulations. As for Rachel—her eyes were more lustrous than ever, and a richer color was in her cheek, but she said nothing. She did not even look at him.

The two brothers, however, were by no means sure that Malus would give over his effort. It was not his way. He made it a point to carry his point on all occasions. To be sure, the case as Aleph had presented it seemed wholly true and reasonable; it even seemed unsafe to Malus personally to proceed; but then he was a man of many resources, had grown venturesome by the habit of success. So they were afraid that it was only a brief respite that had been obtained.

Aleph was inclined to the same view. He had little doubt but that Malus would recognize his antagonist, and

would find in the fact additional motive to persevere. So he expressed his regret that it was not possible to remove Miriam at once to some other house.

This brought back Rachel from her abstraction. She went at once to the bedside of Miriam, who clasped her hands and looked up piteously into the loving eyes that beamed inquiringly upon her.

“Do you think that you could bear to be carried home now?” they asked.

“Right away! right away!” broke out the poor woman with unexpected strength of voice. “It is better to die on the way than to stay here. I should die of fear. Let *him* not leave me”—and she turned her eyes beseechingly toward Aleph.

He approached, took her hand gently, and said a few soothing words while he watched her. She grew quiet and peaceful as her eyes rested on his face.

“It seems to me,” he at length said, “that she can better go than stay. She can summon resolution for the one, but not for the other. The effort may even reinforce her vitality.”

“Then let it be done,” said Rachel. “My sedan is large, and I can take her in my arms, and ease all the motions, and the bearers will move very carefully. Shall we do it?”—she bent to the ear of the sick woman.

Miriam looked at her gratefully, and said with some hesitation :

“If *he* will go.”

“Certainly he will go,” cried Rachel, “and will walk by the side of the chair, and will steady it with his hand, and will every now and then look in upon us through the curtains to see that we are all right ; and when we reach

home he will take you out all carefully and tenderly and carry you in his strong arms up to your own room and lay you on your own bed—*of course* he will. He shall not have my approbation for what he has done to-day till he sees us both safe at home”—and the great dewy eyes flashed half merrily and half timidly on Aleph.

Aleph bowed. “The approbation of the lady Rachel is very far from being a matter of indifference to me. So I will do as she says. We will all go—our friends of the khans, the leech, and all the servants, save the janitor, who on demand shall put Malus in possession. Do you approve?”—he had turned toward Shaphan and his brother.

“We do,” said Shaphan, “but before we go into the street, I wish to mention a fact which perhaps may concern you. We saw Malus to-day in close talk with Simon, the famous magician; and later in the day, on going to your khan, we found that Simon and the beautiful Helena, whom he sometimes calls his daughter and sometimes his sister, had established themselves there and had placarded the neighborhood with invitations to the public to come and witness his wonderful performances at a stater a head. For as much more fee he promises to put the resources of his art at the service of any visitor; whether he wishes to have his fortune told, or to consult spirits, or to prosper in love, or in war, or in money-getting.”

“Have I not heard,” said Rachel anxiously, “that this magician is an agent of Malus and is suspected of aiding him in his undertakings by the magical art?”

“As much is said,” answered the Jew. “The two men are cousins, though not often seen together. It is

supposed, however, by some that there is much secret intercourse between them, and that the great success of Malus in his affairs is largely due to his being in league with evil spirits. This, of course, he stoutly denies. He laughs at the idea. At the same time he speaks highly of his cousin, the sorcerer, and does not a little to give him patronage."

"And yet," said Aleph, "the Law is severe against sorcerers."

"But Malus denies that Simon *is* a sorcerer in the sense used in our Scriptures. He does not deal with evil spirits. He is only a man of great skill and learning, who has studied nature profoundly and so found out many scientific means of doing many wonderful things, and even of subjecting the elemental spirits that inhabit water and fire and lightnings and stars to his will and the public service. His spirits are not devils. His sorcery is only science. And God forbid that the Law should denounce science. So Malus presents the case. The two men certainly uphold each other and play into each other's hands. I wonder what mischief they are brewing now between them!"

"I thank you for this information," said Aleph. "It may prove of service to me. But now let us proceed to the work before us."

Under the direction of Rachel, the servants in a few moments collected the various articles of furniture and comfort that had been sent from the mansion of Alexander. She then placed herself in the sedan: and, the nurse having wrapped Miriam in the bed-coverings, Aleph carefully took the light burden in his arms and placed it in the arms of Rachel. As carefully the porters lifted the

chair and made their way into the street—preceded by the two brothers, accompanied by Aleph, and followed by the remaining servants. In a few moments the house was in the solitary charge of the janitor, with instructions to wait a while and, if no one should appear, to lock the door and carry the key to the police headquarters for the district.

The escort stopped at the private family entrance. Here the two brothers took leave; and Aleph, receiving the sick woman into his arms, followed Rachel into the mansion, along halls and courts and flights of steps, to the room the nurse had formerly occupied. When he had laid his light burden on the bed and had satisfied himself that she had borne the transfer without serious harm, though much wearied and needing to be left in profound quiet, he turned to depart.

The sick woman beckoned feebly to Rachel—more with her eye than with her hand. The young lady drew near and bent to listen to the faint whispers.

“She wishes me to thank you for what you have done for her,” said the maiden after a moment, “and to beg that you will not forsake her now that she is safe among friends.”

Aleph looked inquiringly at the lovely interpreter—not knowing exactly how to interpret the interpretation.

She suddenly turned to Miriam. “Of course he will not forsake you. He is coming here often to see you—to see how you get on. No good physician neglects his patient till she is well; and not even then if he is wise. Besides, he wants to talk more with you about Jesus the Messiah as soon as you are able to bear it. Yes, *of course* he is coming, coming often, coming to-morrow. He will

suffer in our good opinion if he does not. So now close your eyes and rest in peace.”

Instead of doing this, Miriam burst into a flood of tears and nervous sobbing. Up to this time she could not fully realize that the dreadful nightmare of her life was over. But now that she found herself in her own room, and looking about on the familiar objects, and recognizing one thing after another that she used to call hers, and saw only kind faces beaming upon her—all at once a sense of absolute safety came surging in upon her like a mighty billow. Ah, what a relief—Heaven in place of Hell! Then all the flood-gates of feeling gave way. It was some time before she could control herself enough to articulate. But at last the words came—though very faintly :

“Home at last! Thank God, who has fulfilled the words of Jesus and sent me the deliverer whom he promised!”

The great sea went down as suddenly as it had risen. In a few moments the exhausted woman closed her eyes and was sleeping peacefully.

Aleph and Rachel stood together for a little, watching the peaceful slumber.

“The experiment seems more successful than I feared,” said Aleph at length; “I am glad that we made it.”

Her voice trembled a little, and her color came, as she said, without turning toward him and with downcast eyes, “And he to whom the success is due, and who is doubtless the friend whom Jesus promised to Miriam, has now the express and warm approbation that I promised him, and which I have found it hard to keep back till now.”

Aleph answered, “Your compensation is large—I fear

much too large for doing what to me has been a pleasure and an education. And yet I cannot decline to accept an approval which my heart values so highly."

In parting he extended his hand. She placed her own within it. He carried the snowy prisoner in grave and reverent courtesy to his lips. Was she offended?

IX.

THE MAGICIAN.

Ἐπι τὰς ἀφανεῖς καθίστανται, μαντικὴν τε καὶ χρησμούς καὶ τοιαῦτα.

THUCYDIDES, v. 103.

They have recourse to the invisible realm—to necromancy, and fortune-telling, and such things.

1. The greatest show on earth.
2. Simon Magus at his best.
3. Also at his worst.
4. Avaunt, Sathanas!

IX.

THE MAGICIAN.

ON his return to the khan, as Aleph entered the Egyptian quarter, he began to notice the papyrus placards of which Shaphan had spoken; and, as he advanced, they became numerous—pasted on walls, booths, boxes, whatever conspicuous object presented itself. Had the art of printing been known to Simon, he plainly would have been a famous advertiser. As it was, he had made a very liberal use of the scribes of the city. Aleph stopped to read one immense sheet, beautifully written on, which a boy was carrying aloft on a pole. This sheet informed the public that Simon, the greatest magician and master of occult wisdom in modern times, would exhibit his wonderful powers this eve at the khan near the Serapeum at the rate of two drachmas a head. The price for admission had been put so low in order that the entertainment might be within reach of all. Let all come. They would see the greatest show on earth. Whatever the wizards of Thessaly, the astrologers of Chaldea, the sybils of Magna Grecia, the soothsayers and diviners of Etruria, and the sorcerers and necromancers of ancient Egypt and India could do, he was able to do—and more. Let all the people come and see. For an extra didrachma

there would be seats reserved. Seats or no seats, the people were sure to get more than their money's worth. If any wanted their fortunes told by the stars; if they wanted to know the critical times in their lives so that they might be on their guard; if they wanted to know what would be the best times for any undertakings they have in mind, or to have such helps in them as the elemental spirits can give, or to compound love potions, or to communicate with distant and even dead friends, or to defend themselves from enemies—in short, whoever wanted help of any kind that he could not get by the common and natural means, now was the opportunity of a life-time; let him come to Simon, the great magician of the age. He will not be disappointed. Admission to the court of the khan one didrachma—seats under the piazza two didrachmas.

Cimon was found waiting just outside the khan; from the inside of which came the sound of busy axes and hammers. He proposed that they should go for their evening meal to some quiet stall in the neighboring Egyptian market and there talk over their concerns. Accordingly, they were soon established in a nook by themselves, and Aleph proceeded to relate his experiences during the day thus far.

In return, Cimon said that the object of Seti in calling him aside was to ask whether he had as yet seen any sign of a hostile movement on the part of the son of the Governor; also whether he knew of any reason why Malus would favor such a movement. The first question he answered in the negative: as to the second, he was obliged to say that there were circumstances that made it likely that Malus would favor any scheme to their dis-

advantage of which he might happen to learn. On this, Seti said that, knowing well as he did the violent and revengeful character of the young Roman, he had thought it best to have his movements watched; and had discovered that, since the disturbance at the Diapleuston, and especially within the last twenty-four hours, there had been considerable stealthy intercourse between him and Malus. It looked very much as if they were concerting mischief. After what Cimon had told him he had no doubt as to the objects of the mischief. Might he ask whether the circumstances referred to were such as to enlist Malus thoroughly in any enterprise, however bad, against himself and his young friend? To this Cimon had answered that the circumstances were indeed such that their entire disappearance from the scene would free Malus from a great peril.

“Then,” said Seti emphatically, “he will join the Roman in trying to do you all the mischief he can. He will have no scruple as to way or means.”

After Aleph and Rachel had left, Seti had still detained him for a while with various examples of the unscrupulous craft and daring of the man—so plainly for the purpose of putting them on their guard against him that he was almost on the point of explaining their relations to Malus in full; especially after Seti had concluded with asking that for the sake of greater security they would exchange their present quarters for rooms in the Serapeum. “It was an unusual thing to do, not to say unprecedented; but the circumstances were unusual.” So he begged that they would transfer themselves without delay. But Cimon thought that he ought to confer with Aleph about the matter before accepting

the offer. So, thanking the priest for it, and promising to report the next day, he took leave.

“Would it not have been well,” said Aleph, “to leave in the hands of the high-priest that parcel which I saw you making up last evening of the results of your inquiries as to Malus—I mean for safe keeping?”

“That is what I did,” replied the Greek; “going back for that purpose after I had made another visit and added to the parcel some account of that.”

He then proceeded to say that, finding it still so early that he might hope to find the custom house superintendent at his post, he determined to call upon him and ascertain the result of the inquiry he had promised to make. This he did. The official reported that the eminent merchant Malus had entered the office shortly after Cimon had left it, and, on hearing of the request to examine the registers, had kindly offered to solicit a permit from the Governor. It would be very little trouble, as he was about going to Bruchium on business of his own. But he proved unsuccessful. Despite his efforts, the most he could obtain was a permit for *himself* to make the examination in behalf of the stranger; and then only in case the person should approve himself to him as a person of standing and consideration. Of course this ended the matter. Cimon bowed and retired.

He was not disappointed. From the moment when he met Malus in the passage he had not counted on any other issue; though without any idea of the ingenious way in which it would be brought about.

“How much will this failure be likely to embarrass our cause?” inquired Aleph.

“It makes it impossible for us to charge Malus with a

crime against the State; that is, the crime of smuggling, or of collusion with some custom house officials to defraud the government."

"I understand. You have certified copies of the receipts at Myos Hermos; also certified copies of the receipts given for the same goods by Malus as harbor-master here; so that you know that Malus has received all the goods sent. If any of these do not appear on the registers here, it must be because he has brought them into the city without passing them through the custom house, or, if through the custom house, is in conspiracy with some of its officials to defraud the State—a crime more likely to get prompt attention than one that is merely against an individual—and a foreigner."

"Exactly. Still our case, as it now stands, would naturally compel a formal examination of the registers: for we can prove that Malus has received everything up to the gates of the custom house. Beyond the gates he declares himself to have received much less—that is, much has been lost in passing through the custom house. This is really charging its officials with crime. Such a charge, it would seem, must compel an examination of the registers. Still I would have been glad to set the offense against the State in the foreground of the battle."

"Then," said Aleph, "supposing the registry accounts to agree with ours, Malus would be liable to refund the value of the missing goods according to the prices ruling at the times they were received, and to add to this a considerable sum on nearly every one of the many other lots consigned to him for thirty years on account of false statements as to the duties imposed and the prices current—in regard to both of which you have

gained sufficient information. Have you estimated what the whole indebtedness amounts to?"

"Not closely; but it must amount to an immense sum. And then, if Malus should incidentally be convicted of smuggling, half of the large sum forfeited by the Roman law would fall to the party establishing the fact. If the courts are equitable our success means the ruin of Malus (or what he would consider such)—especially as it would bring upon him the claims of many other persons whom he has wronged, but who hitherto have been afraid to contend with him. Of course a man with so much at stake must be expected to make great efforts to secure himself; and such a man as Malus will stop at nothing, however criminal, that promises to help him. By this time, no doubt, he is wide awake."

"Do you suppose," inquired Aleph after a moment's silence, "that the exhibition this evening is inspired by him and covers some designs against us?"

"I fear so," said Cimon, moving uneasily, "though I do not see clearly how it can be made to serve his purpose. I would that we and our belongings were well in the Serapeum. But it is now too late in the day to make a change: all that we can do is to be wary while remaining for the night at the khan."

"I should have some scruples about being present at a professedly magical exhibition if it were not practically involuntary. But, since we have no choice in the matter, we may at least get the advantage of noticing the contrast between the miracles of Jesus as they have been reported to us and the marvels of the most famous magician of our time—for such I understand he is considered."

“Try to imagine some advantage to his cousin Malus in this movement,” suggested Cimon.

“Is it not supposable that Malus is very superstitious (as I believe such men are apt to be) and has great confidence in the magic art, and hopes to weave about us some hindering if not destructive spell, enlisting against us demoniacal forces? Perhaps, too, he proposes to frighten us from our purpose by astrological and other predictions of impending evil: also will seek to enlarge his knowledge of us by asking for the facts needed for constructing a horoscope.”

“That will do very well for a guess,” said Cimon. “And since we are guessing I will make a small contribution. Perhaps the darkness which is sure to accompany the exhibition at some stage will be used for an attack on us bodily. This can be imputed to spirits. If I should see among the spectators any persons with villainous and cut-throat faces, I should feel called on to be on the watch.”

During this conversation their simple meal had been brought and dispatched (not without an audible thanksgiving); and Cimon now proposed that they should at once return to the khan and acquaint themselves with their new surroundings somewhat in advance of the evening's performance.

The sun was about setting, and many people were already collected about the gate, reading the large poster that hung upon it and comparing views and expectations, when our friends came up. They were at once admitted as being guests of the establishment.

They found a platform erected in the middle of the court, and closely drawn about by curtains on which

were various cabalistic characters. From within issued a smoke, an odor as of strange drugs, a hissing sound as of boiling, faint flashes of light, and various sounds as of people moving about and arranging. Around the stage, at a small distance, hurdles had been set up—also about the piazza. The only break in these two lines of hurdles was opposite the room which Cimon and Aleph occupied. Here were two gates giving access from the stage to the piazza by means of a flight of steps from the former.

“What does this mean?” thought our two friends. “Did it *happen* so?”

In passing to their room along the piazza they found benches, each of which could seat four persons, standing before each room, but set forward so as to allow free passage behind them. Before their own door, however, stood only a single short bench seating only two persons. Right before this seat, under the eaves of the piazza, hung a single lighted lamp—the only lamp visible anywhere.

“And what does all this mean?” thought our friends. “Does it mean honor to us as the guests of the house or to make us easier marks for the archer?”

Without stopping to answer such questions they unlocked their door; and, entering, held their usual evening devotions with no appearance of distraction or hurry. When they came out, staff in hand, and took seats on the bench before the door, they found that the shadows had considerably deepened, and the signs of activity within the curtained stage had considerably increased. As yet no spectators had been admitted.

Soon, however, people began to enter the court:

then, after a while, the piazza began to be occupied. Our friends watched narrowly every successive arrival as long as the deepening shadows allowed; but it soon became impossible to form any idea of faces and figures. But they were very many—so many at last that there seemed to be no more standing room in the court, nor sitting room under the piazza. The seats nearest them, on the right and left, somehow came to be occupied last, and though Aleph bent specially on them his young searching eyes, the light had become too dim to be of service. He then noticed for the first time that the lamp before him had protruding sides that fended off the rays to the right and left. Himself and companion would have the sole benefit of the illumination. Would it be a benefit?

A bell tinkled. Up went the stage curtains. In the midst of a blaze of light stood a man of unusual stature. His beard was long and black, and long black locks hung below the close-fitting black cap. A long black mantle covered with geometrical and other figures hung gracefully from his shoulders. Supreme confidence in his own powers and position breathed in his whole attitude and expression. His air was that of an acknowledged sage. He stood motionless for a few moments as if to allow the people a full opportunity to see what a dignified and promising person was before them. He then turned quietly and took a cool survey of the packed court and of the piazza beyond as if to acquaint himself with the situation—to see how many persons and what sort of persons made up his audience. His survey ended with his confronting Cimon and Aleph for a moment.

A little back of this remarkable figure stood another

scarcely less noticeable—a beautiful woman richly, though scantily, dressed, in the Greek fashion. Behind her, at the two corners of the platform, stood two Nubians, black as midnight, who could scarcely be said to be dressed at all. Between these latter stood a table on which was a seething cauldron over a brazier of live coals—also a large shallow dish. Two stools and a number of tools were under the table.

Simon turned and bowed low to Helena—for that was the Aspasia-like woman near him. Then, turning to the people:

“I always make it a point,” said he, “to begin with acknowledging my obligations to my sister, to whom I am indebted for much of my success.”

He then added, “I wish it to be distinctly understood at the outset that a part of what I shall do this evening is only skillful illusion; another part will be done simply by means of my acquaintance with the more mysterious laws and forces of Nature; a third part will be done by the help of powerful spirits whom I have subjected, to a certain extent, by my art, but who do not belong to that class of spirits with whom intercourse is forbidden.”

He at once began to draw a ribbon from his mouth. He drew and drew—apparently there was no end to the stock of ribbons within him. At last, with a gesture of impatience, he broke off the endless thing at his lips, and gulped down the remainder. He then went to the brazier of glowing coals and proceeded to eat them as so much fruit—to eat with excellent appetite.

Suddenly turning from this feast, he took up the large dish on the table and poured out from it a quantity of sand on the platform. He completely reversed the

dish and shook it. He then replaced the sand, inserted in it a small seed, spread his two hands over the dish, and waited for what might happen. What happened was a little olive tree—as everybody could see as soon as Simon had removed his hands and held up the dish for general view. He then set down the dish on the floor, covered it for a moment with a corner of his mantle, and then held it up to view again. Lo, the little olive of a few inches had doubled its size. Once more he covered it from view. On removing his robe, he showed to the people a plant so large that its roots had crowded out all the sand from the vessel and protruded from it on all sides. Using another corner of the mantle, he reversed the process. The great plant dwindled by successive stages into the original seed which was held up for the people to see.

Taking the same dish, shaking the sand out of it, even taking the pains to wipe it vigorously with one corner of his robe, he reversed it on the floor. Muttering a few words over it, he lifted it and a cat appeared. He replaced the dish over the cat; after a moment lifted again, and behold, a dog instead of a cat. Replacing the dish over the dog, and after a moment lifting it again, he astonished the people with the sight of a litter of puppies. Reversing the process, he produced in succession the dog, the cat, and the empty dish.

He concluded this part of the entertainment by drawing a sword from under his mantle and swallowing it.

Next, Simon seated himself at the table, and laid the tips of his fingers upon it. Helena set a seat by his side and did the same. The two Nubians came forward, and, having removed the brazier, seated themselves on the

table itself. In a few moments it began to tip, and finally fell to swaying and leaping so violently that the blacks were unable to keep their seats, though they struggled hard to do so. Having dislodged the two bulky fellows, the table rose several feet into the air and remained suspended; and the brazier with its cauldron rose gently after it and resumed its old place without any disturbance of their contents—and all the while raps and musical sounds both over and under the table were heard. The Nubians caught hold of the legs of the table and tried with all their might to pull it down; whereupon it rose still higher, dragging the men after it. Simon made a downward pass with his hand, and at once it descended gently and noiselessly to the floor.

Again Helena seated herself. Simon approached, took hold of both her hands, and looked steadily into her eyes. Shortly, relinquishing her hands, he made passes downward along her arms. Gradually her eyelids drew together and she slept.

“Now tell us what you see,” said Simon.

“I see,” said she, slowly, and as if looking afar, “a beautiful country of mountains and green valleys and crystal streams, sprinkled with flocks and herds and white-faced keepers.”

“Look again. What do you see now?” continued the magician.

“I see,” replied Helena, “a magnificent palace perched on an eminence. It is of stone; and it has around it walls and towers; and into its court-yard is now coming a caravan dusty and wayworn—loaded horses and mules and camels; and, escorting them, many armed horsemen before and behind.”

“Enter the palace. What see you now?” continued the soothsayer.

“I see steps of marble, doors of brass, a lofty hall with sculptures and suits of armor, sumptuous apartments after apartments—a library in which are four persons; two sitting on a couch, and two standing before them. The first two are a man and woman venerable with white locks, but with no other signs of great age: the other two, also a man and woman, are much younger and still in the fullness of mature life. All are of princely features and bearing.”

“What are they doing?” demanded Simon.

“The younger couple are untying tablets bound about with a black ribbon. They are now reading—plainly with surprise and grief.”

“Approach and read with them,” said Simon.

“I cannot read. The characters are strange. Besides, tears have fallen copiously on them,” said the woman.

Simon reversed his passes, and the woman, giving a great sigh, opened her eyes.

He then came forward to the edge of the stage next to our friends.

“We come now,” said he, “to something very important. It has been known from remotest times that it is possible to determine from the stars the general character of a man’s fortunes, the critical times in his life, the sort of dangers to which he will be most exposed. Becoming acquainted with these, he can take precautions accordingly. For example, if one finds that to-morrow will be a time of special peril to him, and that the peril will come from a city, he can leave the city at once and

so secure himself. So it is very important that each one of you inform himself in advance all about these critical and dangerous times that are sure to come to him. Do not neglect this opportunity of consulting the stars. It is the opportunity of a life-time. For the very small consideration of only one gold stater he can have the benefit of my profound studies among the stars, studies which I can assure you have been profounder and more successful than those of any other man, not excepting Hermes Trismegistus himself. All you have to do is to hand me the piece of gold, together with the exact time and place of your birth, and I will construct the twelve Heavenly Houses, and find the places of the planets therein, and take account of their mutual bearings and modifications, and so make out for you a horoscope that will tell you just what is to be done in every trying situation as long as you live. And you will live twice as long for it. Now, who will, at the trifling expense I have mentioned, protect himself from great harm and secure to himself wonderful advantages?"

He folded his arms and waited. But no one responded. Either there was not sufficient faith in the people, or they had already invested in horoscopes, or the gold piece required was wanting. The astrologer expressed surprise at this backwardness to seize the splendid opportunity they were having for having their fortunes told by the truth-telling stars through their most illustrious interpreter. It was a great mistake. They would surely regret it. He was only passing through the city on his way to Rome at the invitation of the Emperor Tiberius, and when he should return, if ever, it was impossible to say. What was the difficulty? Was it the

ready money demanded? Well, he would make it easy for poor people. They might pay him on delivery of the horoscope and its interpretation. Let them hand in their names and the facts called for, and he would trust them.

This brought out the people in the court. Not a few signified their readiness to accept the new offer; and the Nubians, passing along the inner hurdles with papyrus and stylus, soon collected quite a catalogue of names and appropriate particulars. This seemed very satisfactory to Simon.

He then looked off toward the piazza from whose seats no response to his appeal had yet come. He was now ready to attend to them. It was kind in them to wait till the less favored class had been cared for. Now let the piazza speak. Though they did not belong to the impecunious class, he would make no distinction between the rich and poor, but would serve all on the same terms. And he walked about the edge of the platform on all sides with one hand behind his ear.

"Your voices are too feeble," he at length exclaimed; "I must get nearer," and he descended from the stage by the flight of steps in front of Cimon and Aleph, opened the wicket and stepped on the piazza.

"Perhaps these friends, one of whom seems to me to have come from the native land of astrology and may therefore be presumed to know how potent in human affairs the stars are, will allow me to construct figures for them. Somehow I feel a presentiment as I stand near this young man (and I have never known such presentiments deceive me), that he is entering a critical period in his fortunes, and will need all the light my art can throw on the character of the perils surrounding him and the

way of escape. If he will tell me the exact date and place of his birth, I can in a few moments, by means of a great improvement on old methods, make for him a planetary construction that will cover the next few days and be of immense service to him. I trust he believes in the Chaldean science?"

"At present I express neither assent nor dissent," said Aleph; "I only say that I have no occasion for your art. If perils come I propose to seek help, not from the stars, but from beyond them."

This was said in so decisive a tone as to forbid further solicitation.

Simon merely added in a voice which plainly betrayed resentment, "Perhaps the young man is aware that the stars are apt to be hostile to those who distinctly refuse them. I foresee that they will be hostile to him." And, swaying his long loose mantle against the knees of Aleph as he turned, he stalked back to his place on the platform.

There, folding his arms and looking upward intently as if carefully perusing the sky at different points, he remained silent for a while. He then suddenly exclaimed in a voice of thunder, "Oh, the angry aspects! Oh, the threatening configurations! Oh, the malignant Saturn in Aries shooting his rays aslant yonder!"—and he pointed his finger toward the part of the piazza which he had just left. He then turned to the people and said with a voice that seemed oppressed by some mighty burden, "You have just heard me say that sometimes when I am very near a person, and especially if my robe touches him, there comes upon me a presentiment in regard to him which is, in a measure, a substitute for a horoscope

—especially if at once followed by such a consultation of the heavens as I have just now given.”

“Tell us what you have discovered,” cried a voice from the court.

“I see,” he cried, “his enterprise miscarrying, his friends forsaking him, his enemies surrounding him. Flight alone will save him. And let him not linger. The black cloud has settled till it touches him—let him rush from under it. The walls of the house have crept together till they press him on every side—let him leap forth before it is too late. The walls of the city have crowded in upon him till the four gates almost meet one another—let him struggle through this or that as best he can, and flee, *flee*. Flee on the swift Bactrian dromedary, flee on the swift galley with sails and oars, flee as does the ostrich before the Arabian with both feet and wings, flee as do the sands of the desert before the hot Simoom. Else the Chaldean home will wail for the son that never returns.”

This he said with the air of a prophet—his tall form strained to the utmost, his hands lifted, and his voice urgent and full of horror. He retained his tragic attitude and aspect for a little after he had ceased speaking. Meanwhile Helena had stolen up to him, and stood looking skyward as if trying to see what he saw. Suddenly he grasped her arm with one hand and with the other pointed with anxious look toward various parts of the sky: all the while speaking to her in a low voice, as if explaining what they saw. He had an apt scholar. She gave frequent nods of assent, and finally clasped and wrung her hands with as dismayed an air as his own.

All this seemed to profoundly impress the people in

the court, on whose upturned faces the many lights of the stage were strongly shining. They gazed at the astrologer with open mouths: they seemed awe struck at his fiery words and majestic bearing. He glanced from there to Aleph—was it to see whether the same effect had been produced on him? At all events he saw none. A perfect composure reigned in the face and attitude of the young man. Simon was both disconcerted and angry—as was plain enough to the sharp young eyes that never left him.

“I have no doubt,” cried he, after an evident effort to recover himself, “that nearly all my friends under the piazza are more respectful to the Celestial Science than the one whose danger and misfortunes have just been revealed to me. But, as time presses, I will not ask them to apply for horoscopes to-night. Let them come to me as privately as they choose at my rooms here for the next few days; and it will be strange as well as pitiful if the book of the stars does not read more pleasantly for them than it has done for one this evening.”

He made a sign to the Nubians. They hastened to fan the coals in the brazier; and, when the cauldron had begun to seethe again, he approached and dropped in something that made the contents hiss and leap as if they would burst away from the vessel. He then drew from under his mantle a sheet of papyrus covered with writing, dipped the manuscript into the cauldron, lighted it at the coals, waved it toward the four points till it was wholly consumed.

He made another sign to Helena. She went to one of the looped-up curtains and drew from a fold in it with an air of profound reverence—a wand. This, with averted

eyes, she brought to Simon: then sank on her knees and covered her eyes with her hand. Whereupon the blacks came up hastily and crouched behind her with all the signs of abject fear. Dipping the end of the wand in the cauldron, the magician proceeded to describe with it a large circle about them all. Dipping again, he traced just within the circle and all around it a variety of characters—allowing no break, however small, in the continuity of the tracing. The lines became gradually luminous—first the circumference of the circle, then the endless chain of mystic characters within.

“The Ephesian Letters,” whispered Cimon to Aleph. There was an intense hush of fearful expectation.

“I am now about,” the magician cried in his gravest tones, “to summon here mighty genii and elemental spirits, both to show you the resources of my art, and to convince as many of you as need convincing (and the number of such persons is not small in these days) of the reality of a world of invisible beings possessing great powers. Many of these spirits are exceedingly mischievous as well as mighty, and would be glad to destroy us all. But they dare not cross this circle, and especially the characters traced just within it—though they would do so if they could find the least break in the lines. I am also able to protect those of you without this circle—provided certain conditions are complied with. All seats under the piazza must be set forward from the wall so as to allow free passage behind them for the spirits: and in addition every one must remain quietly in his place, whatever may happen or seem to be happening, till I dismiss you. To all complying with these conditions and keeping a reverent attitude of mind toward the spirits, I

can promise entire safety. To others I can promise nothing. Solomon himself could promise nothing. I wish all of you to distinctly understand that I will not be responsible for even the lives of any who violate these conditions. I warn you that we are about to deal with very dangerous beings, and that I can only control them under certain provisos. If any man is disposed to defy these let him look to himself."

Both Cimon and Aleph had for some time noticed that the single lighted lamp that hung just before them was getting dimmer; and so were not surprised when it flickered and expired while the magician was speaking.

The man was now looking at his best. He seemed to have reserved himself for this time. His commanding stature, his powerful and oracular face, and his stately bearing enriched by the mysterious and becoming robes of his art, shone out very impressively under the brilliant lights of the stage. He stood in the centre of his magical circle, with his wand in his hand. He cast the wand on the floor. Lo, a serpent, gliding along with erect and hissing head till it came to the luminous belt of Ephesian Letters! There it stopped; and then moved along the belt slowly, without touching it, as if looking for some break in it, till it reached the point whence it started. Then with depressed head it moved back silently to Simon, who took it by the tail, and lo, he had again a wand in his hand.

He extended it toward the East and called out with a great voice in that direction certain uncouth names, saying:

"Genii, spirits elemental of air, of fire, of earth, and of water! By the bond between us, by this wand which

ye know, by the spells I have woven, by this magic circle in which I stand, I summon you, *I summon you!*”

He then turned toward the other cardinal points, repeating to each the same formula, though appealing to different personal names. At once there fell on the ear the faint beat of distant wings. Shadows began to flit through the air, and monstrous shapes vaguely showed themselves on the walls and roofs of the khan. Then the lights on the stage burned blue, grew feeble, flickered, went out. Everything was now in profound darkness—save that on the stage the circumference of the circle with its inlying border of mystic characters was become a glowing belt that cast a wierd light on the magician and his cowering companions, but seemed to have no power of illuminating beyond the stage. Now the beat of wings was heard more distinctly. It grew apace. Soon it was like the rush of winds—high in the air above the stage, and at various points in the passage left behind the seats under the piazza. There it swept along with terrific force—whistling and howling. Into these noises others immediately insinuated themselves. Strange whisperings and mutterings became audible. These gradually passed into raps, detonations, groans, shrieks; and occasionally a yell so fierce and demoniacal as to be appalling, rent the air and the ear.

But the chief place of commotion was the edge of the platform, just outside of the fiery zone. Here, all the noises that were scattered elsewhere were condensed and intensified into the roar of a tempest. To fiendish laughs and screeches and yells that made the ear tingle were added the bayings of many sorts of wild beasts when hot after their prey. It seemed as if the spirits were

crowding to get at the magician, and tear him limb from limb, and were chafed to madness on being prevented by the magic circle. It was the many-voiced sea, lashed into fury, leaping in spray and thunder on a rock-bound coast. What a carnival! Was hell emptied? And through the blackness and the uproar and the fury, pierced voices like swords—voices that cried:

“ We are here, great Master, to do thy bidding. Lo, we are here! ”

At no time during the evening had Cimon, or even Aleph with his younger eyes, been able to see who occupied the adjoining seats on their right and left. These seats had not been taken till it had become too dark to distinguish faces or even figures: and the single lamp before themselves was so ensconced among the ornaments of the eaves of the piazza that it threw no light to either side. But from both sides they occasionally caught low sounds of movements and voices; and knew very well that they had neighbors. And they felt quite sure that if an attack should be made upon them it would come from those nearest to them. So, as soon as the lights had all gone out, after a moment's whispered conference together, they noiselessly set their seat back against the door of their room, and as noiselessly took stand in front of it and facing it, but at a distance from it of several feet—and waited for what might happen.

At the height of the uproar and darkness, their ears caught a stealthy movement at both right and left; and then the careful footfall of unsandalled feet. A moment more, and there was a stumbling against the seat they had left, as of men who had been expecting a clear passage; while they felt the presence of others just before them.

At once came a hasty succession of heavy blows, as of bludgeons, on the seat and door behind it. Two heavy thuds promptly followed, and as many groans and falls: for both Cimon and Aleph had struck with clenched hands into the dark, and had encountered something more substantial than spirits. This done, they stepped back to their former places and waited for what might yet follow. Nothing followed—save the sound of footsteps hastily retreating to the right and left. And, all at once, the hubbub of wierd noises began to lull; the whispers and howls and other diabolic sounds dwindled rapidly; in a few moments the rush of departing wings had died away in the distance.

“Now go in peace,” cried the magician. “If any have been injured by the Powers I have summoned, it is because they did not obey my directions. Their blood be on their own heads. I take you to witness that I am not responsible.”

The court and piazza were soon emptied. The people had been too soundly frightened to stand on the order of their going; and rushed out pell-mell through the darkness—overturning benches and hurdles and one another.

During this final uproar, which was almost as great as the spirits had made, Aleph felt a hand on his shoulder, heard a whisper at his ear—“Shaphan and Nathan.”

“Welcome,” he whispered back. “Come into our room.”

They removed the seat, unlocked the door, and with the aid of the two Jews dragged inside the bodies which their feet had encountered on the floor. Closing the door, they struck a light and proceeded to examine their still insensible assailants. In one of them Aleph had no

difficulty in recognizing Antis: in the other Shaphan and his brother knew Draco, a noted bully of the city, at present teacher of fence at the Museum, formerly a trainer of gladiators at Rome, and well known as a dissipated companion of the son of the Governor. Having satisfied themselves that the men were not seriously injured, and needed only the open air to fully recover, they drew them out again on the piazza and there left them to themselves—or their friends.”

The brothers then explained that the lady Rachel had sent a servant to them after their return home to recall them; and had begged that they would be present at the khan in the evening with some of the family servants and give aid to her friends if they should have need. But various circumstances had delayed them so that they did not arrive till after the performance had begun; when they found no admission to the piazza, and the court so densely packed that it was almost impossible to wedge their way to the neighborhood of Aleph and Cimon. This, however, in the course of the evening they had, by dint of constant effort, succeeded in doing, and were quite near when the assault was made and the assembly broke up. They then dashed violently through the crowd, and over the hurdles—fearing the worst, for they had heard the blows, the groans, and the heavy falls. Thank Heaven, it was the enemy that fell!

Very cordial acknowledgments were made to the friendly Jews. In addition, Aleph sat down and wrote on a piece of papyrus the following:

“Aleph the Chaldean, to the daughter of Alexander, sends greeting:

“This is to express my sense of the kindness you have

shown to the eastern strangers in sending help to them this night in their supposed danger. And truly the danger was considerable; but through the favor of the Most High we have escaped the assault made upon us, and have come to understand better than before the difference between the marvels of Jesus and the marvels of the magician. The latter are due partly to illusion and ventriloquism, partly to occult natural law, and partly to diabolism. They are favored by darkness and distance, depend on preparations and compacts and machinery, proceed from an unworthy person, seek unworthy objects, are aided by unworthy Powers, are connected with phenomena that betray a diabolic origin, and are wholly depraving and mischievous in their tendency.

“When the bearers of this give you an account of what they have seen and heard, you will, I doubt not, see new reason to believe in Him who casts out devils instead of invoking them.

“May the God of Abraham and Daniel, the Chaldeans, keep you!

“Farewell!”

When the Jews stepped out on the piazza they found that the bodies were no longer there. Doubtless they had recovered consciousness and taken themselves off.

Magic and miracle! Two very different things, thought Aleph again, as he recalled, in the solitude to which he was now left, the account which Nathan had given of the storm on the Sea of Galilee.

Did ever night with blacker wing
Swoop down upon the sea?
Did ever storm with fiercer flail
Smite Sea of Galilee?

God help yon bubble bark that leaps
 Against a rayless sky—
God help yon bubble bark flung back
 In rayless gulfs to die!

The gates of hell are open wide,
 Its fiends outscreech the blast;
“Up with the bubble boat on high!
 This plunge shall be the last.”

Alas, alas! ye helpless men
 Who to the skies are tost—
Just hanging to the lion's mane,
 What can ye be but lost?

Yet cry for help—*Where is the KING?*—
 Ye have not far to seek;
Within your very bark is One
 Who storms to calms can speak.

He speaks—at once the stars look down
 Upon a waveless sea;
The peace of God is in thy winds,
 O breathless Galilee!

And ever when we cry through storms,
 To Christ our cry should be;
Low bow all waves and winds and fiends
 To Him of Galilee.

X.

THE ARENA.

Μεγάλα πρήγματα μέγалоι κινδύνουσι.

—HERODOTUS, vii. 50.

Great results from great dangers.

1. An anxious friend.
2. Seti defends himself.
3. So does Aleph.
4. Who is to blame?

THE ARENA.

AN evening of such experiences as we have just described would be followed by a sleepless night in the case of most persons at the present day. But those were adventurous times; the element of uncertainty and peril entered into them far more largely than it does into our daily life; and the habit of coolly accepting the situation and accommodating themselves to it was common among men of standing and courage. So the reader must not be surprised to learn that our friends, after thanking Heaven for their preservation, slept about as soundly through the night as if they had suffered no narrow escape and were anticipating nothing but safety on the morrow.

Their morning devotions and meal had been finished, and they were conferring as to Seti's proposal that they should remove to the Serapeum, when a knock was heard on their door, and the high priest himself made his appearance.

“What means all this?” he exclaimed, as he closed the door behind him and took the rude stool which was all that Aleph had to offer him; “the whole khan behind time, everything in a litter, the staging in the court in

the last stages of a debauch; above all the clubs before your door and the battered state of the door itself, to say nothing of the broken seat before it!"

Cimon explained.

"Now you see why I am here so early this morning," resumed the priest. "My thoughts were so full of apprehension on your account during the night that I could not sleep; and I determined that as soon as possible in the morning I would seek you out and again urge you to remove at once to the Serapeum. This evidently is no place for you. It is plain that Malus and the son of the governor have gotten into communication with each other and have joined their forces—plain that the chief object of the doings here last night was a three-fold assault on you through your fears, through magical powers, and through human assassins. These were the three strings to their bow. They hoped that if the others failed the clubs of Draco and his helpers would do the work and the magical powers which you defied take all the blame of it. You see with what characters you have to deal. Behold a fair sample of what these men are capable of doing. So come to the Serapeum without delay."

"We were speaking of your kind offer just as you came in," said Cimon, "and were debating whether we could properly accept it; and had about come to the conclusion that we could not do so without dragging the only friends we have in Alexandria into trouble with powerful people—which would be a poor return for the kindness we have received."

"Leave me to judge," returned Seti coolly, "as to the amount of trouble I can afford to be at for your sake.

The offer I make is made freely in view of the circumstances."

"We have been afraid," said Aleph, "that your view of the circumstances is not as complete as it should be before we allow your generous kindness to embroil you with perhaps the government itself. You already know that Malus supposes himself seriously in danger from us, and that so we are seriously in danger from him. But you have not known distinctly who we are, and what we propose to do. As to who we are, we are still compelled to be silent; but it is fitting that you learn now the nature of Cimon's relations to Malus. Cimon is the dear friend and business manager of an eastern trader who for many years has had large dealings with Malus—consigning to him a large amount of costly eastern goods yearly. We now find, what has long been suspected, that the consignee has made false returns as to the amount of goods received, and prices obtained for them, and the duties levied on them at this port. Complete proof of this, as we suppose, is contained in the parcel of papers put into your hands yesterday. We also cannot doubt that a comparison of these papers with the custom house registers (which comparison we have not been able to make) would show that Malus has defrauded the government as well as ourselves, and perhaps that officials are in collusion with him. The interests he has at stake, therefore, are so large that he is sure to be as bitterly hostile to our friends as to us. And besides, as you see, he seems to have secured a hold of some sort on the Roman authorities themselves. So the man who undertakes to befriend us undertakes a great deal. We are very reluctant to embroil you, and perhaps the family of the Alabarch in so serious

a trouble. On this account we have refrained from asking advice from you in regard to our preliminary movements."

"The case as stated by you," replied Seti, still with the utmost coolness, "is not worse than I supposed; and I still press my invitation. Trouble there will be, no doubt; but, then, if I do not accept this trouble I shall have a greater from another quarter; for my granddaughter sent a messenger to me this morning as soon as it was light to stir me up to do what I am now doing. If I were to be backward in this matter," he added with a smile, "I am afraid she would rouse all my students against me; which she could easily do, for she is a queen to P. Cornelius. Moreover, it is barely possible that both Alexander and myself have just a little of that generous indignation at wickedness that led certain persons of our acquaintance to stand up for us without counting the cost. Who gave Greeks and Chaldeans a monopoly of that sort of thing? No, friends, you must not ask me to do what you would not, I am confident, be willing to do yourselves."

Of course nothing more was to be said. And our friends said nothing more—save thanks. It was agreed that they should send their effects at once to the Scaepum by certain servants whom Seti had left without, and follow them in person in the course of the day.

This matter being disposed of, Seti continued, "Now tell me what steps you have taken to bring that arch-rogue to justice."

"I have done nothing," said Cimon, "save to collect evidence; and have been uncertain what further steps to take."

“ You should put your proofs at once in the hands of Alexander’s lawyer. If he judges them sufficient for this latitude and for a Roman Court (for a Roman Court it must be, since the case is between a Greek and a Jew), let him put things in train without delay. You could find no more skillful advocate; and he has the further advantage, somewhat rare in his profession, of being an honest man. This in itself will instinctively enlist him against such a rogue as Malus. He will do all he can to bring the fellow to justice.”

“ Can you tell me what the prospects for justice in a Roman Court are?”

“ The Roman law, in general, is just; but a case has to be very clear or the strong rogues, in Alexandria as elsewhere, will manage to escape by means of the evasions, delays, appeals, and various tricks that are purchasable by the free use of money. It is said that all things are venal at Rome. I am afraid the state of things is no better in Alexandria. Malus will use money freely—can you do the same?”

“ That depends,” said Cimon. “ For such purposes as the collecting of evidence and the securing of the ablest advocate that can be had, I say *Yes* to your question. For the purpose of bribing the judges, I say *No*.”

“ This is the answer I expected from you. But your enemy has no scruples. He will have the freedom of all means—righteous and unrighteous. In this respect he has much the advantage over you—always provided that there is no God, and that there is a devil. But in certain other important respects you have an advantage over him.”

“Will you tell us in what?” suggested Aleph.

“First, in the intrinsic justice of your cause; for I have no doubt that the case is as you have stated it. Next, the evil repute of Malus among the better class of people is against him. They all know that he is capable of doing just the sort of thing you charge against him—that, in fact, he has done it in multitudes of cases and has only escaped by the terror which he inspires in people too weak financially and otherwise to contend with him. It is worth while for even Roman judges to make some account of the higher grades of public opinion. Further, it would not be strange if many of the small victims of Malus should summon courage in the presence of so large a suit as yours to appear against him with an amount of testimony that would be overwhelming.”

“I understand then,” said Cimon, “that even if our proofs are legally complete, we still have reason to fear that venality on the part of the judges and hostility on the part of the Governor and other officials will find means to set them aside.”

“Yes—it certainly is to be feared. Malus has undoubtedly patched up an alliance, if not with the Governor himself, at least with Romans who can bring heavy influence to bear upon him and so on the courts. We must not shut our eyes on this fact. It is our main disadvantage. But to offset this the Alabarch and myself can also bring heavy influences—and they shall not be wanting.”

“We are fortunate and thankful to find such friends—especially as we have no choice but to proceed. We will proceed and trust Heaven for the result. I think this is the conclusion to which we have come, and that

we are ready to authorize our friend to place our papers in the hands of the advocate he proposes," and he looked inquiringly at Aleph.

Aleph slightly bowed. After a moment, however, he added:

"Still I would be glad if, before legal proceedings are begun, we could give Malus an opportunity to retrace his steps. I would like to try what effect expostulation under the perils of his situation would have. The Most High practices forbearance to sinners; and such I understand is the practice of the Messiah toward his enemies. His miracles show that he has power enough to overwhelm them all with the greatest ease, but he forbears and tries on them the effect of more light and expostulation. I would be glad to imitate God and His Christ."

Seti started to his feet in amazement.

"And this after your very lives have been so foully assailed! This way of doing things is neither Egyptian, nor Greek, nor Roman, nor even Jewish—however God-like and Christ like it may be."

"I confess," said Cimon, "that I have something of the feeling that my young friend has expressed. I am reluctant to drive a man to what may prove his ruin without giving him a chance for his life. To be sure, I have small hope of a favorable result from any appeal we can make to the conscience and fears of Malus. But I should feel easier if it were made."

"Well, be it so!" said Seti after a short silence. "Make the experiment. See what merciful dealings can do. At the most, it only means the delay of a day or so. . . . Now let us see what you will *write* to this promising candidate for repentance and reformation: for I will

never give my consent that you go in person into the den of such a serpent."

Aleph looked at Cimon. The Greek nodded. The young man seated himself at a table and slowly wrote as follows:

"Cimon, manager and representative, to Malus, consignee and merchant.

"It has been discovered that the returns which you have made for many years to the business which I represent are not in accordance with the facts, and that now a very large sum of money is due us. I am reluctant to appeal to the courts to enforce our claims; and hope that your sense of justice and of responsibility to a Higher Power will make such an appeal unnecessary. A satisfactory assurance from you of regret for the past and an upright purpose for the future will dispose me to abate much from my just claim upon you.

"Let me hear from you to-day at the

Khan Rachotis."

"I have great misgivings as to this merciful plan of yours," said Seti, "and only give my consent to it on condition that you authorize me to place your papers in the hands of our advocate at once, without waiting to see the result of your appeal. If it is successful you can recall the parcel unbroken. Otherwise it is to be used without delay. You agree?"

"So be it," said Cimon.

"Does the parcel contain as full an explanation of the case as the advocate will need?"

"So it seems to me."

This ended the conversation. A servant of the khan

was immediately called and dispatched with the letter to Malus. Seti himself remained till he had seen the main effects of his friends put into the hands of two servants of his own for transference to the Serapeum. It was agreed that the owners should follow as soon as possible.

As chance would have it (I confess that I dislike such language on both scientific and religious grounds), they were not detained long. Their messenger met Malus at no great distance from the khan; and soon returned with a spoken message that they should either see or hear from him at the khan early the coming evening.

What should they do in the meantime? Aleph consulted his programme of lectures, and found that Seti was to speak at the third hour in his course on Comparative Religions—special topic, *The Religion of Egypt*. They would settle with their landlord and then leisurely find their way to the lecture. They were curious to hear what the high-priest of Egypt would say about its religion. Perhaps they would get some light on the mystery of his position.

Accordingly, in due time they found themselves in the lecture-room of the Serapeum. They noticed that the room was fuller than before, and conjectured that this was owing to the special interest felt in the topic to be discussed. Seti evidently noticed their presence as he came in and passed near them to his seat on the dais.

What follows is a condensed statement of the main points of the lecture—without the vigorous argument and abundant illustrations by which these points were supported.

Seti began with reminding the students that he had in previous lectures on the origin and history of religion

expressed the conviction that its earliest stage in all countries was monotheism. The evidence of this, he thought to be especially clear in the case of Egypt. All his researches had converged on a remote time when the Egyptian temples contained no visible object of worship; but were dedicated to a single spiritual Being who was supposed to be the eternal, almighty, and all wise creator of all things else, and who was to be worshipped by prayer and praise and gifts and sacrifice. They called Him *Amun Re*.

How long the popular religion remained at this point is not known. Nor is it known by any record how a change came to take place. But probably it was after this manner. Some of the ruder people began to use visible symbols of the Great Spirit to assist their conception and devotion; and by degrees their example was copied extensively by the people at large. The next step was to pass from the worship of the Being symbolized to the worship of the symbol itself—a thing about as easy as the descent of rivers to the sea.

Before long there crept in a new element. The people had all along believed, as all other nations have done, in a multitude of invisible beings, intermediate between the Supreme and man in dignity and faculty, and having more or less influence over human fortunes. These, whether supposed good or bad, the people gradually came to think it worth while to propitiate by various services and honors, very much as they were accustomed to do to the various grades of powerful officials under the Pharaohs; and in process of time the services and honors given to these minor but nearer deities grew to overshadow those of *Amun Re* himself.

This secondary worship, too, found symbols natural and convenient. Its objects were invisible beings hard to be conceived of and realized. In this case the familiar animals of the country were taken as symbols. Foreigners have sometimes wondered at this, and perhaps with some reason; but there are not wanting philosophers who say that even the humblest *living* creature is a more wonderful object than any dead statue can be, though of the most precious material and exquisite workmanship; and that it better represents the wisdom and power of a living spiritual being. Whatever one may think of the propriety of this animal symbolism, it was certainly general in Egypt at a very early period. And men went as naturally from such a symbolism to a worship of the symbols themselves as they did to sin and death.

But where, meanwhile, was the priesthood of *Amun Re*? Through all these changes among the lower orders the higher Egyptian priesthood held fast the original theory of religion. To them there was still but one God to whom religious worship should be paid, and He should be worshipped without symbol. So they resisted the downward drift—resisted it strongly. But the popular current was too strong for them. And, after long struggling against it unsuccessfully, they came by degrees to feel that the lower orders are incapable of worthily grasping and appropriating a strictly spiritual religion—that the gross thoughts and cares and toils amid which their lives are necessarily spent make a grosser form of religion a necessity to them. The heavens are best read and understood from eminences—how can the stars of the higher truth be seen to advantage save from the eminences of human life with their culture and leisure and broad out-

look? They cannot. It must not be expected. A spiritual religion is not for the vulgar. It is too high and sacred for common handling. It were a profanation of the lofty and holy to put them into such hands as hold our plows, work our quarries, and embalm our dead.

These views at first tolerated, then favored, next embraced and justified, and finally established as a policy and institution, made two worlds in Egypt, with a great abyss between them, which have continued down to the present time. On the one hand has been the world of Pharaohs, priests and philosophers holding fast the primitive religion of Egypt as a sacred Mystery: on the other hand has been a world of peasants and idolaters judged unfit for such high knowledge and carefully excluded from it.

“Such,” continued Seti, “was the Egypt which I found. Such was the policy, solid and venerable with the approval and practice of thousands of years, that I inherited. It was an ungrateful inheritance. I came early to doubt its wisdom and righteousness; and by the time when power came into my hands I had made up my mind to resist and forsake it just as far and fast as possible. I knew that a sudden change was not wisely possible. I realized that reforms of ancient evils that have become intertwined with the whole structure of society must be carefully and gradually made. Else social convulsions will follow. More damage would come from violent and precipitate measures than would come from the evil they attack. With the power of an emperor I could not have wisely abolished the old order of things by edict.

“All this I felt profoundly. And so when the supreme

priesthood came to me, while I determined to proceed at once and thoroughly to the great problem of restoring our religion to its primitive purity among the lower classes, I also determined to proceed cautiously. I labored to change the views of the priesthood already on the stage. As director of all the schools for young priests, I sought to shape their education toward the original order of things. I enlarged as much as possible the number of the initiated in the higher classes. I took pains (how much some of you well know) to impress my views on the young men gathered here for education from all parts of the world—hoping that the truth would filter down through the upper strata into the lower and the lowest. And, further, I have persuaded and instructed the priests who deal directly with the common people to push into the background, more and more, the secondary deities—to bring to the front, more and more, the Supreme One; and to insist upon it that there be no worship of the symbols of even Him, only of the Being symbolized; all to prepare the way for withdrawing the symbols themselves.

“I may have been too lingering and indirect in my action. Some of my friends think as much. It is not easy to judge in such matters. I would be glad if we could have a Divine Teacher, such as Plato craved, to tell us with authority exactly what to do. But until He comes (if indeed He has not already come) we must take the course that seems to promise the most good with the least harm. Unsuccessful violence on the traditional religious habits of the people would be likely to give us political and social convulsions which would be bad enough: successful violence would be likely

to give us general atheism which would be worse. Young men (and his voice grew graver and more emphatic as his eye went searchingly around among the earnest faces), Young men, remember that there is something worse than worshipping Nilus, or the ibis: it is *the not worshipping at all.*”

The students now supposed the lecture finished; but after a silence of a few moments Seti added:

“Some of you may feel like asking how this course of mine can consist with the position I hold as head of the Egyptian religion. If an answer to this is not sufficiently implied in what I have said already, let me add that I regard myself as being the high-priest of the original religion of Egypt, according to our ancient institutions; and do not feel bound to the variations from it that have been mistakenly introduced by others. Further, in the course I am pursuing I have the approval of most of those who have always had in charge the religious concerns of the country—the higher priesthood. And still further, I am not chargeable with double-dealing—for, as you will bear me witness, I make no secret of my views and purposes; and my position does not require me to officiate at the worship of any secondary deity, but only at that of Amun Re Himself. Even the symbols of Him under the name of Serapis I do not now use either in public or private. The statue of Him belonging to this temple has not been before the public for a number of years.”

This concluded the lecture. But the young men, too much interested in both the manner and the matter of their teacher to be in any hurry to get away, were still lingering in their seats, when a young man appeared at the door and politely asked their attention. He said that

he had been deputed by the Museum to lay a certain complaint before them. It appeared that a stranger had been received to student matriculation by the Serapeum without actual testing in athletics. This step was certainly very unusual, if not wholly unprecedented; and the Museum felt obliged to complain of it after a fraternal and gentlemanly fashion, and to ask that the ancient usage of the University may not be violated.

Publius Cornelius sprang to his feet. "It is, I believe, according to the ancient usage of the University that the examination which satisfies one of its departments shall satisfy the other also. I beg to inform Quintius Metellus that we examined the candidate to whom he refers as to athletic matters, and were abundantly satisfied with the examination."

"Still it appears," blandly returned the somewhat foppish and fast looking young Metellus, "that no actual trial of strength and skill was made; and the Museum cannot but think that if the new-comer is really deserving of such exceptional treatment he will be willing to content us with an actual instead of an imaginary testing in the more advanced athletics. The Museum has presumed on his willingness, and is at this moment present in a body in your gymnasium awaiting his appearance."

"This seems to me," began P. Cornelius in a tone just a little tinged with indignation—but Aleph, making a sign to him, interposed:

"I beg," said he, "that our president will not press his view. I am quite willing to content the Museum, and should be sorry to have any feel that an ancient usage of the University has been unreasonably set aside

in my favor. I hope, therefore, that the Serapeum will yield to the wishes of the Museum."

"This is very satisfactory," returned Q. Metellus. "But I am also instructed to say that inasmuch as the social standing of the new student is unknown to us, it seems to us that the testing should be on the more gentlemanly accomplishments. This will throw some light on whether he is entitled to mingle on equal terms with the representatives of the best families of the empire."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed P. Cornelius. "Use your eyes, Metellus!"

But Aleph gravely said, "I do not object to the new proposition of the Museum."

"One more particular, and I have finished my mission. The Museum also requests that the testing may be by our professional teachers of equestrianism and fence. The testing is likely to be more scientifically done; and if well sustained will be more creditable to the candidate. I hope he will gratify us also in this particular."

"In this particular also," said Aleph quietly—"assuming that nothing unfair is intended, and that I shall not be asked to attempt anything which the trainer is not willing to attempt himself."

"This condition is reasonable—do you accept it?" demanded Cornelius. Receiving a nod of assent, he continued. "Then we will proceed to the gymnasium—*under protest*. I demur to the whole proceeding. Our new associate is too compliant. The Museum is extravagant and unreasonable. It will bear watching—Gentlemen of the Serapeum!" he exclaimed, after a moment's pause, "I move you that we invite the venerable Seti to accom-

pany us to the gymnasium. It will conduce to order and fairness.”

The suggestion was heartily ratified.

The gymnasium was near. The fair occupants of the latticed gallery already mentioned, and of whose presence some faint signs had appeared during the lecture, had only to remove to the opposite side of the same large room to command as good a view and almost as good a hearing of what might pass in the gymnasium as they had been having of the lecture room. Did they remove? Who knows? Was the Gem of Alexandria, with her lofty brow and shining eyes, among them? Who knows? Certainly not Aleph the Chaldean.

The large court of the temple had been fitted up for athletic exercises. We need only say in regard to it that it was large enough to inclose a small hippodrome at the centre; that on the right and left of a broad passage leading down to this from the main entrance were tiers of movable seats rising one above another. Those on the left were already occupied by the Museum in full force when the Serapeum came crowding in and took the seats on the right. Then appeared Seti and took the seat of honor in the middle of the passage. Last of all came P. Cornelius and our two friends. These walked down at once to the edge of the hippodrome, when Cimon took a seat on the right, and Aleph and Cornelius remained standing—

Before a man, who, a long whip in hand, was holding at full length the rein of a superb-looking horse with a riding cloth strapped upon him.

“What do you wish?” said Aleph to the trainer in equestrianism.

“Handle this Arabian in all ways—mount, trot around the course, canter and gallop, maintain your seat under shouts and the hissing of this whip.”

“Has this horse any peculiarities?” asked Cornelius.

“This the stranger is to find out for himself,” said the trainer gruffly.

“The animal has the eye of a demon,” continued Cornelius; “and it is agreed between the Museum and us that you, Beco, are not to ask my friend to do what you are not willing to undertake yourself. So I now ask you to mount—in short, do yourself what you ask from him.”

“I am here to examine, not to be examined,” and the man shrugged his shoulders and tried, unsuccessfully, to look amused.

“Do you refuse?” demanded Cornelius.

“I refuse to be tested myself; I am not a candidate for matriculation,” was the surly reply.

Cornelius looked anxiously around, and seeing the trainer of the Serapeum standing not far away, he beckoned to him; and on his approach conferred with him in a low voice for a moment.

“It is as I thought,” he then cried out so that all could hear; “our own equestrian trainer judges this animal to be vicious and dangerous—evidently so dangerous that he would not himself venture to attempt mounting him. I appeal to the University against such unfairness!”

No notice was taken of this appeal; for by this time both Serapeum and Museum were watching with breathless interest the proceedings of Aleph.

After his first words to the trainer he seemed to take no notice of what others were doing. His whole atten-

tion was absorbed by the formidable animal before him. Soon he stepped forward to the side of Beco, and stood there for a few moments looking steadily into the flaming eyes of the horse. Then he silently took the rein into his hand and motioned Beco with his whip into the background. There they stood alone for a while, confronting each other—the soul of the man looking out of his eyes, and the soul of the brute looking out of his—the one calm, confident, masterful; the other brimful of willfulness, resistance, determination, passion, and malignity. Each of them seemed to be asking the other, *Which of us shall be master?*

Aleph began to draw gently on the rein. The horse showed his teeth, champed his bit, struck the ground fiercely with his forefoot, seemed on the point of springing on his enemy. But Aleph gave not the slightest sign of apprehension. Not the smallest movement that looked toward self-protection was apparent. On the contrary, he advanced a step, and, if possible, his attitude grew firmer, his port more commanding, and his eyes shot out their rays into the brute eyes with a still more confident majesty. He saw the fierce eyes before him beginning to soften, to waver. He advanced another step. He laid his hand softly on the thin, quivering nostrils. He began to speak—meanwhile caressing with a gentle hand the soft nostril, the long forelock, the tapering ears.

“You are one of ten thousand—finely formed, powerfully built, full of grace and strength and spirit. A steed for a warrior! But you are not an Arabian. Parthia was your mother. And you are as wild as the wildest of the Parthians. I do not think that you have ever

felt the weight of a man. You have been bitted, but never ridden. You have been mismanaged and abused till you think every man an enemy. It is a mistake. You have at last found a friend. Now we understand each other—do we not?"

The noble head had begun to droop toward the soothing tones when Aleph, putting both arms with the rein over it, drew it gently still lower, patted it, patted the heavy mane, patted the proud arch of the neck, patted the shapely flank, patted the royal curve of the back, patted that royal curve with both hands—a moment more was *seated* upon it, rein in hand.

What a bound there was then! The demon that had been cast out came back seven-folded. But the horse seemed to think that he had a demon on his back instead of within him. He sprang into the air with such suddenness and violence that one would have thought him thunderstruck into a resolution to forsake the earth at once and forever in favor of a higher sphere. Then followed a rapid succession of pyrotechnic struggles, in which was tried every sort of device and movement, save that of falling, known to a horse, to free himself from his burden. Such mighty wrath; such desperate and frenzied exertions; such shakings and striking and kickings and rearings and plungings, and at last such runnings away, had not been seen since the days of Bucephalus. But during it all Aleph sat as if a part of the animal, with no strain whatever on the rein, merely watchfully accommodating himself to the various movements of which he seemed to have some secret intelligence in advance: and when the running began he only used the rein to guide it according to the round of the arena.

This was no easy matter—the speed was so great and the round so small. Whether he would be able to prevent the headlong courser from dashing through the seats occupied by the Museum was so doubtful to those in the front seats that they instinctively made a great outcry and flourish of canes at the flying centaur. This added, if possible, new wings to the flight: but Aleph so skillfully combined the use of the rein with limb-pressure and flexions that the round was safely made three times. The quadruped hurricane then stopped of his own accord at the starting point—all in a tremble and covered with foam.

Aleph sprang from his back, caught up a large cloth that lay near, gently wiped off the sweat from the trembling animal, patted and stroked and soothed him with hand and voice till he ceased to tremble.

Then taking his stand a little in front, he beckoned and called. The horse instantly walked up to him. He laid his hand on the mane, both hands; they grew heavier and heavier, and still the animal stood motionless. A moment more and Aleph was again mounted and pacing slowly around the course. Arrived at the starting point, he again dismounted, tightened the band that confined the riding cloth, and then in a very leisurely way resumed his seat.

“Now, friend Parthia, shall we trot?” A gentle shake of the rein and Parthia trotted around the course with a free and stately action.

“Now, friend Parthia, shall we see what you can do in the way of the ornamental?” By this time the steed had recovered his strength and spirit; and in perfect obedience to rein and foot he curveted and pranced and

caracoled about the arena after a most wonderful fashion. But the greatest wonder was not the horse, but the horse-man. Such unaffected simplicity, ease, and repose of manner! With what grace and even majesty he carried himself! As he went his last round with the sunshine on his royal face and the steed stepping as proudly under him as if he knew that he carried a royal burden—ah, *such* a shout went up from Serapeum and Museum both! Aleph happened to look up and lo, on one side of the arena, high up in the Serapeum, latticed windows were all open and bright faces and forms were leaning out waving snowy veils. The ladies of Alexandria, relying on the absorption of the students, and perhaps forgetting themselves in the intense interest of the scene, had gradually pushed the lattice aside for the sake of a better view: and when Aleph looked up and saw them he saw also a bouquet of flowers in the air, and a fair hand that had just parted with it, and a glorious face that he knew behind the hand. The horse sprang to meet the descending token; and as Aleph caught it in his hand, he, as gallant knights should always do, bowed low, even to the horse's mane.

“Who owns this animal, thou villain?” exclaimed Cornelius, with some fire in his voice and more in his eyes, to the trainer.

The man tapped the ground uneasily with his whip, and was silent.

Turning to the students, Cornelius cried, “Whoever was the owner of this horse when he came here has forfeited his claim. Let us declare it forfeited to the University, and present the animal to Aleph, the Chaldean, to be kept at our expense; and if the original owner dares

to claim him let us prosecute the wretch before the courts for intent to kill one of us."

Said Metellus, "I approve of that. It seems to me that it would be a crime against society to reward the man for his crime by replacing a horse worth considerably less than nothing by one worth a thousand gold staters. May I ask what the venerable Seti thinks?"

The venerable Seti thought that under the circumstances the horse had a right to choose his own master—that in fact he had already chosen, and chosen well. He should have free keeping in the stalls of the Serapeum as long as his master should choose.

The students ratified lustily.

In the meantime Aleph had dismounted and stood holding the rein over one arm, while the other was thrown caressingly over the arched neck of the horse. As he gave the rein to a servant of the Serapeum who now presented himself he said:

"I am glad if the Museum regards the trial thus far as satisfactory. But there remains another trial to which they have asked me to submit—that by their teacher of fence. For this I am now ready"—and the flowers which till now he had held in his hand he secured under his girdle.

Then up spake Cornelius again. "I cannot but think that the Museum is thoroughly satisfied already with the justice of our matriculation. And to ask a young man after such exertions as we have seen to pit himself against a fresh man and a famous professional seems to me wonderfully unreasonable. Besides, what has occurred suggests the idea of bad faith somewhere. Of course the Museum does not mean anything of the

sort; but in my opinion they are being made tools of by somebody who has a deadly purpose to serve. Unless Draco of Rhodes is a better and fairer man than Beco the Roman, he can be hired to commit a murder."

"It must be confessed," said Q. Metellus, who had come forward and was now standing by the side of Cornelius, "that the Museum has made but a sorry show here to-day, either as a tool or worse; and I should not much blame P. Cornelius if he had taken a worse view of us than he does. We have had a most instructive time, but no thanks to the Museum for it. We were trapped into it. For my part I disclaim all fellowship with Beco and his proceedings; and if I could think it possible that another such scoundrel could be found attached to the Museum I should be tempted to forsake it for cleaner quarters. If I should wish the examination to proceed further it would be solely for the purpose of vindicating our good name and showing that Beco is the only devil among us."

On this arose another young man among the benches of the Museum who commended in a general sort of way the remarks of Metellus; but then said that the Museum had formally taken the ground that it was not proper to take any accomplishment for granted, saving as the higher includes the lower. It would not only be inconsistent but an unfortunate precedent should they leave the testing incomplete. To be sure, the young man who calls himself Aleph the Chaldean has borne himself well thus far; still he might wholly fail under the remaining test. Certainly the Museum, however well satisfied at present, would be better satisfied if the whole plan agreed upon should be carried out. He did not antici-

pate another Beco in Draco. No doubt Draco would be forbearing with the young man, and would only tax him enough to make a reasonable trial of his skill in the gentlemanly art of fence. For this purpose no dangerous weapons need be used—only the open hands. As the candidate did not seem to be at all worn by what he had done, let him have a chance to win new laurels from Draco of Rhodes.

Some of the Museum applauded.

“But Euphemes of Corinth should consider,” began P. Cornelius; but Aleph laid his hand on his arm and said, “Excuse me, my friend.”

Then turning toward the Museum, he added in a voice that had in it a touch of humor as well as several touches of decision, “I beg that the Museum may be gratified by the complete carrying out of the plan they have proposed. I do not ask for exceptions in my favor, either from my fellow students or from your teacher of fence. Let him do his best—provided he deal fairly and honorably.”

This settled the matter, though Cornelius and some others, especially of the Serapeum, looked and muttered discontent. “It is too bad. Talk of fairness and honor in connection with such a desperado as Draco! Depend upon it there is some wickedness in the wind. When such a fellow comes to the front the gods retire.”

And he *was* a formidable figure to look at, as he presented himself in the arena. A man of unusual stature and weight, with prodigious muscular development about the arms and chest, but without obesity and with every appearance of activity as well as of strength. His face was the worst part of him—shaggy, coarse, hard, cruel,

with protuberant blood-shot eyes out of which looked all the passions save fear and pity—the whole made more repulsive by a large swelling on one cheek which Aleph well understood.

To this forbidding figure Aleph walked down (followed at a little distance by Cornelius and Metellus) and stood before him with folded arms and investigating eyes.

Draco proceeded to pass his hands across the shoulders and chest of the young man; felt of his arms; took their length; inspected his hands; stood off a little distance to observe the limbs and general build.

“Very well to begin upon. I think I could make something of you. Not quite enough like Mars, however.” Then, taking the attitude of a boxer, he said, “Now deliver some blows at me with your open hand.”

Aleph made certain strokes which were more remarkable for the freedom and grace with which they were delivered than for anything else, and which Draco found no difficulty in parrying. None of them were aimed at the face; but once the low stroke was so struck up by Draco in the parrying that the hand touched the swollen cheek. Draco’s eyes flashed.

In this preliminary bout it became evident to Aleph, from the force and direction of the parrying, that Draco was aiming to disable as well as to parry. His wards were strokes—his defense an attack.

“Now take your turn at parry,” said Draco with a subtle menace lurking in both eye and voice.

Aleph saw that the time had come when he would need all his watchfulness. He erected himself to a fuller stature. His feet and limbs set themselves into new firmness. His eye took on new openness and intensity

without losing anything of its characteristic repose. He had hardly made this instinctive preparation before the blows began to come—at first with some show of tentativeness and moderation, but, as they were warded off, they returned with ever increasing heat and force, and gradually came to be aimed exclusively at the head. Now it was the mouth, now the eye, now the temple. He seemed bent on at least marring the manly beauty before him, and which contrasted so strangely with his own coarse and brutal features. Gradually the open palm became the knotted fist. Gradually the knotted fist came as fast and fiercely as the whole passionate force of the man could wield it.

Through the whole of this impetuous hail storm, Aleph kept strictly on the defensive. His whole work was parrying. Was not this in the bond? Of course his hands were full of occupation—his feet also when Draco began to shift positions and at length attacked him on whatever side and from whatever direction he could. Aleph hardly had time to wonder at the headlong ferocity of the storm that was discharging itself upon him.

“*Stop!*” cried Cornelius. “This is fighting, not examining. *Stop!* I say—this is intolerable.”

But Draco paid no attention. The glare of a tiger was in his eyes. His face was that of a fiend.

“Shall I quit the defensive?” inquired Aleph in a low voice to Cornelius and Metellus—as he gained a moment’s respite by a spring to one side.

“Do so!” they both exclaimed. “He means to kill you.”

Then was a sight worth seeing. Then the youth fairly awoke. Then his whole frame began to work with

the supreme grace and force of some mighty machine. It was Apollo turned to Mars, or rather to Jupiter Tonans himself—so wonderfully sovereign and commanding became his aspect. And perhaps the most impressive thing about it was the mysterious repose and utter self-possession that sat on thrones in every feature.

Compared with his movements now, all his former ones were mere pastime. It was sublime to see such a face, such a figure, such a blending of all the poetries of expression and motion. He still parried, but every parry was followed by a blow delivered. Swifter and stronger flew that young hand. He, too, could be swift and mighty—he, too, could press, now on this side and now on that, and again, seemingly, on all sides at once. And yet his breathing was unhurried—there seemed in him endless reserves of strength and battle.

“Immortal gods! how he handles himself,” exclaimed young men as they stood on their benches and watched breathlessly.

Almost as soon as the defensive became the aggressive, a severe stroke on his swollen cheek warned Draco that he must begin to look to self-preservation. He could no longer give his whole attention to assault. He became vividly sensible of the great change that had taken place in the aspect and bearing of his antagonist. He saw how cool and collected he was—how perfectly master of himself. The sight angered him, made him furious. He would have given his life for one fair demolishing stroke on the young man on whom as yet he had not been able to fasten a single bruise. But scant time had he now for even such flashes of thinking. He had all he could do to ward off the blows that came so

mightily and swiftly, and yet with a certain deliberate terribleness and ease that seemed to say that such could be delivered forever. Soon another blow passed his ward and reached the cheek hitherto untouched. But it was with the palm of the hand. Was Aleph affecting to be forbearing and merciful to him who had never given mercy nor needed it? Was he, like some perverse boy, being cuffed into good behavior? The thought was intolerable. That a youngster of a score of summers should be sparing him—conquering him with even something less than his utmost, was agony. And yet that was what everybody could now see was bound to happen. It was plain to see that Draco was waning and that Aleph was waxing. The sweat was dropping freely from the face of the one; the brow of the other was not perceptibly moist. Spectators could see that the young man often voluntarily neglected advantages that the passion and precipitation of his adversary gave him, and was seeking to close the contest with as little damage and mortification to him as possible. After one of these plain forbearances he said to Draco in a low voice:

“Need this go on? Say that you are satisfied with the examination and we will stop just here. You have for some time been in my power.”

For answer the infuriated man leaped at him with the expression of a fiend, and tried to throw his arms about him and bear him to the ground. So sudden and violent was the movement that Aleph eluded it with some difficulty; but he did it, and, in passing, dealt the ill-balanced man a blow that felled him to the ground. He lay motionless.

“He is not injured—only stunned,” said Aleph to

Cornelius and Metellus as they came up. They looked at the speaker and wondered. Not a blow appeared to have reached him. There was no visible disarrangement of his dress even. The flowers at his girdle were still in place. And the supremely cool and masterful look that had presided through the whole contest was still sitting in full glory on its throne.

The issue had been anticipated by the students for some time; but their breathless interest in watching the conflict had kept them from any general vocal expression. But now there was *such* an uproar—such a waving of canes and caps, such stamping and clapping and lung-rending huzzaing as a thousand frenzied young men could make, and such as the old Serapeum had not known for many a day, if ever. Did Seti make any effort to suppress or moderate? Not he. Some even go so far as to say that he was seen unconsciously keeping time to the uproar with his foot. Others say (and I am disposed to think they are right) that he sat as motionless as the statue of Memnon, sat as if in a dream, till the tumult had somewhat subsided. Then he held up his hand. Silence at once reigned.

“Young men of the Museum! I cannot think that any considerable number of you have been knowingly concerned in this conspiracy. Were it otherwise it would be to the eternal disgrace of the University, and especially of your part of it. I prefer to think, and *do* think, that you have been victims. You could not have supposed that it was intended to assail the very life of a young man under pretense of testing his athletic accomplishments. You have been misled and deceived by somebody. I leave you to find out who inspired and contrived this whole

thing. It is necessary for your good name. And I shall not wonder if you decline henceforth to have anything to do with these two professional trainers who have allowed themselves to be used for murderous purposes.

“Perhaps some, if not all, of you have thought it strange that I did not interfere to break off this contest when its true character became plain. I was on the point of doing so several times: but as I looked at the young man I seemed to see in his whole bearing such abundant promise of a successful issue that I felt it would be a wrong to all of you young men to keep from you an inspiring example, and a wrong to him to keep him from the honor to which he is so justly entitled.”

“The venerable Seti is right,” cried Metellus. “We of the Museum are no better than we should be; but we are not sunk so low as to take part in a plot against the life or limb of a stranger who has done us no harm—much less against a member of our own University. We have been imposed upon. We supposed that nothing but a reasonable and safe testing was intended: we even supposed that less danger would attend it under our trainers than would naturally belong to an emulative contest between students.

“It would be a farce for me,” he continued, “to ask the Museum to vote as to whether the examination of the candidate has been satisfactory. There is not one of us but would throw his cap to the moon in token of approval. Of course we adopt the hero into the Museum by a thunder of silent acclamation. We have seen something to-day to tell to the old folks at home—something to tell to our children,” he added smiling. And then with a graver face and a graver tone he went on, “And

somehow I feel as if I should go away from this place a truer and worthier man for what we have seen to-day. I had heard of magnanimity before; to-day I have seen it. And I like it. Heroism is good, but heroism with righteousness is better. I see that it is possible to come down on a great deed, which is even better than rising to meet it.

“But though the Museum does not need to vote approval of Aleph the Chaldean (what a ridiculous thing it would be!), I think we owe it to ourselves to act on the suggestion of the venerable Seti; to express formally our condemnation of these villains (the one lying here where he ought to lie, and the other standing yonder dangling a whip which ought to make many a weal across his own back) and their prompters, whoever they may be. Have we any further need of the services of trainers who are themselves trained by the infernals? I think not. Those agreeing with me will stretch out their hands.”

As far as Metellus could see, every right hand was lifted.

What congratulations were showered on Aleph, how cordial and admiring both Serapeum and Museum seemed, how profuse the latter were in their disclaimers and apologies and promises to unearth the whole plot, and how modestly Aleph carried himself under it all, I will not attempt to set down in detail.

“Come with me,” said Seti to our friends, as the students broke up, “and I will show you your new quarters.” On the way they told him of their arrangement to meet Malus at the khan in the evening, but promised to return immediately after to the Serapeum. At the door of their apartments a servant met them and said to

the priest that his granddaughter was in her sedan at the gate and wished to see him. Would he come at once? She was looking very pale and ill. Seti at once threw open the door, bade them enter and be at home, and hastened after the servant.

He did not appear again that day. Very likely he went home with Rachel. And very likely Aleph would have followed in the course of the afternoon, had not Cimon happened to mention that he overheard a student saying that news had just come that the emperor had asked the daughter of the Alabarch in marriage for his nephew and heir Germanicus, and that the visit of the Alabarch to Rome had reference to this overture. "Perhaps," added Cimon, "this is what has disturbed her."

"She would never marry a pagan," said Aleph decidedly.

"Perhaps Germanicus is such a pagan as her grandfather," returned Cimon. "He is said to be a very promising young man, and the son of excellent parents; and no doubt the Jewish elders will be greatly in favor of an alliance that promises to secure and advance their interests so greatly. They will remember Queen Esther."

Aleph made no answer—unless the silent one of drawing out the knot of flowers from his girdle and setting them carefully with water in a vase which he had discovered in the room. But *was* this an answer? If so, it certainly was not a very clear one. Did it say *No* to Cimon? Did it say that his suggestions were not as weighty as they might be? Did it merely say that the rare and lovely flowers were worth preserving for a day or two on their own account—whether they came from a future empress of Rome or not? Or did the *heart* of the young

man really speak in the act without consulting his judgment—as hearts sometimes do? I am at a loss. Such Delphic conduct is very embarrassing. Why will people put interpreters to so much trouble? If I had been Aleph I would have—but no matter what I would have done. What does the public care?

XI.

THE TREMBLING.

Κρεισσον δε νοσειν η θεραπευειν.

—EURIPIDES, *Hipp.* 177.

Better to be sick than to act the part of a nurse.

1. How could you!
2. Lazarus, come forth!
3. Empress of the West?
4. Sympathetic advice.

XI.

THE TREMBLING.

SETI found Rachel sitting in her sedan and looking more like collapsed alabaster than a human being—her eyes closed, every trace of color gone from her cheek, and yet with an expression that told of a desperate struggle for self-mastery.

She opened her eyes as she felt Seti's hand on her arm.

“O grandfather, how *could* you allow that dreadful combat to go on!”

“What, have you then been a witness of it all? I had forgotten that it was possible. My poor child—it was indeed too much for any lady, save a Roman accustomed to a Roman arena!”

“I had no idea of what was coming when I went over to the other side of the gallery with the rest. And they pressed me to the best window for seeing and hearing: once there I was under a spell. I could not tear myself away. I felt obliged to see and hear though I died in the act. Every sense was acute beyond anything I can remember. Oh how I suffered at the earlier stages of that last conflict! It seemed as if I could neither stay nor get away. It was awful. I was amazed that my companions did not seem to mind the scene as I did. Why did you not interfere?”

“ I hardly understand why, myself. But probably it was the confidence which the whole bearing of the young man, and his superb physique, in which he surpasses all I have ever known—probably it was the confidence that these inspired that he would be more than equal to the occasion. Still, now that it is all over, I wonder at myself somewhat.”

“ But suppose that brute of a horse, or that greater brute of a man, had killed him? I shudder to think of it. I had no idea that anything could have shaken me so.” She closed her eyes and involuntarily trembled.

“ But,” she added in a moment, “ this is not all. I received this morning from my mother a letter which moved me greatly and perhaps unfitted me to bear the scene in the palæstra as well as did the other young ladies. Between the two I feel too weak to go home alone: besides, I want your counsel. Can you not go with me?”

Seti went with her.

The following is a copy of the letter—omitting the usual epistolary preliminaries—which Seti read and pondered that afternoon:

“ My dear Rachel, you know how little I thought of remaining in Jerusalem till now. But our relative Nicodemus has been urgent, and such great things have been happening here that I have felt more like sending for you and your father to come to me than like returning home.

“ My dear daughter, you doubtless have wondered that hitherto I have said so little in my letters of Jesus of Nazareth (as he is called here), though you have seemed so anxious to hear about him. The fact is that the ideas of the Messiah to which I have been accustomed and which are held by the chief people here, have made it

hard for me to feel my way to a definite and settled opinion ; and I have been unwilling to write much on a subject in regard to which my mind was in so confused and uncertain a state. But I have at last—after much prayer, and much study of the prophets, and much inquiry of credible witnesses, as well as some seeing with my own eyes—come to see my way clearly. Yes, my dear daughter, I do indeed feel sure at last that Jesus is our long-expected Messiah. If the proofs of this which he furnishes are not sufficient it seems impossible to prove anything. Even Moses himself did not more clearly establish his Divine mission.

“ Nicodemus has helped me not a little. He is a very cautious man—I think somewhat too cautious and slow ; as is not unnatural to one who has so much to lose—but at home he makes no secret of his conviction that it is impossible to account for the wonderful deeds of Jesus save on the supposition that God is with him. I hope this influential man will soon get courage to speak out.

“ When I came here I found the reality of Jesus’s miracles admitted ; and, after I had learned the character of his life and teaching, I did not see how they could be accounted for reasonably by the magical art and evil spirits. But I have lately fallen in with some of his disciples, and especially with some friends of his at Bethany, who have given me a more clear and connected view of his doings and teachings than I had before. At Bethany I met the mother of Jesus—a wonderful woman, whom to see and hear is to believe. In answer to my inquiries, she told of the strangest possible events preceding and following the birth of Jesus—of an angelic annunciation, of a Divine conception, of the birth at Bethlehem, of shep-

herds sent by a glory of angels to worship the child, of a caravan of princes from the far east who came, star-guided, to do him homage, of a flight to Egypt, of their return on the death of Herod to live at Nazareth in Galilee till Jesus was thirty years old, of how good and holy he was during all those years, so that she never saw a fault in him, though much that was mysterious. She had sometimes felt oppressed by the mystery which always hung about him like a silver veil, but through which occasionally struggled gleams of a Divine majesty and power. As time rolled on, and the child had long since become the mature man, she wondered that so many years were allowed to pass before his making any public movement. But she knew that it would come in due time : God would be as good as His word ; such preparations and heralding would not be an idle flourish and make-believe. Then she went on to tell me about his forerunner and baptism and first miracle near three years ago ; and of the many miracles she had seen since. While listening to his teaching, she had been quite as much astonished at his wisdom as she had been at his power. It was a very strange feeling the mother had when she found herself looking up to her son as being immeasurably above her in everything. Still she rejoiced in the fact with a sort of awful joy.

“As she told me all these things there was so much simplicity and truthfulness, as well as intelligence, shining in her face and whole manner, that I could not but accept her testimony. Then how I wanted to see *him!* This I had never done until a few days ago. And it was in this way :

“Have I said that the house in Bethany where I saw Mary the mother of Jesus was the house of one Lazarus

and his two sisters? One day when I was there Lazarus complained of feeling unwell. The sisters, Mary and Martha, did some trifling thing for him and thought no more of it. But, instead of improving, he grew worse. A leech was called in. Still the brother grew worse. Day by day the shadows deepened, until at last the leech himself confessed that he could do no more. Then the sisters said, 'Though the leeches cannot help Lazarus, there is one who can;' and they immediately sent off a messenger to Jesus, who was then in Galilee. Day after day passed and still no Jesus came. Meanwhile the sick man pined and wasted, and the home and hearts grew darker and darker, and at last the leech said there was no hope. No, no hope in *him*, or such as he, but still hope in Jesus that he would bring or send help. Can it be that he will suffer his friend to die?—he who has cured all sorts of diseases for all sorts of persons with whom he had no special tie?—I was there and saw the struggle between hope and despair: saw despair finally triumph as last words were spoken, as the breath came gaspingly, as the light faded from the eye and the pulse from the wrist and—he was gone. Close his eyes, O friends; straighten out the stiffening limbs; let the mourning women come! Lazarus is dead—*dead*.

“The sisters gave themselves up to their grief. They refused to be comforted. They could not understand that dreadful silence. Had the seemingly inexhaustible fountains of power and helpfulness really given out? At all events, all was now over. Nothing remained but to bury their dead, and wait with streaming eyes and broken hearts for their own turns to come. And the sooner they should come the better.

“So the dead was buried, the lament made, and the sisters sat down with despair for companion in a home where midnight had come in place of midday. Some of us sat with them as much as we could—holding their hands in silent sympathy. What could words do in such a case! We answered their groans with a pressure of the hand. We followed their tears with our own. Every now and then, amid their tears and groans, they exclaimed, ‘If he had been here our brother had not died—had not died.’

“So three days wore away—carrying with them what little was left of the light in their eyes and the color in their cheeks. On the fourth day, while I was sitting with them, some one came in and whispered to Martha. She at once rose and hastened out. But Mary sat still—not even appearing to notice the departure of her sister. So we continued sitting. But it was not long before Martha returned with flurried haste, and with an expression on her face that seemed like the first faint gray of dawn on the edge of a black bank of clouds. Mary started up at a whisper from her, and with something of the same expression on her face followed her out. We followed, too; for we thought that our sympathetic presence at the grave where we supposed they were going might still be helpful to the stricken sisters.

“And now, my dear daughter, prepare to read something wonderful. My hand trembles as I proceed to write it; and sometimes when I have thought of it such an awe has come over me that I could not have then written at all. But my nerves are now steadier. Behold what happened!

“As we neared the cave where Lazarus had been laid

away, we saw a group of men. Mary darted forward and threw herself at the feet of one of them. Then I understood it all. Jesus and his disciples had at last come. I did not need to hear her say, 'Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died;' for, as I looked with all my eyes of both body and mind on the face that was looking down so compassionately on the weeping woman, I saw at once the original of the picture that his mother had made for me. I never had seen such a face. I do not expect ever to see another like it. I do not speak of its beauty, though beauty was not wanting; nor of its majesty, though majesty was not wanting; but of a mysterious something that seemed to lie back of and shine dimly through the comeliness and the kingliness—a power behind the throne greater than the throne itself; more beautiful than the beauty, more majestic than the majesty; a certain something so pure, so wise, so mighty, and yet so loving and pitiful, that Divinity himself seemed looking through the windows of flesh. This was how he seemed to me. It may be that he does not make the same impression on all; indeed, I know that he does not. And even to me, while I looked, there was a sensible coming and going of the Divine expression—like a rapid flowing and ebbing on the strand of a boundless sea of mingled fire and foam. Nay, while I was absorbed in watching him the Infinite seemed to sweep back and back, and at last disappeared altogether—leaving nothing but the purely human. But oh, what a human! The sands laid bare were pure gold. So gentle, so tender, so sympathetic as his tearful eyes rested on the tearful people—a frightened dove or hind would have taken refuge in his bosom. Mary evidently took refuge there.

“ ‘Where have you laid him?’ said the most sympathetic voice in the world.

“ ‘Come and see,’ said the sisters; and led the way to one of the tombs close by. The cave was wrought into the brow of a hill, and was closed by a door against which rested a large stone.

“ ‘Take away the stone,’ said Jesus; and as he spake I seemed to see the Infinite coming back into his face with a mighty rush and completely covering the merely human out of sight.

“ We were breathless with expectation.

“ He stood for a moment with eyes uplifted and lips that moved—as if communing with the sky. Then, in a voice that had in it such a commanding quality, such a tone of unquestioned and unquestionable supremacy as I had never before noticed in any voice, and which seemed able to speak a world out of nothing, he cried :

“ ‘LAZARUS, COME FORTH!’

“ Would the dead hear? I *knew* he would hear. The voice itself predicted a resurrection; and I felt in every fibre of my being that almightiness was present and failure impossible. And yet how intently I gazed on the door of that tomb—how intently I listened for some sound from within! He scarcely had done speaking, when, sure enough, there was within the cave a stir, a rustle, a *step*. Another moment and the heavy door swung open, as of itself, and a man in grave-clothes appeared. The swathing bands were still about his hands and feet—the napkin was still about his face.

“ ‘Loose him and let him go!’ bade Jesus.

“ The people obeyed, and lo, our friend Lazarus of old! Not the fever-stricken, delirium-haunted, emaci-

ated Lazarus of a few days ago, who could not have stood on his feet without being wholly supported ; but the Lazarus of his best days, able to go and come and do with the best. Also, looking as he did then, but with a difference. The mystery of the unseen was in his face. He seemed in possession of vast secrets. With this was a look, first of bewilderment and surprise, then of recognition—recognition of him whose potential word had brought him back to the world. He knelt at the feet of Jesus, and kissed his hand—as men do homage to their king. *His* King had come.

“Any doubt whether the death was real? Not to those who, like myself, had seen the sick man decline from day to day until the last feeble breath was drawn and the body grew cold and stiff. Not to those who prepared the body for burial and carried it forth to the tomb. Not to those who stood by the cave-mouth when the door swung back, four days after ; nor to those who took off from the living man the cerements of the dead. The smell of death could not be mistaken. No, there is no doubt.

“Since then I have seen Jesus several times, and have talked with him. And I *know* that he is our Messiah. Would that you and your grandfather and all the dear family could see and hear him too ! I feel that you all would, and must, judge as I do. Both my eyes and my heart recognize him. I seem to know him by a new internal sense.

“Not so, however, our chief men. He does not impress them as he does me. They are getting exceedingly bitter against him. Every new wonder increases their exasperation. I am ashamed to say it—but I have no doubt that they would gladly take his life. It must be that

they are judicially blinded ; or, if not, that an evil mood of the heart and will wonderfully hinders perception in religious matters.

“ I would like to say more ; but I hope to see you soon, and to make you a joyful sharer of my faith by a fuller account of what I have seen and heard.

“ But what is this that I hear ? Hints come to me almost daily about you and the great alliance. And yet you said nothing about it in your last. Just before he left for Rome, your father wrote me that the emperor had made proposals for you in behalf of his nephew and heir ; and that this was partly the occasion of his going to Rome. I hope that you will speak freely in your next. I can see what great advantage to our people, not to say to all peoples, might come from such an alliance ; especially as I hear the best things said of the young Cæsar. He is said to be like his excellent father. Is it possible that a daughter of mine will become more than a second Esther ? ”

Such was the letter—omitting the usual formalities of beginning and ending. While Seti was reading it, Rachel kept her eyes fastened anxiously on his face—especially as he approached the end. When at last he looked up, she came and stood before him and put a hand on each shoulder and looked beseechingly into his eyes.

“ Grandfather, had you known of this before ? ”

Seti slowly bowed his head.

“ Why did not my father tell me ? ”

“ Perhaps he did not want to agitate you unnecessarily—perhaps he wanted to see the young man and make inquiries about him, and learn more fully from the emperor himself all that was implied in the proposals

before allowing you to be troubled with the matter. You see it was possible that such inquiries might show it best to decline the offer without its coming before you at all."

"Grandfather, let it *never* come before me. In advance, I put it away from me with both hands." And then suddenly: "Do you think father would be willing to sacrifice me, I do not say to ambition, for I know him incapable of that, but to what he thinks to be the interests of his people?"

"I think," said Seti slowly, "that he might be willing to sacrifice himself for such an object, but would feel that he has no right to sacrifice you. Sacrifices of this sort must be voluntary."

"Then I am safe," she exclaimed, "for my will is all another way, and it has passed beyond my control. If a victim is needed for our people, let father lay me on an altar of stone or earth, as did our father Abraham his son Isaac, and I will die by his hand gladly; but to die all my life long on such an altar as Tiberius—this is beyond my power, even for the good of Israel. It seems to me an awful wickedness. I abhor the very thought of it."

"And so do I," said Seti. "I do not believe in doing evil that good may come, pagan though I——" (she put her hand over his mouth). "But they say that Germanicus is not a Tiberius, but is like his father, who was among the very best of the Romans, both in character and accomplishments; and is it not just possible that if the young man should come here in person to plead his own cause you would——"

"I would *not*, grandfather; if he should come to me with his head weighted with all the diadems that ever

were worn, and with all the personal accomplishments that ever managed to flourish on a heathen, I would turn my back upon him. There, now! Bear witness, ye heavens!"

"I think I understand you," replied Seti, after a moment. "I feel very much as you do about this matter, heathen though——" (she again hurried her hand to his mouth). "But do not speak in this way to others. I see that the matter is getting abroad, and you will be likely to get hints, inquiries, counsels, congratulations from many quarters. Take refuge in silence. By all means do not look like an empress, and an angry one, as you did just now. You shall not be crowded into the imperial throne for the sake of Israel, or for any other sake."

She kissed him for answer; laid her head on his bosom; and, exhausted, went to sleep as he softly stroked her shapely head. So he sat and held her in his arms till the day was spent, and the old moon in the arms of the new looked in at the casement, and saw the new moon in the arms of the old. And those moons aloft that are never weary, and worried, and worn, shed tears over the sublunary ones whose lot is so different—tears which the very early risers in Alexandria, the next morning, mistook for dew. They were plain people; and, like most in University towns, were not much wiser for the University.

XII.

THE VANISHING.

Καιρὸς πρὸς ἀνθρώπων βραχὺ μέτρον ἔχει.

—PINDAR, *Pyth.* iv. 509.

Opportunity for men has a brief measure.

1. Where are they?
2. Call on the governor.
3. Invoke the University.
4. Let PISO do his best
5. Where is God?

XII.

THE VANISHING.

EARLY the next morning Seti knocked at the door of our friends. Getting no answer, he repeated the knock. Still hearing nothing, he opened the door and went in. The room was vacant ; as was also the sleeping-room adjoining. Plainly the latter had not been occupied during the night. He was alarmed.

Summoning two servants to follow him, he proceeded to the khan with rapid steps. What was his dismay to learn from the landlord that, shortly after Cimon and Aleph came in, the evening before, a body of the city police appeared and demanded to search their room for jewelry stolen from the warehouse of Malus. Permission being readily given, the Cretan agent of Malus, well known in the city, who accompanied the party and conducted the search, went fumbling about on his hands and knees in the darker parts of the room ; and finally held up, with an exclamation of delight, a small casket which he declared was the missing article, and had been missing ever since Cimon's visit to the warehouse. Whereupon the chief of the police showed a warrant for arresting Cimon. The young man protested, and declared that he saw the Cretan slyly whip the casket out of the bosom of his own tunic. But the older man

thought that the police were right in claiming that they had no option in the case—he would go with them without resistance, and his friend could take such measures on the morrow for his relief as he might find best. So he went off with the party, leaving the young man standing at the gate.

But this party had scarcely disappeared, when a band of Roman soldiers came up and surrounded Aleph. “Are you Aleph, the Chaldean?” demanded the leader.

“So I am called,” said the young man.

“Then we have been sent to arrest you.”

“For what?” demanded Aleph.

“For assault and battery here last night; and as a suspected enemy of the emperor.”

“Show me your warrant,” demanded the young man.

The leader produced a document bearing what purported to be the seal and signature of the governor. “Is this document genuine?” said Aleph to the landlord, who was standing by. The landlord looked at the paper and nodded.

“Then I will go with you,” said the young man calmly. “But may I not first communicate my situation to my friends, that they may have an opportunity to set me right with the authorities?”

“We were not authorized to allow delay for any purpose.”

“You will have to delay,” said Aleph, “for the purpose of hearing and allowing these by-standers” (several of the guests of the khan had by this time come up) “to hear me declare that I am innocent of the charges brought against me, and can prove as much, opportunity being given me.”

A soldier approached to bind him. Aleph motioned him away with his cane. "I have said that I will go with you. I now say that I will go with you without attempting to escape while going, provided you leave me free and in possession of this cane. Otherwise the man who approaches me does so at his peril."

After some consultation his demand was granted; and he went off quietly with the party, saying to the landlord as he went, "You can at least tell what you have seen and heard."

Such was the account given to Seti. He remained merely to ask a simple question: "Could there be any doubt as to the party being real Roman soldiers?" The landlord thought not: they had the equipment of Roman soldiers; and, besides, their bearing and step together were professional.

The high-priest hastened back to the Serapeum, assumed his pontifical robes, summoned a large train of servants, and proceeded in his official chariot, drawn by four white mules, to the Roman headquarters in Bruchium. Arrived at the palace of the governor, a herald stepped before the gate, blew a trumpet, and cried: "Seti of the Serapeum, high-priest of Egypt and metropolitan, desires audience of Avilleus Flaccus, Proprætor and Legate of Cæsar and Governor of Egypt."

In a few moments the gates were thrown open, and the whole party entered a large court, where, at the foot of a flight of marble steps, Seti alighted and was conducted by an obsequious usher into the audience-room and presence of the Roman governor.

Seti was dignified and formal; coolly saluting his

excellency with all the usual formalities, but not a jot beyond. On the other hand, Flaccus, an ordinary man to look at but wearing the extraordinary toga permitted to the imperial representative, was exceedingly demonstrative and deferential in welcoming his illustrious visitor. He seemed to feel that, belonging only to the Equestrian Order and with no ancestors save those whose names had been written with water and in water, he was socially far from being equal to the freezingly cold and stately Egyptian pontiff whose sires had reigned in palaces and temples before Rome was founded.

Seti cut short the ceremonial. Would the governor be good enough to say whether he had given an order for the arrest of a regularly enrolled member of the University, an inmate of the Serapeum, and a particular friend of himself and the Alabarch Alexander?

Flaccus appeared to consult his memory. He did not remember to have given any such order.

“An order to arrest one Aleph, the Chaldean, as a disturber of the public peace and a suspected enemy of the emperor?” suggested Seti.

No, he did not think that he could have given such an order.

“An order executed last evening by a company of Roman soldiers?” continued the priest in the same icy tone.

“Certainly not.”

“I am glad to hear it, and to have your authority for denying the report that is getting abroad. It may also be for your interest to deny it personally as you have opportunity; for the young man in question is a great favorite, not only with the Alabarch and myself, but

also with the young men in the University, who represent the noblest Roman families and a great interest with the emperor and the Cæsar."

"I think," said Flaccus, with a not very successful attempt at an arch look, "that I know of somebody who is likely to have more interest with Germanicus than any of them."

"However that may be," said Seti emphatically, "it is certain that the young man will have such justice as our best efforts can secure."

"What can I do?" said the Roman uneasily.

"I will tell your excellency," said the Egyptian. "It is understood in the city that a party of Roman soldiers, under a written warrant from you, arrested and carried off, we know not where, a privileged member of the University, for whom the best vouchers can be found. But, as I now learn from you, that warrant must have been forged; and what appeared to be Roman soldiers, were not such, but other parties in disguise. Now I would respectfully suggest that you give me and the other friends of the young man written authority to search for and rescue him at whatever cost to those who have carried him off. This will answer our purpose, and at the same time serve to defend you from the suspicions of the people."

Flaccus hesitated, bit his lip, twirled a gold badge that hung from his neck, looked at every object in the room save Seti. Seti looked at nothing save him.

The priest rose to go. "Time is of great consequence to me this morning. Am I to understand that your excellency declines to authorize me in writing to rescue from robbers and murderers a young man for whom the

Alabarch and myself, as well as the University at large, offer to stand vouchers?"

"I do not see why you need a written authorization from me," said Flaccus, beginning to sharpen a reed.

"I did not say that *we* need such a document. *You* need to give it." He said this last in a low but a very distinct and measured tone of voice.

"Well, I will give it," said the governor with sudden decision—"if it will oblige you and your friends."

"It *will* oblige us," said Seti; and in a few moments he took punctilious leave with the desired document in his possession.

He returned at once to the Serapeum. Resuming his ordinary dress, he proceeded to the lecture room, where, as yet, he found only two or three students, among whom was Publius Cornelius. He beckoned them to him, and asked such co-operation as they could give in a matter he was about to bring before the whole class. Shortly they came pouring in, rather obstreperously, I fear, as college boys have been wont to do from the beginning; but as soon as they set eyes on their teacher there was a profound hush; for they saw at once that something unusual had happened—that the Seti they had hitherto known had given place to quite a different Seti and a much younger man. All the old dignity and authority were in his face and bearing; but somehow there had come into the old look a roused and forceful expression such as a crisis might be expected to call out in a young man largely endowed both as a man of thought and action. Calm, watchful, mindful of all that is passing and likely to pass, prepared to throw his whole force into action at a moment's warning. All the students were in a hush of

expectation as they saw the new man sitting on the old bema.

He began with saying that he had no lecture for them that morning. But he had something better than a lecture—an opportunity for a good action. He then concisely and simply narrated his morning experiences, and held up the document he had obtained from Flaccus. Perhaps the young man had been killed. Perhaps he was only imprisoned in some out-of-the-way place. It was for his friends to find out the facts as soon as possible. He knew of none who could do as prompt and good service in the matter as the generous-minded fellow-students of the extraordinary young man who had so commended himself to their admiration. Would they undertake it?"

The response was instantaneous. Many sprang to their feet, with flushed faces and hot, indignant words.

"A conspiracy!" cried one.

"An insult to the University," cried another. Some called out "*Draco*" interrogatively; and others, of the bolder and more highly connected of the Romans, among whom was Publius Cornelius, shook their fists significantly in the direction of the Cæsareum. One thing was evident to the watchful eye of Seti—that there would be no lack of sympathetic readiness on the part of the Sераpeum to act as he wished. What did he wish?

This was brought out by Cornelius, who declared that they were all of one mind to further any plan that their venerable instructor might have to propose; and moved that a committee be appointed to confer with him as to what had best be done. He also proposed that this committee should secure the co-operation of the Museum, which he had no doubt would be enthusiastically given.

“Besides,” he added, as he repeated his emphatic gesture toward the north-east, “the Museum is nearer than ourselves to the sources of this mischief and can explore them better.”

A committee was appointed—including Cornelius. These gathered about Seti. His plan was that some students should find out whether Draco and the son of Flaccus were present in the city all the last night—that others should find out whether any soldiers were then absent from their quarters, and if so to whose force they belonged—that still others should watch the gates and harbors for their return and note the time and direction of it—that still others should rummage the streets, especially in the neighborhood of the khan Rachotis, for some who had observed the party, noticed the direction they took, perhaps witnessed an embarkation. The students interested were so many, they could, by properly distributing themselves, make all these inquiries at once. No time should be lost. Let them report to him.

Feeling sure that the young men would need no further impulse, the priest left them, and, stopping at his room for the parcel which Cimon had put in his hands, proceeded to the office of Alexander’s legal adviser. This was in a wing of the extensive palace of the great banker whose affairs furnished the greater part of the business of the lawyer. The man was both a Roman and a Greek—his father being from Tusculum, and his mother from Athens. He possessed in a remarkable degree the mental characteristics of both nations—the practical and resolute character of the one, and the acuteness and subtlety of the other. To a profound knowledge of Roman law, especially as applied in the provinces, he added a familiar

acquaintance with the usages of Alexandria as a business community—having lived in the city from childhood. Alexander early discovered his abilities, and by degrees made him a confidential adviser in legal matters, especially after he became a proselyte and attached himself to the Diapleuston.

Marcus Piso was not much of a man to look at—at the first look. Small, slender, somewhat stooping, no longer young—it was necessary to be with him for a time and watch his face and manner—his keen eye and protuberant brow—as he dispatched business with one and another. Then he inspired confidence both as to his ability and integrity. Then one said, “Alexander is not mistaken in his man.”

The little man did *not* show to advantage as he rose to receive his imposing visitor. But, what was better under the circumstances, he at once conducted Seti to an inner office and listened with all his ears, and eyes too, to a brief account of our friends, of what had just transpired, and of the measures taken for the discovery of Aleph.

“I tell you these facts,” said Seti, “to interest you as much as possible in these men whom the Alabarch and myself intend to support and befriend to the utmost of our power.”

“I have been strongly interested in them ever since the affair at the Diapleuston, which I happened to witness; and my thoughts were running on them when you came in; for news of the arrest of Cimon for theft had just reached me.”

“As if a man having credit with Alexander to the amount of 200,000 gold staters was likely to pilfer! No, the charge and the arrest were gotten up to prevent or

discredit an impending suit by Cimon against Malus. And Aleph has been killed, or spirited away, partly to aid the same purpose, and partly to gratify the malice of certain others whose names you can guess."

Seti then produced Cimon's parcel, and continued: "I am told that you will find in this parcel all needful particulars in regard to the proposed suit against Malus. Please examine it at once and if you find it warrants legal proceedings institute them without delay. Of course Malus is strongly entrenched and will fight to the death; but we will back you with all our forces. I am sure that I speak for Alexander as well as for myself. Meanwhile, whatever you can do to cancel or relieve the imprisonment of Cimon, please do. The case of the young man I will look after myself."

Seti's next visit was to Rachel—not by way of the street, but by a private door in the inner office of the advocate, by which he was accustomed to communicate with the banker. He found his granddaughter in Miriam's room. And he saw at once, in the looks of the two women, that the evil news had preceded him. Miriam looked totally exhausted, and lay on her bed feebly moaning, with closed eyes; her hand held by Rachel. As to Rachel herself, Seti was struck by the change that had taken place. A touch of mingled amazement and suffering was in her face; but into the profoundly emotional expression had come "*nescio quod preclarum et singulare*"—a look of self-control that had been fought for and taken possession of by fire and sword; such a victory that another like it would be ruin. A certain new and powerful expression was in every feature. Lights and shadows of the heroic were hiding in the

depths of her eyes and in the curves of her lips. She came and sat on a stool at his feet.

“Grandfather, we have tried to wait patiently for you. You see that we know all. Now tell us what you have done ; for I know you have done something.”

Seti told of his morning movements.

“Do you think it possible that they have *killed* him?” she asked with awe in her voice and white lips.

“Sometimes I think not ; and yet it would be hard to give my reasons. His enemies are capable of any crime. Perhaps the only ground of my opinion or feeling that he has not been killed is the wonderful resources, both of body and mind, which he has for self-protection. I have never seen a young man with such powers, and such a complete and never-failing mastery of them. He is a natural prince and hero, and somehow and somewhere has had a training to match. He is just the man for great and desperate situations. He is an empire in himself. I hardly wonder at Cornelius, who says of him that he has in his veins the blood of the immortal gods. Body and soul, he is built like a temple. What Karnac was, Aleph the Chaldean is.”

“It is even so, grandfather,” murmured the maiden ; and she buried her burning face in her hands.

“This gives me hope,” continued Seti. “Besides, as I have told you, he refused to be bound or to give up his staff ; and the same wariness that led him to retain this means of defense would be apt to keep him on his guard against assault. Yes, such a great and resourceful nature would not be killed easily.”

“Say *not at all*, grandfather. Let us not *imagine*

such a thing, lest it take the heart out of us," and she shuddered.

Seti looked at her keenly for a moment. She suddenly drew herself up as she sat, tossed away with both hands the heavy tresses that had fallen over her face, and looked up with wide-open eyes into his. He laid his hand tenderly on her head, and sighed before saying :

"It is as you say. We must hope for the best if we would escape the worst. Aleph the Chaldean *is* a living prisoner somewhere, and we must find and release him as soon as possible. So I must go."

"Take Miriam and me as active, though invisible, partners in this matter, dear grandfather," pleaded Rachel. "It is necessary for us if not for you. We cannot sit here and wait, and wait, with folded hands till somebody brings us word of what others are doing, or trying to do. It would kill us. We have kept ourselves alive thus far only by praying : now we must have something to do to help our praying. You see how the case stands with me—it is a *necessity*."

"But what can you do?"

"We can at least *try* to do in some womanly ways. This will be a relief to us. You are working by means of the famous University ; perhaps we can work quite as effectively by a humbler class of agents. At least we can *try* : and our thinking and planning may save us if they do not save him. In my father's absence I want your approval."

"I think you are right," said the priest slowly. "So be it, then. It may be that your womanly devisings will be the first to penetrate the mystery. I shall not complain if it prove so."

Seti kissed her and departed, saying to himself, "Some trees are killed by decapitation, but this tree becomes thriftier and fairer than ever."

Was it decapitation? Well, if it was not that, it was something that marvellously resembled it. Seti was an experienced man, and his faculty of insight was great: and I would sooner take his judgment in the matter than that of most. He thought the trial that had befallen his granddaughter terribly severe. I think the same. I should be sorry to have that stroke repeated. Nobly as the first blow has been borne, I could not answer for a second. There are limits to successful pruning. A plant may be decapitated once too often. Seti thought so too, and he carried away with him a greater burden than he brought; for now he understood that the question was no longer how to save Aleph, but how to save Aleph and Rachel.

The Egyptian went home praying—praying to *Amun Re*. An able lawyer, an enthusiastic University, a resourceful high-priest armed with an official document, were all very well in their place; but they needed presiding over and empowering by the Supernatural. Would He do it? In the course of his long observation, Seti had known some striking cases of poetical justice in human affairs. The wicked had been taken in their own toils. Into the pits they had dug for their neighbors they had fallen themselves. But it was often otherwise. The righteous had fallen before the wicked. Craft and power and powerful money had proved too mighty for goodness and justice. If good causes had always thrived, the Romans would not be in Egypt, nor Flaccus in the Cæsareum, nor Malus in the grandest warehouse of

Emporium Street. So who can tell what *Amun Re* will do? And yet prayer is the breath of the nations and the ages. Nature herself says, *Let us pray*.

So the thoughts of Seti prayed, and prayed mightily, as he bent his steps to the Serapeum.

XIII.

THE SEARCH.

Ἄλλοτ' ἄλλοῖσι διαιθύσσουσιν ἄνραι.

—PINDAR, *Olymp.* vii. 173.

Different winds rush in different directions.

1. Oh, for Ariadne!
2. Leaping to a conclusion
3. Domestics at new work.
4. Pharos and some stars.

XIII.

THE SEARCH.

RACHEL went and sat by the bedside, in long silence. At length she began unconsciously to think aloud—at first slowly and with long pauses ; then more rapidly.

“They have *not* killed him. Then they have taken him out of the city to confine him somewhere. . . . The shortest and least embarrassed way out of the city would be by the gate of the Moon to Mareotis. . . . Here boat would be taken. Where would it go ? There is no place where a prisoner could be confined on the islands of the lake or on the southern shore—none in the pleasure-villas on the banks of the canal connecting the lake with the Nile—none on the Nile itself till one comes to the fortress that once belonged to the family of Seti, but now is in possession of the Roman governor. I have it—there *are* dungeons there, and Sextus Flaccus has access to them, and they are well away from observation. *That* is the place where they have carried him.”

Her face flushed, and her eyes flashed with sudden decision. “Grandfather’s way may be sure, but it is slow ; and by the time he finds his way up the Nile to the Setian stronghold it may be too late. I will leap to a conclusion.”

She at once summoned all the domestics of the household. Did any of them know of a traveling merchant, accustomed to carry his wares from house to house along the east bank of the Nile? Several knew of such a person. Was he a Jew? Was he of the Diapleuston? Was he quick-witted and prudent? Was he now in the city? Receiving an affirmative answer to all these questions, she at once dispatched a man who professed to know where the peddler could be found, to bring him without delay.

In less than an hour her messenger returned with the very peddler whose acquaintance we made in the first chapter of this narrative. She looked at him narrowly. He was not an attractive object—what with his poor clothes, his unkempt hair, and his excessive obsequiousness. But he did look shrewd and to a degree reliable. At all events she must try him. So she told him that she had heard a favorable account of his intelligence and discretion; that she wanted to employ such a man to go up the Nile as far as the Setian palace on a confidential mission. She wished to find out, without the knowledge of any armed force that might be there, whether a young man is held in confinement in the palace. And she thought that, if he would furnish himself with such a pack of goods as seemed most likely to attract the servants and others about the premises, he might incidentally contrive to get from them the desired information. She would furnish the goods, and, besides, reward him richly for the service.

“Is the young man tall and marvelously well proportioned?” inquired the Jew.

“He is.”

“Has he the face of Moses, and the bearing of a king?”

“So it is said.”

“Is it not he who on the last Sabbath defended our synagogue from sacrilege?”

“It is.”

“Then,” said the peddler, “I will do what the lady asks of me—not for her rewards, though Father Abraham knows that I am poor enough. I will do it for the young man’s sake, who can beat the heathen at their own weapons. I can beat them in trade; but it is a satisfaction to me to see them beaten after another fashion.”

“Have you ever been at the palace?” inquired Rachel.

“Often, in the way of trade. An old Egyptian and his wife, a Jewess, keep the place when the governor is not there, and are employed about the premises in some way at all times.”

“Here is a purse of gold. Make up your pack as attractive to these people as possible. Stay with them as long as you can. Be ingenious. Keep eyes and ears open. Spare no money nor promises that will help your object. I will see that your promises are fulfilled. Take the first boat going south; be put ashore at a little distance from the palace; then do the best an ingenious man can, to find out whether Aleph, the Chaldean, is confined there, and, if so, how he may be released. Return or send as soon as possible. But stop——”

She went to a desk, and wrote on a small sheet of papyrus as follows: “Your friends have found you. You shall have help soon.—R.”

She handed the paper to the Jew, saying, “Should

you find him, perhaps you may be able to get this to him."

The man hastened away. What should she do now, and during the days that might pass before she could hope to hear from the peddler? To sit still and wait, she felt to be impossible. Was there anything more she could be doing to keep her heart from preying on itself? She asked the question of Miriam as well as of herself.

Miriam had quickened and strengthened bodily under the rousing of thought and care for one outside of herself, and was sitting up thoughtfully in her bed. Yes, she thought that something further might be done. She doubted whether the students would be as good at getting information from the town-people as would some others. The frequent broils and jealousies between the two classes would put inquirers at a disadvantage. And, then, the people who would be most likely to notice the abduction, because most likely to be abroad in the evening, would be the humbler classes, whose homes had little to attract them. The humble stall-keepers; the daily workmen hanging about the street-corners; the street-boys, brimful of curiosity, afraid of nothing, ready to run after anything unusual; the water-men, that wait for jobs at the gate of the Moon or on the lake-wharves, would be more likely to notice and more free to speak of, to people of their own class, the passing of the soldiers.

"Suppose we ask the servants," said she, "whether they know any of their own class living on the route from the khan to the Gate—any workmen, or watermen, or waifs likely to have been in that neighborhood waiting for what might turn up. If they themselves do not know of any such, they will be likely to know some who do; and

so inquiries may be set in motion through all the humbler classes. Give the servants a holiday—several holidays, if necessary. We can dispense with them. I feel a return of my old vigor—the God of Israel be praised!” and, to the surprise of Rachel, the woman drew herself from the bed into a chair that stood by the side of it.

Rachel was too much absorbed in her object and plans to spend any time in speculating on that mysterious connection of the soul with the body that enables the former in its roused state to infuse its own healthy vigor into the latter. But she was glad that the pressure of circumstances had so opportunely transformed the helpless into a helper, and only begged her not to exert herself too much, as she carefully drew the wraps about her.

Rachel welcomed the suggestions of Miriam; and soon the many servants of that large household were abroad seeking for information, or seeking those who could seek it better than themselves.

Toward the close of the day Seti appeared to report that Sextus Flaccus had been found to have been in the city all the previous night, and that, apparently, no soldiers had been absent from their quarters. But Draco had disappeared from early in the evening, and had been traced to Mareotis—this seemed to Rachel a particle of light. No reports as yet from the students watching the gates and harbors, or from those seeking traces within the city. Rachel told Seti of the supplementary measures she had taken for getting information within the city, but she said nothing of the peddler and his expedition. I hardly know why. Perhaps it was because she thought the womanly logic of the movement would not commend itself to a philosopher.

The next morning Miriam was still better—indeed almost seemed to forget in her new object of absorbing interest that she was an invalid at all. As yet the servants had made no report; having come in late the night before and gone out again before light in the morning. Inactive waiting is an uneasy business at the best; so Rachel determined to have as little of it as possible. She sent off a servant with a basket of provisions to the house of the peddler with instructions to learn at what hour he left the city and in what sort of craft; for there was almost as much difference then as now in the speed of vessels. She found that the active man, within an hour from the time he left her, had managed to provide himself with a more attractive pack than he had ever before carried, and to get on board a well-appointed merchant vessel just starting southward with a fair wind and not a few oars. This was some comfort. She prayed that the wind might follow fast, and that the rowers might be able and willing at their toil.

In the course of the day another small comfort (small and transient like the scarcely perceptible shade of greenness that sometimes comes even in the heart of winter, for a few hours, to some sunny nook and then retreats as fast as it came) came with some scraps of information brought in by the servants. They reported that the company of soldiers had been noticed at different points in the Egyptian quarter; and, on comparing these points, the women saw that they meant a movement toward the gate of the Moon. This was a much-needed encouragement to Seti, who came in the evening to say that the students had as yet been able to draw no information from the people whatever. They seemed to regard all

the inquiries with suspicion, as if they meant some College prank against which their best refuge was silence. What so many students wanted to know they would do well to conceal. So the young men spoke to deaf ears and silent tongues. Still they would not discontinue their inquiries. They hoped that all their ravens would not come home to roost.

The next day added considerably to the stock of information. Several street-boys who were hanging about the gate and wharves on the night in question had been ferreted out in their various dens by the servants, and agreed that a company of soldiers with a prisoner passed through the gate while they were there, and took boat to a larger craft lying out some little distance in the lake. On their part the students had discovered that the pleasure-galley of the Flacci had been absent from its station ever since the same evening, and had been seen by a waterman steering toward the canal and the Nile. Rachel was now so satisfied that her first movement was a wise one that she told Seti of it. He was glad that so time-saving a measure had been adopted; and returned to inform the students that such traces had been discovered that they need no longer continue their inquiries in the city, but should hold themselves in readiness to co-operate in another movement that might be necessary. He now felt quite sure that the soldiers employed in the abduction were *discharged* soldiers—men who from age and other reasons were no longer in active service—of whom there were not a few in the city quite ready to lend themselves to the purposes and the pay of such a man as Sextus Flaccus.

Immersed in her cares for Aleph, Rachel had neg-

lected till to-day to inquire about Cimon and his affairs. For this she blamed herself roundly. But she was glad to learn that her father's solicitor had found Cimon's papers very complete as against Malus, had formally instituted a suit, had been able as Cimon's official advocate to procure admittance to him and arrange for his comfort till his trial should come off, that the chief clerk of Malus, who had been discharged by him as soon as he learned how liberal of business information he had been to Cimon, had come to him with valuable evidence. Three suits were to come off in the following order—(1) The suit of Malus against Shaphan and Nathan, (2) the suit of Malus against Cimon, (3) the suit of Cimon against Malus. Marcus Piso was more than satisfied with this order; for he felt that the first two trials would throw much damaging light on the character and operations of Malus and prepare the way for the success of Cimon's suit against him.

“ But then those Roman courts! Who could guarantee their equity! Would not the Flaccan influence be supreme in them and in favor of the supreme criminal in whose misdeeds it had long participated! The Most High only knows! If possible, we must make the right of the case so plain that neither court nor government can go against it without the whole people crying *shame* on them. And this I am more and more inclined to think can be done.” . . . So encouraged Marcus Piso. At the same time, with a shadow on his face, he admitted that the devil was strong.

The next day was the Sabbath. The family of Alexander were very strict in their observance of the day, but not so unreasonably strict as to refuse works of necessity

and mercy. Miriam (now wonderfully improved) and Rachel would not have hesitated to plan and do, to any extent, in so urgent a case as that of Aleph if they could have seen opportunity. But, until they should hear from the peddler, what more could be done? Certainly nothing but praying. So they gave themselves wholly to this mighty form of working. The God of Israel, so pitiful and so powerful, and who had said, "Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee," was invoked that day with an energy and whole-heartedness that seemed bound to cross all the spaces and make its way to the very foothold of the Throne. Till the public services at the Diapleuston, the women were scarcely off their knees for a moment.

At the synagogue, to her surprise, Rachel found Seti seated where Cimon and Aleph had been placed on the last Sabbath. She went and sat down by him for a few moments, placing her hand in his; and then went to her own place. The selections from the Law and the Prophets by her uncle Philo, as well as his remarks that followed, seemed to her to have a most positive though veiled reference to the case, which she felt was by this time weighting all their minds with its certainties and uncertainties. She felt it good to be there. There was something soothing and supporting in the sympathetic atmosphere. And so she lingered after the conclusion of the services.

While thus lingering, she noticed a woman of the humbler class trying to make her way somewhat impatiently toward her through the slow-moving crowd. As soon as she came near enough the woman thrust into her hand a paper rudely folded and at once passed on with the rest of the retiring congregation. Rachel opened the

paper at once, and with some difficulty deciphered the following :

“ He is here. They are trying to starve him. I can prevent that for a little ; but the custodes will take no decisive step till they have had my promises in your behalf confirmed by your own lips.”

When she had finished reading the scrawl she found Seti standing by her side and drawing her arm within his. It was timely. Unsupported she might have fallen. It was a flash of light that she had longed for, but it had in it something of the threat and terribleness of a flash of lightning. It revealed, but it revealed an urgent danger. Her agitation remained voiceless till they had reached home and Seti had read the letter. It lifted a cloud from his brow. Now they knew that Aleph was still alive, knew where to find him, could make some reasonable plan for his rescue. He congratulated her. Early to-morrow they would go up the river in the galley of Alexander, well-equipped with resolute men. Perhaps he would ask some of the students to follow at a distance in another galley. They might not be needed ; but it was well to overlap emergencies with our provisions. At all events, the young men would be gratified—and they deserved to be. He had never thought so well of young men since he was a young man himself. Especially of Cornelius. Such unselfish enthusiasm and untiring effort in behalf of a confessed superior, such hearty use of his influence and leadership to further all plans in aid of Aleph—why, they spoke almost as loudly for Rome as Tiberius and the Flacci did against it!

The clouds on the horizon had begun to redden. Was it from the rising or the setting sun? Neither Seti

nor Rachel could tell; for they did not know the east and west of Providence. It was indeed something to have found that Aleph was still living (a fact which they had compelled themselves to assume, but which phantoms with mocking faces and whispering voices were all the while challenging at both ears); also that he was at the Setian palace. Now they could localize and focalize their exertions in his behalf. This was at first a very sensible relief. But, in finding these facts, they had also found that their friend was in the hands of a body of desperadoes who were seeking his life. Might they not succeed before the swiftest help could reach him? Perhaps they had succeeded already. That single poor peddler was a mighty thin partition between life and death. So the clouds which had thinned away somewhat soon thickened up again into the old blackness. Through the live-long night the waves of hope and fear alternately beat on the vexed strands whose names were Seti and Rachel.

The wear and tear of such times are very great on some people. A single night has been known to bow a form as stately as Seti's—to blanch tresses as young and beautiful as Rachel's. But let us hope the best for both sufferers. One of them is strong in youth, the other is strong in age. Neither will be easily overborne. Neither is a stretch of low-lying sands, easily loosened and carried out to sea in rough weather. Both are highlands, fronted and ribbed with rocks for the sea to dash and roar upon—rocky convictions of the supernatural, rocky faith in a divine government, rocky *meus conscia recti*. In this I find some comfort. At the same time I know that even rock-bound coasts sometimes suffer heavily in a wild time. Have I not walked on such a coast the day

after the storm has been hurling its battalions upon it and found it ragged and torn and strewn with ruins—the battle-field of yesterday? And I am far from saying but that this may be just the condition in which the sore winds and waves of their trial may leave Seti and Rachel. We must be prepared for the worst while we hope the best. Should the worst come, no heart will be sorer than mine.

XIV.

THE ARGONAUTS.

Φιλεῖ δὲ τῷ κίμοντι συσπένδειν θεός ?

—Anon.

Does God love to help the struggling good man ?

1. How best to do it.
2. Song for signal.
3. The golden fleece and dragon.
4. Hair-breadth—?
5. Even as He.

XIV.

THE ARGONAUTS.

EARLY the next morning the pinnace of Alexander was moving toward the Nile as fast as eight strong oarsmen and a fair breeze could carry it. Under a silken awning in the stern sat Seti and Rachel: while at some distance a few stout male servants in holiday attire leaned over the bulwarks, watching the water ripple away from the shapely sides, listening to the low monotonous stroke-song of the rowers as they rhythmically struck the waters, and occasionally talking together in a low tone.

Seemingly it was a holiday excursion—nothing more. The whole aspect of things on board that delicate butterfly of a vessel, including the lovely maiden in her rich robes, with her harp standing by her side, was that of a pleasure party. No one looking from shore or passing vessel would have thought that such a festival barge with its luxurious and dainty furnishings and daintier mistress was heavily weighted with anxious thoughts of peril and conflict.

To Rachel, her surroundings, from the cloudless sky and wooing breeze to the costly and delicate sea-chariot on which she was borne, seemed almost so many mockeries. Her real sky was full of clouds, her real wind was

the breath of storms, and the real galley on which her spirit was sailing was a war ship full of swords and spears and faces threatening battle. She found it very hard to cover her anxieties with the serene face and manner which she felt the situation demanded. So she kept the servants as far from her as possible, that their prying eyes and ears might not play too successfully on herself and Seti.

They were hardly well afloat before Seti began to unfold his plan of proceeding.

“It is very important,” said he, “that we implicate the Flacci, both father and son, as little as possible in this affair. The father, bad as he is, probably has nothing to do with the abduction; and so ought not to suffer on account of it. The guilty party is Sextus; who, having access to his father’s official seal and blank forms, forged the warrant for the arrest, and then employed some dissolute companions of his among the discharged Roman soldiers to execute the warrant. These having no duties in the city have not yet returned, and so the watch of the students for them has been in vain. Sextus is the great criminal in the case and deserves exposure. But, if we so manage the matter as to expose him both to his mortified father and the public, we shall be sure so to exasperate both of them as to throw their whole influence, under one pretext or another, against us in the impending suit against Malus. And that would be a very serious matter. So we must try to rescue Aleph as quietly as possible—in some way that does not direct public suspicion toward the Flacci at all. If we should appear before the castle of the governor with a sufficient force to back us, and demand the prisoner, the whole affair would

at once go abroad to the four winds, and cry FLACCUS in every ear from Pharos to the Cataracts: besides, the garrison would probably deny having the prisoner, and contrive some way of disposing of him before we could effect an entrance. So the best way for us is to persuade the custodes to give Aleph the means of making his own escape; and we can be near to receive him and carry him quietly back to the city—saying nothing as to where he was found and how rescued. If this plan fails we must, of course, resort to rougher methods.”

“Do you think,” inquired the maiden, “that Aleph would have submitted so quietly to the arrest had he not supposed it made by the proper authorities?”

“Certainly not. He yielded to what he supposed to be the government of the country in which for the time being he was living.”

“In that case, if he were assured that the arrest was pronounced unwarranted by the governor, and that he was expressly allowed to free himself by any means, would he not be likely to make great efforts to free himself?”

“Doubtless, if opportunity could be found. But how is he to break down an iron door with his hands, or, with his hands dig through massive stone walls settled together and cemented by ages? I know that dungeon well. It is the strongest in all Egypt. Supreme strength and courage must have opportunity. Genius must have some capital of favorable circumstance on which to work. Even heroes must have ground on which to stand, and scope for their arms. No, I know the place too well to think that our young friend, full of resources as he is, can do anything to help himself till he is at least outside

of the dungeon, or till some fitting tools have been introduced into it."

"I knew the castle belonged to your ancestors, and is rightfully yours; but I did not suppose that you knew anything about the interior."

"See here!" said the Egyptian, as he drew from the folds of his robe a parchment discolored by age, and unrolled it before her. "Here is a plan of the whole structure, cellars and dungeon included. This has come down to me through many generations, together with a written description of every part of the structure; and, though I have never set foot in it, I think I could find my way about it without the least difficulty. There has always lingered in the family a vague faith, be it superstition or not, that this noblest of the ancient Egyptian palaces was destined to come back to us some day; and so the eldest in our line has always made it a point to know as much about the structure as if he were in actual possession."

"Explain the plan to me, my dear grandfather. It may somehow help us in what we have to do. I, too, would like to be able to thread my way alone over the whole."

"Heaven (*your* Heaven) forbid that you shall have need to do so. Still, we have leisure for an explanation, at least in part; and it will be in the way of our family custom. This line (pointing) represents the high and massive stone wall that surrounds the whole palace, together with extensive grounds in the rear. There are three gates to this all surrounding wall—one in front, opening on a flight of steps to the river by which the master and his friends come and go; the others far

back on the north and south sides and chiefly used by servants for communicating with the little hamlets that lie, one above and the other below the palace. On the river side of the inclosure rises the quadrangle of the palace. The front and two connected sides contain the state and family apartments: the rear is given up to servants and the various offices belonging to them. Of course the soldiers are quartered in this last. We will only study this part now. It is of only a single story above ground. Right here in the middle is a large room where doubtless the soldiers eat and drink: to the right and left of it are their lodging rooms and the kitchens. Directly under this common and mess room is the single dungeon of the castle, connected by a flight of steps with the mess room, and also by another flight through a heavy iron door with the rear grounds of the castle. One can reach the dungeon only through the iron door or by descending from the common mess room. The wine and provision cellars are to the right and left of the dungeon, and a narrow passage runs before the whole."

"Has the dungeon any light and ventilation?" inquired Rachel anxiously.

"Only through the narrow grated opening in the wall by which food can be introduced without opening the door; and the narrow passage before all the vaults is only dimly lighted by a barred opening near the ceiling at either end."

"Would Aleph have light enough to read a note or this plan of yours?"

"It may be. Such eyes as his can do what mine could not. I have sometimes thought that they furnished their own light. But whoever could put a note through

that grate could introduce a narrow lamp or taper also."

"If a pointed iron bar could be secretly introduced by the custodes through the grate, would Aleph be able to pry open the door?"

"Impossible—at least without making so much noise as to rouse the soldiers."

"Perhaps they are revellers," she said reflectively, "and, having free access to the wine cellars, have frequent carousals and even stupid drunkenness."

"Very likely; almost certainly," Seti exclaimed. "They are the boon companions of Sextus; and, like him, will not miss an opportunity of indulgence. If we can only gain over the custodes, we might so drug their wine as to stupefy their drunkenness still more, so that loud noises would not rouse them. This deserves to be thought of; and, fortunately, I happen to have with me for another purpose a drug which I think will answer. But we must not depend on this plan alone. If one expedient should fail, we must have another to fall back upon."

"And what is that?"

"We must persuade the custodes to get possession of the key of the dungeon. This ought not to be impossible, if the soldiers have a drunken carouse every night, as seems to me very likely. But we cannot be very specific in our plans till we have seen the peddler and custodes, and know exactly what the situation is."

Rachel said nothing more, but pored over the plan of the palace. At length she drew from a small ivory box by her side an ink horn and papyrus, and proceeded to

make a fair copy of the plan—adding some jottings of explanation as Seti had given them. She then put both original and copy in his hands. He compared the two, nodded, and looked at her inquiringly.

“I mean, if it is possible, to get this to him with the iron bar.”

He silently returned the copy.

Meanwhile the pinnace had been steadily pressing on its way. It passed through the canal, it turned up the Nile, it went sweeping by crocodile and hippopotamus and ibis sporting in the water or sunning by the banks, it met corn ship, and Roman galley, and Nubian dory, and skin-raft loaded with brick and stone, and, occasionally, a pleasure barge freighted to overflowing with the laughter and song of the young and gay. The peasants on the banks for a moment stopped work at their trenching and water wheels to gaze at the beautiful vessel, the Nautilus of the Nile, and perchance to envy those who reclined under its snowy wings and silken canopy. Ah, little did they know what anxieties were aching away at the heart of all that beauty and costliness! The breeze toyed with the sails, the waters rippled and gleamed and laughed away from the decorated prow, the oars rose and sank in a water-song of their own that kept time with the low chant of the rowers—there was music of all sorts filtering through the dreamy air—but under that awning of silk and purple there was only the music of prayer and, it may be, of some hope that the Most High would not allow the wicked to triumph. But prayer was the chief thing. Much silent planning and resolving was done during the latter part of the voyage, but there was more silent praying than either.

“Grandfather, what a comfort and help it is to pray!” as she turned toward Seti and laid her hand on his arm.

“I have found it out, my child, though not as soon as I could wish. But the knowledge will remain. Straits crowd one toward the Unseen Helper.”

And now the castle was in full view. On a promontory that curved out boldly into the river, skirted both above and below by a thick grove of mingled mimosas, acacias, sycamores, and palms, each of which groves screened a little bay and hamlet, stood a quadrangular fortress with its defiant encompassing wall. Rachel drew her harp toward her and began to play—at first softly and slowly, and then with a stronger and more rapid hand. As the pinnacle approached the castle she began to accompany the instrument with her voice: and, when fully in front, the voice surged up over the promontory in melodious billows and seemed to envelop it in floods of exultant song, every word of which was rendered with wonderful distinctness. It was a chant. It was a chant in the original tongue of these words from the Book of Daniel. “Now when he came to the den he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, ‘O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually able to deliver thee from the lions?’”

Again and again the words rose and beat their delicious music against the castle like an invading army. Seti narrowly watched the premises as the pinnacle glided by, but saw no sign of life. But as soon as they had gone a little farther, rounded the promontory, and then silently veered into the sheltered nook by the hamlet, they saw

the peddler on the wharf with his professional pack on his back.

When the vessel was fairly moored, the man begged to be allowed to come on board and exhibit his goods, which he protested were the finest and cheapest to be found outside of Alexandria. The beautiful lady would certainly find something she would like among his various stores. In short, his eloquence was so great that he was at length allowed to come on board and ostentatiously spread out his wares about Rachel and Seti.

“Say that he is living,” she almost gasped, though scarcely above a murmur.

“He is, my lady.”

“Say that food has been given him daily.”

“At least since I came.”

“Now tell us,” she said, with a firmer but still low voice, “while you slowly display your goods, piece by piece, what you have done—in as few words as possible.”

“Yes, my lady. I landed at this hamlet, and went up at once to the south gate of the palace grounds. Here I found a soldier on guard; but, on making him a small present, he allowed me to enter and seek my old acquaintances, the custodes. Fortunately I found them by themselves in an out-house—the old Egyptian and his much younger Jewish wife; the latter much the leading partner, as I had long known. I warmly saluted them as old friends, hoped they had not forgotten Ezra, assured them that I had never been so well prepared to give them a good trade as now; and proceeded to unpack and display my goods despite their protestations that they did not want anything, could not afford to buy anything, and such like nonsense. But I saw that their eyes followed

me as I spread out article after article, and that they listened well as I mentioned prices absurdly low.

“ ‘ You must have stolen these things,’ exclaimed the Jewess. ‘ Alas, that a son of Abraham should turn thief!’ ”

“ ‘ I hardly wonder,’ said I, ‘ that you suspect my honesty; for, as you so plainly see, these goods are worth many times what I ask for them. How then does it happen that I can honestly offer them so low? I will tell you. I have a very liberal friend—no less a person than the lady Rachel, daughter of the great banker Alexander; and she pities me and other poor children of our people; and it is she who makes it possible for me to let you have the goods at so low a figure. Our father Abraham knows that I could not do it otherwise.’ ”

“ ‘ As soon as I mentioned your name, I saw at once that I had touched the right chord. I have since found that she came from Alexandria, where her family in time of sickness and poverty had received much help from your family. ‘ The God of our fathers bless the pitiful and gracious lady,’ she exclaimed. ‘ Many a time has she helped me and mine.’ ”

“ ‘ And is she not the granddaughter of Seti—the high-priest and head of my race?’ inquired the Egyptian husband.

“ ‘ To be sure she is,’ I exclaimed, ‘ the worthy child of both Egypt and Israel—and I will tell you a secret (I sank my voice very low and looked cautiously about). I can tell you of a way in which you can greatly oblige these great friends of ours and get as many of these goods as you would like for just nothing—absolutely nothing.’ ”

“Their eyes opened wider and began to glisten. They drew themselves closer to me.

“‘Look you,’ said I, ‘there has been in the dungeon of this castle for the last few days a young man who is a special friend of Seti and Alexander. He was arrested without right, and spirited away from Alexandria in the night, and brought here by a company of men appearing as Roman soldiers.’

“‘Thrown off her guard, the Jewess exclaimed, ‘How did you come to know this?’

“‘No matter,’ said I, ‘it is enough that I *do* know it; and know further that if you would oblige Seti and Alexander, who have such claims on you, as well as wonderfully advantage yourselves, you have now an opportunity. If you will help them in this matter, they can and will do great things for you. It is the opportunity of a life-time.’

“‘But what can we do?’ exclaimed both custodes at once.

“‘I will tell you. But first tell me whether you have seen that goodly young man with your own eyes, and know him to have been safe and sound when he was put into the dungeon.’

“‘So he seemed by the torch-light,’ said the Jewess. ‘A goodly young man, you may well say. I never saw one half so goodly. He stood like a king among his slaves, with his great staff for a sceptre. The soldiers seemed almost as much afraid of his eye as of his staff, and plainly felt relieved when the key was turned upon him.’

“‘Has he had food and drink since then?’ I asked.

“They hesitated; and the woman looked in a troubled way at her husband.

“‘Now, by all the patriarchs,’ cried I in great excitement, ‘have they been starving this friend of Seti and Alexander all these days, and you doing nothing to help him?’

“‘Not so,’ she hastened to exclaim. ‘We thought we could not let the young man perish; and as soon as we found out that no food of any kind was being given him we managed to introduce some secretly through a grated opening in the wall originally made for that purpose. But it has been at the risk of our lives. We cannot continue. If we should be discovered he would kill us.’

“‘Whom do you mean by “he”?’ I asked.

“‘The leader among the soldiers.’

“‘What sort of a man is he?’

“‘A great, bull necked, big fisted man; with fierce and cruel and blood shot eyes, and cheeks somewhat bruised and swollen. I have heard him called Draco. This man carries the key of the dungeon at his girdle day and night. He treats us like dogs, and would kill us outright in his terrible passion should he find us out. No, we cannot afford to take such a risk for a single day longer. We were worrying over the matter when you came up.’

“‘Look here, woman!’ said I fiercely, ‘if you let this Hebrew (for he is of our faith) perish, you will have to account for it to both man and God; but, if you will give him ample food and drink daily and help us to free him, the lady Rachel promises to reward you richly—beyond what you could dream. If there is risk in the mat-

ter there is enough pay in it, too, to make it well worth your while to take the risk. But I do not see that you need to run any considerable risk. Where are these men in the night?’

“‘They always pass the best part of the night in a drunken carouse. They have found the wine cellar.’

“‘And, I dare say, by midnight they are lying about the floor of the mess room dead drunk and stupid as logs.’

“‘It may be.’

“‘And what is to hinder you from taking that time for putting food, and whatever else his friends may wish (this note for example), within reach of the prisoner? The risk must be very small. Indeed I am not sure but that you might safely steal in among the besotted and snoring brutes, cut off the key from Draco’s belt, and open the door of the dungeon. The lady Rachel would enrich you for life.’

“‘The woman threw up her hands in dismay. ‘I *could* not do it. The very idea of such a thing almost frightens me to death. Besides, how do I know that the daughter of Alexander will fulfill all your fine promises. You always did talk larger than the truth. You never spare fine talking in the way of business.’

“‘I confess this awfully embarrassed me. My habit in dealing with my customers *has* been somewhat of the ornamental and poetical sort. And now at last it had brought me into difficulty. What should I do? I silently promised myself that I would mend my ways. I protested to the woman by all things sacred that I did not misrepresent you. The miserable woman declared she would not believe me. Nothing short of your own

lips should satisfy her. If you would come and with your own mouth repeat my promises they would try to do what they could. But she shook like one in a palsy when she said it.

“ Seeing that my reputation was too much for me, sinner that I am; and that nothing better could be done, I said, ‘ You are unreasonable; but it shall be as you say. The lady will come and confirm all I have said. But meanwhile (here I drew out my bag of gold pieces) this is what she has given me to reward those who take risks in her service; and if you will daily put into the grated opening plenty of food and drink, together with whatever else I may give you, and will daily come to me in the upper hamlet where you are in the habit of going for provisions, and will swear that you have done so by the beards of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I will, each time, give you two gold pieces. And I will begin now; for I want you to put this note into the dungeon this very day. Swear to me that you will do it.’ And I held up two shining pieces in the sun.

“ Her eyes snapped. So did mine—the gold looked so dazzling and lovely in the golden sun. As for the husband, he sat with amazed eyes and open mouth, but said nothing. Neither of them had seen such gold before.

“ The woman stretched out her hand. I made her swear, gave her the note you gave me, and then gave her the two coins.

“ Just then a man shouted to them from the castle in a threatening tone; and they hurried away in a fright, while I gathered up my wares as fast as I could and went back to the hamlet. Here I scrawled a note to you, gave it to my son whom I had taken the precaution to take

with me, and put him on board of a vessel for Alexandria just then passing. Since then the custode has been to me daily, made oath that she has fed the prisoner, and received her gold pieces. She reports that Draco has gone back to the city for a day or two; but that he has left a substitute who wears the key of the dungeon at his belt, and leads off every night in the drunken debauch. I expect her every moment. It is about time for her to make her daily visit. . . . There she is with her provision basket! I will go and bring her on board."

Rachel was struck with the air of the humbly dressed and somewhat bent woman whom the peddler soon brought up to her. She looked the picture of timidity and uncertainty—as if drawn in opposite directions by powerful forces, and almost torn in pieces in the struggle between them. Her nerves were all on the wing. One could warrant that no sound sleep had come to her for many a night. She staggered rather than walked up to where Rachel was sitting.

Rachel saluted her warmly; with her own hands placed a cushion for her near herself; asked her name; by degrees drew her out to tell of her former life in Alexandria and of her bits of contact with the family of Alexander. How long had she lived here? Were there others of "our faith and race" in this neighborhood? Was she holding fast to the God of Israel? And did she hear and understand the chant from the prophet Daniel?

Seti sat silently by and listened to the gentle, soothing tones in which, without any airs of condescension and patronage, but simply as woman with woman and believer with believer, the princess talked with the peasant, till he saw the discomposure of the poor woman slowly

give way to the winsome ways of one speaking to her as from her own level. And yet what a contrast! The fresh, glorious beauty and grace, fittingly arrayed, of the one over against the faded features and crooked form and rough garments of the other! Could it be that the two were of the same race? No one who saw Rachel that day could doubt that she at least thought so, and knew how to make her lowly sister feel the same. Said Seti to himself, "The last few days have ripened her like tropical suns." There are ways in which the great may put themselves in sympathy and fellowship with the lowly without putting on their dress, eating their food, living in their cabins, and using their language.

"And this is my grandfather, Deborah," at length said Rachel, looking toward Seti, "who, though he is high-priest of Egypt, honors the God of our fathers and loves our people. He shall be witness to what I will now say to you. Our merchant friend here has told you how much interested we are to rescue the young man of our faith who is now in the castle dungeon. But Ezra was not able to tell you, as I do now, that the young man was not imprisoned by the government, but by a band of ruffians on their own private feud; and that we have in our hands a warrant from the governor to deliver him from his enemies as best we can. But there are reasons why we wish to do it as quietly as possible. Here you can help us. You have already helped us by keeping our friend from starvation. Now we want you to help us still further—in fact, to help us free him this very night. If there is any risk to you in what we shall now propose, we will reward you accordingly. We will do for you all that our agent the merchant has promised. We will make it un-

necessary for you to be a servant any more. If you choose you shall go with us to Alexandria, and live at your ease for the rest of your life. You know that we are able to do as much as we say. Now, grandfather, will you tell Deborah what we want her to do?"

"Do you and your husband draw and carry the wine every night to the soldiers?" inquired Seti.

The woman answered in the affirmative.

He went on, "Put this powder in the wine skin from which you draw. It will not hurt the taste of the wine, but the drunkards will sleep the sooner and sounder. Doubtless there is somewhere on the grounds a large pointed iron bar: is it not so?"

She replied that there was one in the provision cellar.

"It is well. In the course of the day contrive to introduce the bar, with a note which I will give you fastened to it, into the prison through the grated opening. Will you do it?"

She bent her head in assent.

One other thing—the hardest but most important of all. As soon as the mess room is quiet after the debauch, and the men are lying stupid with drunkenness and drug, steal in on tiptoe and cut off the key from the girdle of the captain, and unlock the dungeon door, if the young man has not yet succeeded in prying it open. The drug is so powerful that I think you can do it safely. If one should happen to rouse, he would, very likely, think you had come to bring more wine and relapse into his stupor. When the young man is free, conduct him to the north gate, which I know you have the key of; where we will meet you with a number of men and conduct you all to

the pinnace which by that time will be near the north hamlet. Will you do this also?"

"Oh," the woman exclaimed with almost an air of distraction, "I am *so* afraid. Those wicked, frightful men—how *can* I go in among them!"

Both Seti and Rachel talked long with her; plied her with arguments and promises; and at last had the satisfaction of seeing her more composed and firm, and of hearing her promise that she would do as they wished.

As she rose to go, Rachel grasped her hand and said, "Now be brave for a few hours and your fortune is made. Do all we have said—do just as we have said. Do it for the sake of the innocent, do it for Israel's sake, do it for our sakes who have some claims upon you, do it for your own sakes for whom this day may do so much."

As the woman was turning away, Seti held out to her a vial filled with a colored liquid. "As evening comes on pour this into a cup of water and drink it. It is a cordial. It will strengthen and steady you for what you have to do. . . . And then," he added to Rachel, "the note and plan to be fastened to the bar!"

She at once wrote thus: "To night we expect that the guard will be stupid with wine and drug. When they are fully quiet after their debauch, see what you can do toward prying open your door. If you cannot succeed, you may still hope that the door will be unlocked shortly from without. Make your way out of the castle by means of the inclosed plan, if no guide appears; and meet your friends at the north gate.—R."

She showed this to Seti, who nodded his approval. Folding her copy of the plan into the note, she gave it to the custode—charging her to put it through the grate

while it was still light enough to read the note and to see how best to attack the door. The woman departed some gold pieces richer than she came.

The peddler gathered up his wares, repacked them, and went forward with his pack. Late in the day, at a signal from Seti, the boatmen who had scattered themselves along the bank, returned, unmoored the vessel, pushed out silently into the stream, dropped silently down past the castle, and as silently warped into another sheltered nook very like that they had just left and about as far from the castle.

Here the servants spread refreshments for Rachel and her grandfather: and then a larger outspread was made at the other end of the pinnacle for the others. While these were eating, Seti and Rachel went down among them to speak a few kindly words, to see that their wants were well supplied, and to ask all of them, save two or three needed to stay by the vessel, to be ready late in the evening to escort them in a short walk they were proposing to take. It would not be amiss if they should take bludgeons or other arms with them: they would find a plenty of such below. Very likely arms would not be needed; but then the place was neither Heaven nor the Diapleuston. Is it necessary to state that no person was employed on Alexander's barge unless he was a Jew of his own synagogue?

How should they spend the weary hours of waiting before it would be time to set out for the gate? Seti did something to answer this question.

As soon as the men had finished eating, he stepped to the front of the dais with a roll in his hand, and invited all of them to come near while he should read from their

Sacred Writings. He then proceeded to read from the Septuagint the 93d and a part of the 94th Psalm. It was very different reading from that artificial sub cantus heard in the synagogues. It was the reading of a prophet by a prophet, of a poet by a poet. Such a natural, hearty, sympathetic rendering of the great thoughts—it seemed as if the royal Psalmist, in the full glow of his inspiration, was rehearsing his own words. The people stood with open mouths and wondering eyes as the man of three generations—his form erect, his eyes keen, his hair but slightly frosted, his teeth perfect, his voice firm and resonant, his whole bearing that of one who defies decay—celebrated in grave and majestic tones the glory of the One God, His justice, and the final overthrow of the plans of the wicked. He closed by reading with special slowness and emphasis these words, “*Who will rise up for me against the evil doers—who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?*”

Rolling up the parchment, he looked searchingly about on the upturned faces.

“Friends,” said he, “we are not far from a den of evil-doers. In yonder castle, a small band of ruffians, without warrant from the authorities, have shut up in a dungeon the young man who stood up so nobly for our faith in the Diapleuston a few days ago. We are here with a warrant from the governor to rescue him. We expect this will be done about midnight without any help from you. But we have promised to meet the rescuing party at the north gate of the castle grounds with our men and conduct them to the pinnacle. We hope that this will be all we need to do. But if we should be disappointed, I want you to be ready with stout hearts

and arms to succeed where others have failed. The soldiers are few, at midnight they will be drunk, the castle will be open, and I who know every nook in it will be your guide. Now, who of you will rise up for us against the evil doers?"

"We will all go," said one.

"Yes, *all*," said another and another.

"There is none of us willing to be left behind," exclaimed the peddler as he looked around.

"And yet," said Seti, "we must leave some with the vessel. Ten of your stoutest will be enough to go with us; and you may select these for yourselves. Now let us kneel and pray to the God of Israel, who can do great things for us whereof we shall be glad?" and, to the astonishment of all, he kneeled, and spread forth his hands heavenward, and invoked the blessing of the Most High on their undertaking with the manner of one who saw God and stood in his very presence. Few words, but full of meaning and realization and devotion. And that westerling sun looked through the screen of palms on as true and acceptable a prayer meeting as he sees to day.

In the brief twilight that follows an Egyptian sun-setting, they saw a man running down to them from the high road that skirted the bank. It proved to be the old Egyptian custode. He was spent with running, and, when brought up to Seti and Rachel, could hardly speak. But at last he managed to let them know that he was much afraid, from his wife's growing agitation, that her courage would fail at the critical moment. All appearances promised an agony of fright and incapacity when presence of mind would be most needed. He begged that the lady, who only seemed to have power to soothe and

hearten her, would not fail to come with the others. It might save everything.

“I *will* come,” said Rachel; and, looking at Seti, she added, “I had rather in any case go with you than remain here in suspense.”

He made no reply to her, but said to the Egyptian as he dismissed him with a present: “Do not forget to have the north gate opened early—also the iron door leading to the cellars. Have a lighted lantern ready as soon as the soldiers are quiet.”

The stars came out one by one. Sirius flashed out first; then Aldebaran; then the body and belt and sword of Orion, together with Pleiades and Hyades and the Chambers of the South—with their pageant universe. No moon would appear till after midnight; but such was the stellar effulgence that nothing more seemed needed for such an enterprise.

The *flight* of Time! Yes, he is sometimes pictured with wings as far stretching and mighty as an archangel’s; and sometimes he seems to us to be plying them with all his might. But not in such circumstances as our friends were in. To eager, restless, suspenseful hearts, hoping the best but fearing the worst, eager to work but for the present able to do nothing, Time has no wings at all, not even feet, but creeps along as if weighted with untold chains. So crept he that night to Seti and Rachel.

But even the snail is at last found to have moved—the most lingering hour that ever crept toward a man, second by second, at last arrives—and so, at last, midnight ached along and found Seti and his company at the north gate. It was unfastened. So far, well.

They listened. They thought they could hear dull strokes at carefully measured intervals. "Get nearer—as near as you can," said Seti to the peddler, "and see if the sound does not come from the dungeon."

In a few moments the man returned to say that the prisoner was evidently at work on his door; but that the custodes, both man and wife, were sitting in an apparently helpless state on the steps before the iron door leading to the vaults. He could scarcely get an intelligible word from either of them.

"Let us go to them," whispered Rachel to Seti; "let us go to them alone. The men would only alarm and confound them more."

For answer he drew her arm still further within his; and went cautiously forward through the shadows straight toward the door of the vaults. Sure enough, there were the custodes on the last step, cowering, trembling, moaning faintly, almost stupid with terror. Rachel knelt by the woman, took hold of her hand with one hand and stroked her with the other, bade her be of good courage, if only for a little.

"You see," said she, "that I have come to help you. Seti also is here; and many other helpers are behind. Have you taken the cordial? Ah, I see that you have forgotten it. Never mind, take it now. There, now I hope you will soon feel better. What do you say? You have no strength? You cannot go alone? Look, Deborah, let us go together as far as the prison door and see what progress has been made. Perhaps it will not be necessary to go for the key. Come, lean on me."

So the woman was persuaded to her feet. The potion that Rachel had given her seemed beginning to take ef-

fect. Seti pushed open the iron door, found a lighted lantern just within, cautiously descended the steps with it, closely followed by the two women. Now the blows were falling strong and fast; as if the prisoner knew that no time was to be lost. They came to the grated opening into the cell. Seti set the lantern by it. At once the strokes ceased.

“Is it Aleph the Chaldean?” inquired the priest in a voice scarcely above a whisper.

“Thank Heaven! it is the voice of Seti, my friend and father,” answered a voice within.

“Will the door give way?” asked Seti.

“I fear not,” replied Aleph. “I cannot see where to apply the bar, and so much of my labor is thrown away. If a light could be introduced through the grating, I could soon tell whether freedom is possible in this way.”

“Can you get a narrow sence that will pass through the grate?” asked Seti of the custode.

The woman, without speaking, pointed in a vague way toward the room above.

“Do nothing till we return,” said the priest to Aleph. “We will find you a light, or something better.”

Then he whispered to Rachel, “There is but one thing to be done. Seat the woman on this bench and come. We must do without her. She might shriek or fall among the men at any moment. Safer without her.”

The woman sank on the bench like a rag. Seti took down the lantern, drew Rachel’s arm again within his own, and softly made his way up a flight of steps to the door of the mess room. He listened a moment. Noth-

ing was audible but the dull hard breathing of the men within.

He gently pressed the door open. The room was full of lights of all sorts—as if the ruffians had been afraid of darkness and meant to have as little of it as possible. And all around—on benches, on the floor, under the great table, hanging limp over the backs of chairs—were the men in a state of swinish intoxication. Broken and upset cups lay about everywhere. Pools of wine and vomit were on the table and on the floor. The foul air was almost intolerable.

Seti took up a sword that lay on the floor, and held out the lantern to Rachel.

“No, grandfather,” she whispered, “this work is for me. I can tread among them more lightly than you can; and now I can see the key at the belt of yonder man,” and she pointed to a man who sat at the head of the table, his arms spread out upon it, and his head resting on his arms.

He expostulated, “Perhaps the woman neglected to drag the wine as she neglected her own cordial.”

Without replying, the maiden gathered her robes tightly about her, and stepped in among the dangerous brutes. Her feet fell as fall the snow-flakes. Around one man, over the arm or leg of another, narrowly missing the nodding head of a third—on she went through those swine possessed with devils like some celestial vision, with eye and foot steady and sure, till she reached the farther end of the room and the side of the symposiarch. She saw the key. Oh for a knife to sever it from the belt! She could see nowhere any sharp cutting tool. The man was snoring heavily; the snores got into a tan-

gle, trembled, stopped. He groaned and moved. She stood breathlessly over him with steady, flaming eyes till his breathing became regular again; then, seizing a small scone from the table, she held it under the string that fastened the key to the belt. In a moment the two parted company. With lamp in one hand, and the key with her draperies in the other, she made her way back to the door and Seti as carefully as she went.

They passed out. Seti noiselessly closed the door, drew up between it and an angle in the wall a stout bench, and descended to the dungeon. Rachel put her hand with the narrow lamp in it through the grate, and whispered in an unsteady voice, "We have the key. Take the light, and, if you have displaced the door somewhat, replace it. Else the key may not work."

He took it, made a few movements with his bar, then said, "Now try the key." Seti inserted it and tried to turn—alas, the bolt would not move.

"Hand the key to me," said Aleph; "perhaps I can do better from the inside."

It was passed through the grate. The outside hearts stood still as the key was heard groping for its hole, then stoutly pushed home, then beginning to turn in the wards. Would it stop? Has it stopped? Ah, what a moment that was! Human nature could not endure many such strains. But hark! There is a sudden mighty heave and push and wrench; and, oh joy! youth and strength and Heaven have surely conquered. Back flies the bolt with a loud noise that is musical as Paradise; and lo, Aleph stands before them. Seti threw his arms about him, and exclaimed, "My son—thank Heaven!"

"I also thank Heaven and my foster-father," re-

turned Aleph warmly, as he returned the embrace; and then, turning toward Rachel with eyes that even in the dim light throbbed into hers thankfulness, and much besides that made her face burn and her heart sing, he added, "And there is another who will not be forgotten, even the angel whom God has sent to shut the lions' mouths so that they have not hurt me. I knew your voice, and even your hand, as well as your chant, as you came."

"We must hasten," interrupted the priest. "We are not yet quite out of the lions' den."

Aleph at once went into the dungeon and brought out his staff and the lamp.

"And Deborah? It will not do to leave the poor woman here; and, shattered as she is, she cannot help herself away. She failed us at the last moment, but she did what she could," whispered Rachel to Aleph as she pointed to the custode on the bench.

He bent to look at the woman. "No, she cannot walk, and must not be left. I will carry her."

And he took her up as gently and as easily as one might a babe; and so, following Seti, they went up the steps to the iron door and then out under the blessed stars that seemed to rejoice and exult with them. Seti did not forget to make assurance of safety doubly sure by putting another bolted door between them and pursuit. They found the Egyptian sitting where they had left him. He plainly was able to help himself: so, bidding him follow, they moved on to the gate, where they found the boatmen and peddler much alarmed at their long absence and about going to seek them. This gate also they immediately bolted after them—thus putting a third em-

barrassment in the way of pursuit. The pinnace-men could scarce restrain their joy and shouts when they saw Aleph among them with the woman in his arms. They did *not* restrain themselves as soon as the bolt of the gate went clanging home, but sent up a shout full of heartiness and victory. The newly risen moon seemed to shout back again.

They reached the vessel without further adventure.

“Unmoor, men,” cried Seti, “and push out into the river!”

When this had been done, and the pinnace was moving gently with the current, his voice rose again. “Before we spread our sails and take oars for Alexandria, let us acknowledge Him who has answered our prayers.” And so under the bright moonlight, floating gently down the restful ancient river, with no sound on the air but his own majestic voice, the high priest, as if primate of all religions, gave thanks, in few and fitting words and with uplifted hands, for the success of their enterprise to Him “who executeth judgment for the oppressed, who giveth food to the hungry, and who looseth the prisoners.”

Now up, men, with the sails! Now, ye oarsmen with light hearts and strong arms, ply joyfully the oars homeward! Aleph, sitting at the feet of Seti and Rachel, is duly questioned and tells modestly his story; and he in return soon comes to know all that we know about the measures taken for his rescue—also about the situation of Cimon, in regard to whom his concern seemed to have been greater than for himself. For the most part Seti told the story. And he told it well. Rachel certainly had no reason to complain that justice was not done to the part she had taken in the matter. And she saw more

eloquent speaking in the two luminaries that occasionally beamed up into hers than she had ever seen in moon and stars—or even the sun.

But toiling men must have rest and sleep. So, after the lapse of an hour or so, during which good progress had been made, the boatmen moored again under the screen of another leafy grove that overhung the river and laid themselves down wherever they best could. Seti and Rachel retired below. As for Aleph, he had had enough of inactivity. The sense and delight of freedom once more were strong within him. He leaped ashore; and walked about in the grove, and sometimes on the highway from Alexandria which in general followed the banks of the river, and which the Romans, according to their wont, kept in the best condition. While on this thoroughfare he heard the sound of wheels and the tramp of furiously driven horses coming from the north. He stepped into the grove. The noise rapidly grew, and soon became mixed with the voices of men in angry dispute. As the voices came still nearer—could it be?—Aleph thought he recognized the voice of Draco. Then appeared a chariot drawn by two foaming horses, with four men seated in it. When nearly abreast of him the horses suddenly stopped.

“We will go no farther,” exclaimed the voice of Draco, “till this matter is settled. We mean that he shall die; and we also mean to be paid well for what we have done for you. We must have enough to pay us for the loss of our situations, and to keep us in Rome, or wherever we choose to go, for the rest of our lives. We want the talents down—all of them. We are not a-going to trust you for a yearly stipend, which may and may not

be paid; we must have everything in our own power. You did not promise so much? But you promised to pay us liberally; and the pay must be what *we* call liberal. Cannot get so many talents? You can at least steal them from your father, or from the treasury of the province—we do not care which. We do not care how you come by the money if so be that we get it.”

In the course of the violent altercation that followed Aleph recognized three other voices—that of the equestrian trainer, that of Antis, and that of Sextus Flaccus who seemed in a half drunken state. He also gathered that Sextus had been berating the trainers for their defeat by Aleph until the passionate men had been provoked beyond measure, lost all self-control, and were ready to do almost anything to gratify their resentment. Sextus was too much in wine to see his danger; kept on abusing them roundly; and even went so far as to threaten that he would pay them little or nothing for their services. This had brought matters to a crisis.

“Now,” said Draco at last, with an oath as horrible as a pagan or an atheist could swear, “let us have done with this. Tell us, Sextus Flaccus, what you will do—yes or no. Will you promise by the soul of your mother, the only oath you are likely to keep, that within five days, by hook or by crook, you will pay over to us the money we demand? If not, you drunken fool, we will strangle you on the spot and throw your body into the river. It will be said that you fell into the river in a drunken fit. And everybody will believe the story—even your own father. Swear, I say, or *die*, DIE. We can help ourselves at the castle to more than you are likely to give us, if it be true, as we hear, that your father hides his

treasures there; and then we will take to the desert and have everybody for a prey. Come!"

Nothing came from Sextus but a new volley of provoking epithets and threats.

The two trainers grasped him. A struggle followed. "Drive on a little farther to a better spot," cried Draco to Antis.

The horses sprang forward under the lash and soon disappeared. But Aleph could hear the noise of scuffle, muffled calls for help, half suffocated cries of terror. He ran after the chariot as fast as possible: at length descried it standing by the roadside empty. At the same time he heard a loud splash and saw three men run up from the river bank, leap into the chariot, and drive off at a furious pace. It was vain to pursue—perhaps he might rescue the victim. So he rushed to the bank which the men had just left; and leaned over the water, holding by a friendly sapling that bent over the stream. At first he could see nothing, coming as he did from the bright moonlight; but in a moment he saw a hand just sinking beneath the water—saw also a crocodile close by in the act of turning over to seize his prey. Quick as thought he struck at the monster with his staff, and then, plunging his arm deep in the water, caught the fingers of Sextus just as they were passing out of reach, and drew the body to the bank. It was apparently lifeless. The proper way of treating such a body is no discovery of modern times. Aleph was not ignorant of it, promptly used it, and found signs that life was not extinct, though flickering in its socket. He took up the body and hastened to return to the pinnacle. He found it all alive with anxiety at his disappearance—especially after the sounds of strife and rushing wheels

had faintly come to them. Seti and Rachel met him, as he stepped on board with his burden, with a joyful welcome and inquiring looks.

“Sextus Flaccus, nearly or quite murdered by his comrades—first throttled, and then drowned!”

A few swift words of further explanation, and Aleph hastened to the dais with his burden, and for a long time bent every energy to restore the vital warmth—by posture, by friction, by wrapping in rugs, by aiding the ribs in the scarcely perceptible breathing movement, by fanning—Seti assisting with advice and hands. It was a hard fight with death; but at last came signs that their labor would not be in vain. Sextus breathed regularly though feebly. His throat, which they had laid bare, and which was all bruised and discolored by the strangling hands of the ruffians, showed the efforts of the vital fluid to resume a forceful circulation. At last he moaned and opened his eyes. Opened them on Aleph as he knelt before him, fanning him, gently adjusting his position and wraps as usefully as possible. Opened them at first in a vague, bewildered stare into which soon came a grain of intelligence, then of astonishment, then of alarm. He tried to raise himself. Aleph gently helped him. Then followed a fixed gaze of absorbed inquiry in which thought seemed wrestling with thought, each demanding of each, *What means all this? Is it possible?* He then quietly closed his eyes and seemed trying to recollect himself. Seti and Rachel kept well behind, and watched with breathless interest. Again Sextus opened his eyes—this time with full intelligence in them. He tried to speak. No sound came. He tried again. Aleph put his ear near the struggling lips.

“Are you Aleph the Chaldean?” came in the faintest of whispers.

Aleph nodded.

“Aleph the prisoner?”

Aleph nodded again.

“Did you save me from the men, and the Nile, and—the crocodile?” Sextus asked in a stronger voice.

“What, did you notice the crocodile?” said Aleph. “I thought you were beyond noticing anything.”

“I saw him preparing to seize me—saw something worse than a crocodile; for all my follies and sins of many years, including my treatment of you, came up before me in one dreadful flash. Ah, it was a dreadful sight—worse than any monster on sea or land!”

“You see that it is possible to escape from monsters that are very near,” said Aleph soothingly. “But I would not talk any more just now. You are too weak. Let me adjust the rugs and wraps more comfortably for you, and lie down again. You are among friends.”

Sextus bent another long wondering gaze at the noble face that was bending over him, and then resigned himself with closed eyes to the gentle hands that laid him carefully down to a smoother and softer resting place. In a few moments he was asleep.

“Well,” said Seti, with a grave smile, you *are* a very strange young man. Is this the way you treat enemies in your country? If so it is very unlike any other country that I happen to know. Still, I confess that the way, unprecedented as it is, has a good look to it, and may be worth introducing into Egypt.

“Say not *unprecedented*, my dear grandfather,” said Rachel, “for you know Deity treats men better than

they deserve; and the Christ, it seems, does the same. How forbearing he is toward his enemies, when he could so easily overwhelm them!"

Aleph was looking dreamily at the banks now fast gliding by (for the pinnace was in full motion again and the dawn was kindling all things into color and beauty), but at the word *Christ* he turned inquiringly toward Rachel. She understood him.

"Yes," she said, "we have something new to tell you about the Christ—something new and wonderful that comes from a witness that I can trust—my own mother"—and she proceeded to relate to him the history of the resurrection of Lazarus and the consequent exasperation and plottings of his enemies.

"Having had little else to do, I have been thinking much of Him during the last few days," returned Aleph, "especially of what the prophets, Isaiah and Daniel, say of his suffering character. 'He was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquities of us all: he was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation, for he was cut off out of the land of the living.' And Daniel says, 'And after three score and two weeks shall the Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.' So I am expecting the worst and the best—the greatest sacrifice and the greatest salvation the world has ever seen. Jesus is surely a king; but at present his kingdom is not of this world. He will pass to his throne through the gates of death. Then of his kingdom there will be no end."

He said this as a seer might say it, and with a new light in his face.

Sextus slumbered on, hour after hour, as the vessel glided down the silent river and the sun glided up the silent sky. Their morning meal was spread for them and still he slept. But when they raised their heads, after the priest had thanked Him who giveth to all their food, they saw that his eyes were wide open and fastened on them. Aleph at once went to him, helped him to a sitting posture, propped him with cushions and rugs, and then brought him fruits and other food. He was now able to eat, though but very slowly. Aleph did not leave him till his slow repast was quite finished, and he was again settled into a restful position. During all this he said not a word.

It was not long after the meal and the general religious service that immediately followed that they saw in the distance and coming toward them a large galley evidently crowded with people. As it approached they recognized the young men of the University; and the young men at the same time recognized the commanding form of Aleph, who had risen for a better view of the craft in which Seti seemed so interested. What a shout from young throats suddenly broke into the sky! What a climbing into all high places and lookouts! What a frantic flourish of hands and caps—yea, of spears and swords and bucklers; for it was now plain that something besides a cordial reception of a returning friend was in the thought of the young men when they left Alexandria. They were prepared to fight as well as to celebrate.

“Hail Aleph the Chaldean!” Three times they had given this uproarious greeting with full lungs and wild gesticulations; and there is no telling when they would have stopped had not Aleph stepped on the bulwark to-

ward the galley and beckoned to them. They instantly became silent.

“You see, my friends, that the venerable Seti has found me, and found me safe and sound—thanks to Heaven and him. No matter where, no matter how: he desires that no questions be asked about these things. My arrest and abduction were not by the authorities: they were a private enterprise altogether for which we may hold Draco responsible, if we can lay hands on him. Apart from him all is buried. Many thanks to you for the generous interest you have taken in the stranger, for the efforts and pains you have been at on my account, and of which I have been duly informed. I did not know when I joined the University what a company of generous and warm hearted associates I would have. If my arm were long enough I would grasp the hand of every one of you. Suppose it done till we meet again. Once more; in return for your warm greetings, I am sure that I can give not only my own but those of the dear friends in whose hands you see me, and without whom I should not be here to day.”

Pausing a moment, he added, “I have a favor to ask. We have with us a sick friend for whom quiet and rest are needed. For this and other reasons we propose that you precede or follow us at a considerable interval; and that we enter the city apart in as quiet and undemonstrative a way as possible. We can demonstrate at our leisure hereafter. I certainly shall want to demonstrate my gratitude.”

One great cheer for the speaker; and another for “the empress of Alexandria” as they now discovered Rachel beneath the curtain which she had hastily let fall

between herself and the approaching galley; and then the galley silently dropped behind—far behind. But our friends could hear faintly from it the music of song and instrument, and faintly see the flutter of banners and streamers of all sorts all the way along the river and canal. But when they entered the lake they quite lost sight and hearing of the galley. So the pinnace came quietly to its old moorings.

Up to this time Sextus had sat silent and almost motionless where he had been placed. He now threw off his wraps and attempted to rise. With the help of Aleph, who hastened to him, he succeeded; but he was not able to stand alone.

“I see a close palanquin on the shore,” said Aleph. “I will beckon for it, and if you somewhat muffle the lower part of your face, you will not be recognized. I will order the bearers to take you to Bruchium.”

Sextus looked gratefully at him, and said in a low but decisive voice, “I shall not forget this, as you soon will have occasion to know.”

So they parted with mutual pressure of the hand.

Then Aleph parted from Seti and Rachel—saying to the latter as she reminded him of his promise to see Miriam, “Shall I also see the empress of Rome?” His voice was somewhat unsteady.

She hesitated for a moment, and then said, impulsively, “You will never see her, if earth and Heaven can prevent it;” and her face shone with a determination that was almost fierce.

“If I only wore a diadem, I know at whose feet it would be laid”—he said it simply, as to himself.

“Aleph the Chaldean already wears a diadem which

the daughter of Alexander values more than any that will ever shine on the banks of the Tiber," was the reply.

What is the use of being a princess and, by invitation, an empress, if she cannot speak her mind frankly? But what *is* her mind? Seti might have used the same words. From his lips they would have meant high approval and even admiration. Was this all that she meant? Did she only pay such fitting intellectual tribute to Aleph as one pays to an admirable statue, to the glorious stars, or to each of a hundred shining historic persons? We admire them and praise them—but we can live without them. We can leave the admirable statue in its palace or temple and very contentedly go about our business, never to see it again. We can praise Plato to the skies, and yet be quite willing to have him and his Republic remain some twenty odd centuries away from us. Who has a right to say that such was not the mind of Rachel?—appreciative, outspoken, Setian, and—nothing more?

XV.

THE CONFERENCES.

Λυοῖν παρόντων ἡμῖσιν λόγος πάρα.

—ÆSCHYLUS, *Eum.* 428.

He hears but half who hears one side only.

1. Legal preparations.
2. A mixed cup.
3. A critical conversation.
4. For better or worse?

THE CONFERENCES.

THERE were several reasons why the first wonder and rush of surmises as to the reappearance of Aleph did not last long. They were let alone severely. And then the rumors of an approaching visit from the Cæsar grew stronger every day; and all eyes and tongues were strongly drawn toward the daughter of Alexander and her probable views and feelings as to the great alliance. In addition, the air was now full of the great trials that were to come off in a few days—Malus against the two brothers, Malus against Cimon, and Cimon against Malus. That Malus should venture to attack anybody was not a matter for surprise; but that anybody should venture to attack Malus was indeed wonderful. So the city had plenty to talk about without querying long as to the where and how of Aleph's escape, with nobody to answer questions.

The public interest grew exceedingly when it became plain, as it soon did, that the contest would not be between two individuals, but between two great parties. On the one side were Malus and the Flacci with their host of dependents: on the other was Cimon, supported by all the influence and forces of Seti and Alexander, as well as by the good-will and prestige and family influence

of both branches of the University, with which Aleph was now unboundedly popular. Though he firmly declined to give any information as to who the chief criminal in his abduction was, and what the place of his confinement, and how he was rescued, the students were not offended—following the lead of Cornelius and a few others who had specially attached themselves to him, and to whom he had said that his silence was to save embarrassment to Cimon and other friends in their affairs. They looked in his face and believed him. They heard the ring of his voice and were content both with him and his friend—with Cimon, *because* he was his friend. As Malus soon had occasion to know. Not a student entered his warehouse. If one saw him coming he ostentatiously crossed to the other side of the street. And the vexed trader was compelled to listen to some serenades that were neither very musical nor very complimentary. Of all such demonstrations in his favor, Aleph was ignorant; though he was well aware on what side the sympathies of his fellow-students were enlisted.

I have said that the public assumed that the Flaccan influence would be cast in favor of Malus. But one day an event occurred which unsettled at least the University part of the public on this point. At the close of one of Seti's lectures and before the students had left, a herald appeared at the door and announced his Excellency the Governor. Seti stepped forward after a very cool and stately fashion to receive the dignitary; and inquired what he could do to please his Excellency. His Excellency stated that he was fond of young men, and liked to look in upon them now and then, in their curriculum; but that his special object to-day was to congratulate both

him and his young friend, who he believed was called *Aleph the Chaldean*, on the success of the measures for the rescue of the latter.

“I *do* congratulate you most heartily, venerable Sir—as I know that you are much interested in the young man. Is he present?” And Flaccus looked about on the students as if to discover him.

“Will Aleph the Chaldean come forward?” said Seti: “His Excellency wishes to congratulate him in person on his safety.”

The young men were too much interested in what was passing to stand on ceremony. The better to see everything, they stepped on the seats and pommelled down obnoxious shoulders and heads. And they saw Aleph advance, not only without embarrassment, but with a grace and even majesty that would have become a king. And yet the kingly way was so unaffected and so modest in its expression, as not to be offensive.

“May it please your Excellency,” said Seti with emphasis, “this is the young man for whom you have asked and whom you authorized us to rescue at all costs.”

“I am glad I did it. It was one of the best acts of my life,” exclaimed Flaccus, as he looked up with undisguised astonishment at the figure and face before him.

Then with some hesitation he continued, “You do not seem, young man, to have suffered much from your confinement. It could hardly have been very severe without leaving some marks upon you. I see none whatever. I would not object to being confined myself if I could reappear in as good a condition as yours.”

“Still, such a confinement as mine is not one which I can conscientiously recommend to your Excellency,”

returned Aleph. "It had some features about it rather trying to the average constitution. I think that the fact that I am here to day in a sound condition is due to my having a constitution considerably tougher than the average."

"No doubt it is so," said the Roman. "I am glad that you have come off so well. I have come here to say so; to express my pleasure at your safe return; to congratulate you upon it; and also to congratulate you on having secured in so brief a time such warm and most desirable friends as I see about you. I trust you will count me among them."

"Aleph the Chaldean accepts with pleasure the kind words which your Excellency does him the honor of offering; and himself feels that he has been highly favored in finding in a strange land so many friends whom he will never be willing or able to forget."

"I have another object in coming here to day," continued Flaccus. "My son, who is sick, begs that you will visit him at the Cæsareum. Your nation, I believe, is well versed in leech craft; and perhaps you can help him. If you will take a seat with me in my chariot it will gratify both him and me."

"I will go to your son almost immediately," said Aleph. "But your Excellency will excuse me for declining the honor of your chariot. A less distinguished way of going will better suit my youth and circumstances."

To say that the students were astonished hardly does the facts justice. Three things amazed them—that the Governor should take a step so likely to be understood by the public as against Malus; that Sextus Flaccus, sick

or well, should send for Aleph; and that Aleph should carry himself in so unembarrassed and independent and yet courtly manner in the presence of the chief Roman dignitary. It was another revelation to them. Some of them said, "Plainly, this is not the first time Aleph has dealt with people in high places—he is too much at home with them to be dealing with novelties."

Both that day, and daily for many days afterward, Aleph found his way to the Casareum, and to the slowly recovering Sextus. What was said or done in these interviews never transpired—at least among the students. I am not prepared to say but that Seti and Rachel came to know of pleasant and hopeful things.

Well, it *is* time to speak again of the lovely Jewess. Of course Aleph, the very next day after his return, fulfilled his promise to see Miriam—and all the more readily because Seti had domiciled himself at Alexander's until the return of his son-in-law. He found not only Miriam but also Seti and Rachel in the family apartment. Great was his surprise at the gain the nurse had made since he last saw her; and so he was able to give congratulations as well as receive them. Miriam's congratulations, however, were rather lame in the expression; for when she saw him enter without any sign, even the slightest, of harm from all that he had passed through, her eyes filled with tears and she scarcely found voice to say more than, *Thank God.*

"You see," said Rachel, "that Miriam has wonderfully improved within the last few days; but I doubt whether you can guess to what the improvement is owing."

"The skill of the leech?" suggested Aleph, smiling.

“Nay—as if you did not know her leech!” and she lifted her eyebrows.

“The excellent nursing?”

“By no means—I can speak for that.”

“The *want* of nursing? The nurse has been busy elsewhere; and so nature has had a chance to act freely. Excessive care is sometimes as hurtful as no care at all.”

“Still at fault,” cried the maiden. “Shrewd as you are, you will not be likely to guess: so I must tell you. She took a new medicine; and it was *Aleph the Chaldean*. Devising ways and means to get you out of your difficulties, O much enduring Ulysses, O pious Æneas beaten about in all seas—this is what has made the change that you see. It is a very healthful business this rescuing Aleph the Chaldean.”

Then followed a pleasant explanation of the part which Miriam had taken in the rescue, and such a grateful recognition of it as it deserved.

On the humorous plea that Miriam was indebted to him for her health, and must make payment for the same in valuable information, Aleph proceeded to ask her many questions suggested by her former narrative of what she had heard and seen of Jesus. Rachel joined him in this. As a result they found not a few difficulties removed or diminished by a better knowledge of circumstances.

During this questioning and cross questioning Seti sat a silent but alert listener. Only at the close, when the young people fairly woke up to the fact that for a long time he had said nothing, and turned deprecatingly toward him, did he say, “You two would make very respectable advocates. I hope Marcus Piso will examine

witnesses as well in the approaching trials. I am glad to see that your faith in Jesus does not forget the claims of reason.”

Here a parcel was brought in and given to Rachel. “From my mother,” she exclaimed, as she glanced at the superscription. “This doubtless contains further news of the Christ that will interest us all. Let us see.”

She broke the seals. In a moment she became so absorbed in her reading that, evidently, she was quite oblivious of her surroundings. Her face became a mirror behind which appeared the whole changing heaven of her moods and feelings. The first glance at the letter brought a shadow on the beaming countenance. As she went on the shadows deepened apace—as when clouds add themselves to clouds in advance of the storm. At last the storm itself came. Her face became a picture of mingled astonishment, compassion, indignation, and dismay. She dropped the letter on the floor, exclaiming, “*Can it be! Where is the Almighty Avenger!*” And the tears streamed between her fingers as she buried her face in her hands.

Seti and Aleph had both watched her changing expressions with alarm—had both risen and were now standing by her side.

“What dreadful thing has happened, my child?” asked Seti.

“They have murdered Him—*murdered* Him—have murdered the CHRIST!” she exclaimed: then turning to Aleph, “And you were right. You feared the worst, and the worst has come. Can there be a bright side to such a picture?”

She tried to brush away the tears that she might better see the expression of his face.

He said gently, "I think I can conceive of a brighter side even to such a terrible picture. But I see that you have not finished your reading. Perhaps the remainder of the letter will contain the brighter side." He took it up from the floor and handed it to her.

Thus encouraged, she resumed her reading. Almost immediately a change appeared on her face. Her eyes opened widely with a new wonder, and beamed with a new light. As she went on the shadows thinned away as fast as they had thickened; the light and sweetness grew apace as does the fairest morning; and at last the sun rose on every lovely feature as she finished the manuscript and exclaimed, *God be praised—there is indeed a brighter side!*

She turned to Aleph, "You are right again. Jesus lives. He has passed through death to his throne."

"I do not think," said he, "that you are now able to read to us the whole wonderful account as your mother has written it. But perhaps you can give us a briefer account in your own words—suited the length to your strength, and passing lightly over details that have tried you most."

"I will try. But I think that I could not even do this were it not for the strength and courage which this last reading has given me."

After a moment she proceeded: "From the time of the resurrection of Lazarus the chief men at Jerusalem, with two exceptions, have been bent on the death of Jesus. On the night before the Passover, they sent an armed force to Gethsemane, where he was praying, ar-

rested him, took him to the palace of the high-priest, went through a form of trying him for blasphemy, condemned him (two only objecting), then hurried him to Pilate the governor; and so importuned and worried and threatened the reluctant Roman that he at last consented, but not until they had taken on themselves and their children the whole guilt of the deed, to condemn him to the cross. Then followed mocking, and buffeting and scourging. Then in the early morning, accompanied by many weeping and wailing friends and a mob of howling and exulting enemies, the soldiers took him to Calvary and there crucified him between two robbers. Oh, the cruel, cruel spikes! Oh, the more cruel jeers and mockings and tauntings and railings of the soldiers—and even of his fellow sufferers! They evidently were suffering far less than he. Those familiar with crucifixions had never before seen such agony. All the signs of an inexpressible anguish were in both face and form. And once he uttered a cry so terrible that Nicodemus, who heard it, said that it would haunt him to his dying day. He had never heard the like before: never could bear to hear the like again. He is fully persuaded that the sun in all his circuits had never looked down on such mortal agony, because it was the agony of Him on whom ‘God laid the iniquities of us all.’ In fact, the sun refused at length to look on the awful scene any longer. He had climbed over the eastern hills, and up to the zenith, with undimmed face, when, all at once, he disappeared. For three hours the darkness of God was over the whole land. Men could hardly see one another. But the darkness of men was still greater than the darkness of God. They still continued to cast at

Jesus through the lurid dimness the stones of their derision and insult until the end. At the ninth hour the great Victim died—praying for his enemies. Then the earth quaked mightily. Ancient rocks that had defied men and time broke in pieces before the silent cross. The veil of the temple was rent in twain by unseen hands. Even dead men came from their graves, to meet Jesus as he descended into his. ‘*Truly,*’ said the centurion who had the crucifixion in charge, ‘*truly this was the Son of God!*’

“When all was over, the disciples smote their breasts and returned to the city, filled with horror and almost despair. Who could have thought it! Is there really no humanity on earth, and no divinity in Heaven! Is this the end of their hopes—this the end of their long and fondly expected kingdom of God! From the towering summits of faith to the depths of doubt and misery—what a fall! My mother was not able to see the more immediate disciples for two or three days; for she was crushed in both body and heart: but Nicodemus kept her informed as to everything. Besides, she knew how they were feeling from knowing how she felt herself. She was prostrated before the awful mystery. She was dazed and almost incapable of thought under the mighty shock. And yet she had at the bottom of her heart a feeling that this could not be the end. God *cannot* be so defeated by man.

“So much for the tragedy. Had this been all that my mother wrote I could never have smiled again. Her account filled me with shame and horror and wrath. It seemed to me that God would have been just if he had at once smitten those murderers into the lowest Tophet.

God forgive me! but I almost felt as if I could do it myself. I felt as if I belonged to an accursed and doomed race. Yes, I felt as if I could never smile again. But you see that I can (and her face wet with tears shone out upon him, with bewildering radiance); and it is because the tragedy has a triumph for its sequel.

“On the third day after the crucifixion Nicodemus came home in great excitement, saying that the Roman guard which Pilate, at the solicitation of the Jewish chiefs, had set about the tomb where the body of Jesus had been placed, came into the city early in the morning and reported to the chiefs with scared faces and trembling lips that One with a form bright as the lightning had flashed down from the sky in their sight, rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it. They fell to the earth, and became as dead men. When they came to themselves they found the angel gone and the tomb open and empty. Great was the perplexity of the leaders on hearing this; but they finally resolved, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea protesting, to fortify one crime by another, and gave a large sum of money to the soldiers to say that the body was stolen while they slept. This recalled vividly to my mother’s mind what Jesus had once said, but which, in common with the other disciples, she had taken as having some figurative meaning, *‘And the third day I will rise again.’*”

“Soon after, one of the maids of the house, who also was a disciple and had been out at the market, came hastily home, saying that some of the apostles and others had seen angels at the sepulchre who told them that Jesus had risen—had even seen Jesus himself and spoken with him. My mother could no longer restrain herself, but

hurried away to a place where the disciples were wont to gather; and found many assembled. The room was in a fever of restless paces to and fro, of eager questionings and answerings. Seen him? Spoken with him? Sure there is no mistake? Peter and certain women were in great request, for they could say *Yes* to all such questions. The joy of assured conviction shone in some faces; a hope that still feared in others. It seemed too good to be true. Thomas, one of the Twelve, declared it could not be true: there must be some delusion in it—either of the senses, or the nerves, or the imagination. He would not believe without the concurrent witness of at least three senses. He had scarcely said this, when, though the doors were closed, they saw Jesus himself standing among them with the well-known form and features and voice; and he said to Thomas, ‘Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless but believing.’ Thomas broke down at once. Doubt was impossible. Not a ray of hesitation remained with any. None understood the sublime march of events; none knew what prodigies were yet to come, whether his enemies would now be swept away and a visible Divine Kingdom set up, or not; but of this all were sure that he who had died on the cross was again alive among them. And they rejoiced with exceeding great joy—though the joy yet felt the swell and tossing of the just departed storm.

“Since then my mother has seen the Messiah several times. But he never shows himself to the people at large. It is now understood among the disciples that in a short time, after meeting them in Galilee, he will return to Heaven—leaving his disciples to preach in his

name forgiveness of sins to all nations who will repent and believe."

"I think I will read to you," added Rachel, "the last page or two of the letter, that you may see what views are now being held by those immediately about Jesus as to his person and work." She read:

"Now we all know that my thought was right—that his death was an atonement for the sins of all men; and that the victims which have been offered from the beginning were only types of this great Victim. And I say to myself, What must be the nature and dignity of him whose death can atone for all human sin? Must he not be Divine as well as human? Must he not be God manifest in the flesh? Who else could make so mighty an expiation?—who else save he of whom it is written, 'And the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father,' and who has said of himself, 'I and my father are one?'"

"I cannot return home just yet—much as I wish to see you and others. This great opportunity of seeing and hearing for a brief time longer the Redeemer of the world is too precious to be sacrificed. Besides, the successive tides of grief and joy have so shaken me that I am unfit to travel.

"Read what I have written to your dear grandfather. Oh, that he were here—his fairness of mind and penetration would be sure to place him on the side of Jesus.

"Of course I have written the same things to your dear father and brothers at Rome—hoping that amid their great schemes of business and ambition they will find room for faith, *my* faith. May they not be among 'The

rulers who take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed?' As to you I have no doubt, even though the lot of Esther"—the maiden broke off abruptly with a flush and a shudder, and busied herself for a little in adjusting the leaves of the manuscript.

This letter led to a long conversation; I should say to long conversations. Daily, for many days, Aleph came to his friends; and daily the great theme was Jesus the Christ. Seti never failed to be present, and never failed to be silent—save when a brief inquiry could bring light. But, the day before the trials were to begin, he was absent, arranging last things with his lawyer. Miriam also was absent.

The unfailing and unwearying topic of topics again came up; and after a delightful talk about the past and the future of the Messianic history, Aleph inquired about the attitude of Seti.

"My own impression has been," said he, "that it was better for a mind like his, so fair and penetrating and judicial, to be left largely to feel its own way to the truth. So I have made no formal effort to commend our own faith to him—save by shaping my inquiries of Miriam and our talks with each other so as to furnish answers to questions which a great and philosophic mind would naturally ask on its way to a just conviction. Have I been right in this?"

"I think so," she answered. "Such men, my father says, must convince themselves. The most we can do is to get the material for judgment within their reach. And I think we have done this successfully in the case of my grandfather. His mind is open to evidence from all quarters. He has no national or race prejudices. He

married a Caucasian princess; and was willing that my mother should marry a Hebrew. Signs are not wanting to me that his judgment is slowly but surely settling in favor of Jesus, not only as a divine messenger, but even as an incarnation of the One God. And yet I do not think that he has any idea of relinquishing his position as primate of the Egyptians.”

“I see no reason why he should,” returned Aleph. “He holds the original Egyptian position in matters of faith; also that of the higher priesthood all through the Egyptian history. He fairly represents the religion of the land as it was when his office was established: his predecessors have wrongfully used their power to change the ancient faith and practice; he can rightfully use his power to restore it. Meanwhile, he is acting no part; he is perfectly frank and outspoken as to his views and objects; his function requires of him no endorsement of idolatry or even a refusal of the Hebrew Scriptures and their Messiah. He could, to-day, say to his College of Priests, not only that, like the far-back fathers, he believes in one Infinite God who only is to be worshipped with Divine honors, but also that he believes that this God has just appeared in the person of Jesus—he could freely say all this and his subordinate priests would not be stumbled. So I think that no law, human or divine, requires him to surrender the advantages of his position in favor of some one who would promote the national apostasy instead of reforming it. But I could wish to see him pronounced in favor of Jesus before I leave the country.”

“That, I trust, will not be soon?” said Rachel, with a startled look.

“As soon as these trials are fairly over, I suppose.”

“What!” she exclaimed with a look of dismay, “I thought you would remain a long time, studying our institutions, enlarging your knowledge of the Western World, especially getting an inside view of our University life and teachings. Be persuaded to remain—a long, very long time. Seti had rather lose all the rest of the University. I do not think he could be persuaded to part with you at all. And I think,” she stammered, “all your friends here feel very much the same.”

He replied, “My father did not propose for me a long stay in this city. Through my Greek preceptor I was already considerably acquainted with the matters you mention. They have been merely collaterals to two main purposes—which were, first, to learn what could be learned about the Messiah who, as my father believed, was born at Bethlehem some thirty years ago; and, second, to investigate the proceedings of Malus. As side issues my father wished me to get such improvement as a young man might from seeing the world, and from being under the necessity of judging and acting for himself among all sorts of men and under all sorts of conditions. And as soon as the great objects of my visit could be accomplished he wished me to return. I am an only child: the father wishes to see his son, and the son wishes to see the father. And if I can return through Judea and see the Messiah, and carry away from him to my parents a blessing, I shall consider my mission accomplished. But it will cost me something—very much indeed—to go away, even though it be homeward. I never expected to find such friends in Alexandria as I have found; and, as

the day approaches for me to say farewell to them, I find I am approaching one of the greatest trials of my life. What wonderful kindness they have shown the nameless stranger who could not, consistently with his father's wishes, furnish the commonest letter of introduction! And what delightful hours have I spent in this house with one whose views and feelings on the most important of all subjects have harmonized so completely with my own! Yes, it will cost me much to go away—I did not know how much till I received yesterday a letter of recall from my father (his lip quivered); and I doubt whether I have even now a full sense of the bitterness that will come in saying last words. But, if they must be said, it is doubtless better that they be said a week hence than at some remoter time. I feel that my heart is less and less under my control with every passing day. You see (he added with a sad smile) that, if there were no other reasons, I must go away to escape from you: Rachel is too mighty for Aleph the Chaldean. When one cannot conquer it is best to leave the field."

"Flight is disgraceful," exclaimed Rachel with sparkling eyes. "Better die on the field. But I will be merciful to my captive. He shall live."

"To be dragged at your chariot wheels—to grace the triumph of her at whose feet lies the empire of the West?" He rose.

She also rose and came toward him. "You are quoting; or you are thinking of a distant somebody of whom you have heard and whom you have despised. Surely you are not thinking of *me*. It is true, if I must say it, that I have been offered the Roman purple in the person of the heir-apparent; and that to day the elders of

my people have been here to urge my acceptance of the proposals—for the public good. I listened to what they had to say and was silent—following the counsel of my grandfather. But to you I will not be silent. I have never seen Germanicus, and never want to see him. The empire of the West will have to wait long at my feet before I take it up. I will have none of it. I had rather die.”

She hesitated a moment and then went on, while a celestial blush spread a new loveliness over every feature, “So you see that you need not go away to escape from me. The daughter of Alexander was glad, beyond measure, to hear that she was beloved by Aleph the Chaldean. She accepts his love and gives him as large in return.”

Even Aleph could be transfigured. And it was nothing less than a transfiguration that now took place in his face at this frank declaration. Rachel had seen that face in many moods of thoughtfulness, watchfulness, resolve, pity, gratitude, command; but she had never before seen it radiant with joy. Now she saw it—wonderingly and blissfully saw it. All the flood gates of the morning seemed suddenly opened in his face. Such eloquence beamed upon her from that illuminated page that she needed no voice to interpret it. But a voice came—with a curious accent of surprise and inquiry.

“Can it be that I hear aright? Can it be that the greatest good fortune of my life thus far has come to me to day; and that the maiden for whose favor princes strive can give her heart and hand to one who is to her merely Aleph the Chaldean—the unknown?”

“You are *not* unknown,” she replied with a face as

radiant and transfigured as his own. "It is true that I do not know whether you are rich or poor, whether prince or peasant, but this I know, that in yourself alone you deserve the warmest love that woman can give; and I give it. You shall be my emperor."

"What will Seti say?"

"He will say as I do—proud old Pharaoh as he is."

"What will your father say—the rich, the ambitious?"

"He will say as Seti says till he comes to know you better; and then he will say as I do. Much as he values money, I happen to know that he values merit more."

"What will the city say? That the Gem of Alexandria, who might have chosen the greatest and best in the land, and even been mistress of the West, has thrown herself away on a nameless adventurer?"

"Perhaps. But I do not propose to marry to suit the city."

In a moment she found herself in his arms, and felt his warm, lingering lips on her forehead. She looked up at him archly and said:

"And what will *your* father say?"

"Ah, that is a very serious question!" he answered with a smile; "but fortunately I can answer it better to-day than I could have done yesterday. This morning I saw Cimon, and, on my telling him my feelings toward you, he surprised me by saying that it was my father's hope that during my absence I might find among the chosen people some suitable maiden to share my lot and be to him a daughter—that his wandering Jacob might somewhere find a Rachel. And Cimon, from whom I have kept nothing, is satisfied—nay, more, is delighted.

So thus I answer your question. My father will say as Cimon does, and Cimon will say as I do.”

How long Aleph tarried at this unwatered wine I do not know ; but I happen to know that he did not become so intoxicated but that he could hold a long business consultation afterward with Piso and Seti about the trials that were to begin the next day.

He was driving the chariot of the sun ; but he held the fiery coursers well in hand.

XVI.

THE BASILICA.

Οί δὲ δίκας ξείνοισι καὶ ἐνδήμοισι διδοῦσιν, τοῖσι τεθλεῖ πόλις.

HESIOD, *Works*, 223.

Those who administer the laws with justice to foreigners and natives—by these the city flourishes.

1. Before the courts.
2. Is Themis blind?
3. Fiat justitia.
4. Buat cælum.

THE BASILICA.

THE courts of Alexandria were held in the great Basilica at the intersection of Emporium Street with the Street of Canopus.

Among the Romans, subject peoples were, as far as possible, left to be governed by their own laws and customs. Accordingly all suits between persons of the same nation were first tried by their own judges. An appeal could be taken from these to a Roman court. Also, the case went to a Roman court if the judges failed to agree on a verdict.

The suit of Malus against the two brothers, Shaphan and Nathan, for the non-payment of the sum they had agreed to give for his rights in their khan-business, together with interest on the same for nearly thirty years (time did not outlaw debts in Alexandria), being between Jew and Jew, came before Jewish judges, who happened to be equally divided between the two chief synagogues.

In suits of this kind, and indeed of almost every kind, it was customary for the more immediate friends of either party to give him moral support by taking seat with him in the court-room. Of course Malus was not unprovided with sympathizers. Nor were Shaphan and Nathan. On their side of the room sat Seti and Aleph, as well as some of the principal men of the Diapleuston.

I do not propose to give a detailed account of proceedings. Those who are curious about the formalities of ancient courts, Jewish or Roman, must seek for them in other works. I touch only *fastigia verum*.

The advocate of Malus first stated briefly the accusation. Then Malus made oath that the statement was correct. Next the defendants made oath to the contrary. Then Piso, as advocate for the defendants, proceeded to question Malus. Was it not possible that he had long ago received payment, but had gradually, through press of affairs of much greater consequence, lost sight of the fact? Malus replied that he was not apt to be forgetful in business matters: besides, he distinctly remembered having made an annual application in writing at the beginning of each year for the sum due him, to say nothing of many personal applications. He was prepared to furnish witnesses to the fact of such applications, both written and oral, during a full quarter of a century.

Piso inquired why he had not brought suit before. Malus replied that he had not been pressed for money; but that the leading motive for his long delay had been *mercy*. He hated to push matters to extremities; but had at last come, very reluctantly, to feel that forbearance with such unscrupulous persons was no longer a virtue, but rather an encouragement to wrong-doing.

Here his advocate suggested that he probably was in the habit of giving a receipt for moneys paid him.

“I *always* do it,” he said promptly. “Of course a receipt is always expected and demanded in case of large payments. If the defendants had paid me the money due they would have demanded a receipt and I should have given it. Let them produce my receipt.”

Malus indulged himself with what he meant for a smile, which was broadly imitated by his party.

“Do you recognize this?” inquired Piso, producing a discolored sheet of papyrus, and handing it to Malus. The man’s hand visibly trembled as he took it; and as his eye glanced along the page he could not prevent a ripple of dismay from passing across his features. But it was gone in an instant.

“A very clever forgery!” he sneered.

Piso took back the paper and handed it to the judges, together with some letters which he himself had received from Malus in course of years on business matters.

“The honorable judges will perceive,” said he, after a few moments had been allowed for a comparison of the papers, “that if the receipt is a forgery, it is an exceedingly clever one—perhaps will perceive that it is so clever that none but an expert scribe, who has made a close study of the plaintiff’s handwriting in many specimens, could possibly have done it. This is what the leading scribes in the city tell me, and are here to testify. But Shaphan and Nathan are *not* skillful scribes—as you may see from these specimens received from them in course of business,”—and he passed over to the judges a parcel.

After a few moments he resumed. “But the honorable judges should further notice that the receipt bears the signatures of two witnesses, as was customary years ago in transactions of such magnitude. These witnesses have given me some trouble. They left the city shortly after signing this document, and I could not find any one who knew where they were. The probability was that they were dead; for they were not young when they disappeared, and thirty years make havoc with old people.

But yesterday, without concert and from opposite directions, they for the first time returned to the city—each drawn by a mysterious feeling that he was wanted and *must* not stay away. They are in this room now; can be identified by persons here present who formerly knew them well; will testify to their own signatures, and anew to the well-remembered fact that Malus received his money in their presence.”

Turning again to Malus, Piso said, “You say that this receipt is a forgery—to whom do you attribute the forgery?”

“Of course to those who could hope for advantage from it—to Shaphan and Nathan.”

“The honorable judges and all here present will please notice,” exclaimed Piso, “that Malus has publicly charged my clients with the crime of forgery; a charge which I deny in their name, against which their general repute testifies, and for which I propose to bring suit against him at fitting opportunity. He shall *prove* what he now asserts, or suffer the penalty prescribed by law to false accusers. Meanwhile, my clients are held innocent by the law as not yet having been proved guilty; and this case must be decided on the assumption that they have *not* committed a forgery.”

Of course the advocate on the other side was voluble and shrewd. He had not practiced in the school of Malus many years in vain; but had his ways of making the worse appear the better—pushing some things to the front, others to the rear; throwing a shadow here and a glare there; slurring over this and dwelling on that; magnifying little things and dwarfing great ones—all after the manner of unscrupulous advocates in every age

The result was that the four judges were equally divided—the Diapleuston pair deciding for the brothers, the others for Malus. So the case went the next day to the Roman Court held in another room of the same Basilica.

Malus was not discouraged by this. He counted on the Flaccan influence being in his favor; and, quite as much, on his reputation of being on good terms with the Roman authorities. He hoped to see some Romans of standing, who might be supposed inspired by Flaccus, occupying seats on his side of the house; also to get from the judges, as they came in and took their seats, some furtive glances of recognition and encouragement. He was disappointed. Still, official people have to be prudent in showing their favoritism; and he still hoped that the powerful magnates at Bruchium were surely, though secretly, at work for him.

The case was reviewed, the arguments for and against were repeated without material change, the same testimonies were given as before—save that Piso was now able to bring forward witnesses to show that, when his clients informed Malus of the loss of the receipt and asked for another, he did not deny having given one, but deferred giving a duplicate just then because of press of business.

The verdict was against the plaintiff.

Malus was astonished at this unusual experience. It was a blow at his prestige. There was no telling but that other victims of his craft and greed, encouraged by this defeat, might turn upon him. Also, it looked as though his Roman friends were beginning to fail him. Still, he was a man of audacity; had grown into a vast confidence in himself and his star; believed more in Simon Magus and his pleasing predictions than in God and eternal

justice : moreover, he said to himself that the Romans in this small matter were trying to appear impartial, so as to break the force of public criticism and suspicion when they should come to decide for him in the larger matters pending. So he managed to keep up heart. Does not many a bright day begin in clouds? Has not many a victory been introduced by a check?

The next day brought on his suit against Cimon the Greek—to be tried in the same place, before the same Judges and Prætor. He was on the ground very early, with an enlarged body of sympathizers and a cheerful aspect. His friends copied his example, and beat the copy. They were almost hilarious. They thought that it would help to gain a battle, to assume it to be already gained. The real object of Malus, however, in being at the Basilica considerably in advance of time, was to get, if possible, an opportunity to convey a note, or a word, through some sub-official of the court, to one or more of the judges before they took their seats. This he was able to do; for he made it worth the while for janitors and pursuivants to oblige him.

When the Prætor and Judges came in he watched their faces for some auspicious sign. But they were still very prudent—unnecessarily so, he thought. In his heart he cursed them for it. It was carrying matters quite too far. They might at least give him a glance that would mean much to him while not compromising them. But they did not even look his way. He would make them sweat for it some day.

Cimon, whom we have not seen for too many days, had come in escorted by two officers; whom, however, he seemed escorting. Seated near him were, not only Seti

and Aleph, but also Alexander, who had arrived from Rome during the last night, together with a large delegation from the Diapleuston Seventy. This was not a pleasant sight to Malus: but it was a relief, as he looked about from under his bushy eyebrows, to see seated with his own company several Roman officers well known as the intimates of Sextus Flaccus. "It is all right," said he to himself. "It is all wrong," said the thoughts on the other side of the house—with a few exceptions. These exceptions said, "*The Lord reigneth*; I will not fear what man can do to me."

According to custom, the court opened with an outline-statement from the advocate of the plaintiff. The defendant had visited the warehouse of Malus, was shown by his conductor through the department of eastern goods, was observed to notice particularly the jewels. Soon after he left, and before any other person had come in, the young man who had conducted him, becoming disturbed as he thought of the suspicious appearance of the stranger, returned to the jewelry room and found a certain casket, containing gems worth fifty thousand *aurei*, to be missing. Whereupon Malus set inquiries on foot, found out where the stranger lodged, obtained a search warrant, found the casket hidden in his room but empty, and had him arrested for theft. His client would say whether this statement was correct.

According to custom, Malus made oath that the facts were as stated—made oath "by Him who reigns in Heaven"; for such was the blanket oath that could be taken alike by the man who believed in Jupiter, or in Zeus, or in Osiris, or in Jehovah.

Then Piso outlined his defense. "Some facts had been

correctly stated. Cimon did visit the warehouse, was conducted through the jewelry department, did notice the cabinet of jewels in passing. Also, the casket was seemingly found in his room. But *he* did not carry it there. That was done by the agent of Malus who conducted the searching party, in order to make out a case against Cimon, whom Malus had reason to fear and wished to discredit and remove. His client would say whether the facts had been correctly stated."

Cimon made oath that, to the best of his belief, the facts were as stated.

Omitting the plea for the plaintiff which came next, the witness-bearing on both sides, the questionings and cross-questionings by the advocates, I will give a summary of Piso's plea, which came last.

He began with gravely ridiculing the idea that anything in the appearance of Cimon should have suggested to his conductor that he was a thief. "The Judges can see for themselves that the story is incredible. So far as appearances go, there is not a man here less likely to do what has been charged upon him than Cimon, the Greek. Further, it appears from the testimony of the Alabarch that this man, whose face is written all over with the natural marks of honesty and high character, has a credit with him for 200,000 gold staters; and so is a very unlikely person to steal what might be, as everybody knows, a box of sham jewels, or even an empty box. Further, the Superintendent of the jewelry department has testified that he saw the casket in its place after Cimon had left; and it cannot be claimed that he gave this testimony in revenge for his dismissal from his post, because he brought me the information before the dis-

missal took place. Further, the young man called Aleph the Chaldean, and a much esteemed member of the University, has testified that he was present when the search was made, and actually saw the Cretan agent of Malus furtively slip the casket from the bosom of his own tunic as he pretended to grope for it on his knees in the dimmer part of the room: and the Cretan himself, at last tired of the wickedness he has been set to do, and fearing the avenging heavens and his own awaking conscience, has confessed that such was the fact—that Malus had employed him to play that part, and, lest he should be tempted to run away with the casket, had opened it in his presence and showed that it was empty, instead of containing gems to the value of 50,000 staters.

“The advocate on the other side has asked what possible motive could Malus have for attacking maliciously a stranger who had never crossed his plans, or even his path, till a few days ago. That point was well taken. People do not act without motive, and what seems to them a sufficient motive: and it is incredible that so shrewd a man as Malus should lay a plot to brand Cimon as a thief, and shut him up in prison, and, in default of 50,000 staters, sell him into slavery, without some powerful reason for doing it. And such reason exists. The plaintiff had become aware that Cimon had unearthed a gigantic system of embezzlement on his part which threatened to destroy his reputation, subject him to heavy punishments, and sacrifice a large part, if not the whole, of his fortune. To prevent this ruin he contrived this plan to smutch Cimon as a low criminal whose accusation was unworthy of notice—also to remove him from view and possibility of action, first by incarceration,

and then by sale into some distant servitude, as our laws permit in case of insolvent debtors. All this will be proved when the next suit in order shall come before the court.

“As this last is evidently a vital point, the Prætor and Judges might do well to consider whether it would not be well to reserve their decision of this case until after the suit of Cimon against Malus has been tried. They can safely be promised great additional light.”

Such, for substance, was what Piso said in a much enlarged form. Strong opposition was made to his proposal for postponement by the Malus party ; but, after a good deal of mutual consultation on the part of the Prætor and Judges, and, as the day was already far spent, it was at length decided to reserve the decision in hope of additional light on the morrow.

Malus was now thoroughly roused. Under the stolid and uninterpretable exterior with which he retired from the Basilica everything was ablaze—all his shrewdness, all his determination, all his wrath, all his daring. He was a born gambler, and could coolly stake everything on a last throw. To-morrow he *must* conquer. To-morrow he *would* conquer. The stars should fulfill themselves by fighting for him. Simon should weave his spells and summon his mightiest spirits all the live-long night in his behalf. But he would not neglect to supplement magic with all the human expedients for winning success. He had prospered so long that he had come to feel that prosperity was both his destiny and his due. He had made people his prey so long that they seemed *made* to be victimized : he had the right of a fisherman to draw into his net as many fishes as possible

by all possible ways and means. He had used the right freely, made many captures, and hitherto had not found a captive large enough to break through his net. He determined that his steady run of good luck should not fail him. He spent the whole night with his lawyer—trying to forecast the course of accusation and evidence which the other party would take, and the best ways of resisting the same. Among these ways he decided should be a more decided and potent invoking of his Roman friends to come to his aid. He thoroughly believed in the venality of every Roman, from the governor downward or upward. Some could be bought for less than others—but all could be bought. Perhaps his hints had not been sufficiently broad: perhaps he had not hinted at sums sufficiently large in the case of some. Now he would mend all that. The governor should have an offer that he could not misunderstand; and one that even a governor would find it worth his while to accept. So of the city Prætor and Judges. Each should have his gratification, and a large one. It would be costly work: but then he could easily and swiftly reimburse himself if his situation could be made secure. Such was his confidence, after all, in the sympathy of the authorities and in the power of money that he was able to face the new day with untrembling nerves, despite the vigils of the night. Had not trusty messengers gone in all directions with instructions to make all sure, *sure*—regardless of expense?

The Basilica was crowded long before the hour. Malus had with him all his friends of the day before, and, in addition, the leading men of his synagogue. On the other side, besides those of the day before, was a large delega-

tion from the University, with Philo and Cornelius at their head—also a large number of by no means showy people, apparently small traders and shop-keepers, whose “moral support” the students seemed at first inclined to laugh at, but, at a hint from Piso, ended in making much of. Among these last was the Phenician of Chapter Second, sitting between his Cretan oppressor and Malus’s discharged clerk. It is doubtful whether Malus recognized these persons—they were well in the rear; and besides he deigned only a glance at the nobodies, being on the lookout for only somebodies, for people of station and weight and large consideration. Of this class he as yet saw no addition to the other side, save the students; and them he was prepared to see.

It was now almost time for the court to open, when an unusual stir was heard at the main door of the Basilica; and shortly the Governor made his appearance, attended by several sub-officials and supporting his son Sextus. The young man was very pale, leaned hard on his father, and, before he had advanced far, became faint and motioned toward the first vacant seats they came to—which chanced to be on Malus’s side of the house. Accordingly, the party fell in there, and busied themselves in trying most officiously to help the invalid—offering this and that restorative, making this and that inquiry, and generally making him as miserable as they could well do by shutting off from him air and light and quiet.

Malus was overjoyed. Plainly his last move had been a successful one. The powers had at last shown their hand. Now he was *sure* what the result of the trial would be. He shot a glance of triumph at Piso; and was in the act of rising to go and pay his respects to his excellency

and offer his services toward making the sick man still more uncomfortable, when the voice of the crier was heard, loudly demanding order and announcing the opening of the court. He looked at the tribunal. The Prætor and Judges were already in their places. So the best he could do was to throw toward his Roman friends, so opportunely arrived, as much of a mingled look of concern and sympathy and welcome as his wooden face would permit.

According to Roman forms, the advocate of the plaintiff first stated briefly his accusation. Some thirty years ago a merchant from Chaldea visited the city; made Malus his agent for the sale of certain costly goods to be sent to him from time to time; and, from that time to this, made frequent and heavy consignments—at first satisfactorily, but with growing dissatisfaction as the years went on, on account of the smallness of the returns; this smallness being ascribed by Malus partly to losses in transit from shipwreck and robberies, partly to enormous custom-house exactions, and partly to poor markets. Finally, the suspicions of the merchant became so strong that he sent his friend Cimon to Alexandria to make inquiries and to take such action as his representative as should seem fitting. Inquiries had shown that the statements of Malus were false at all points—the receipts which he had given as harbor-master show that all the goods sent have been received in good condition; the registers of the custom house, which his excellency the Governor has allowed to be examined, show that only a part of the goods received have been entered for duty, and that the duty actually paid on the part entered has been far less than reported (as also appears from the testimony of the chief of the custom

house) : finally, the testimony of the leading houses engaged in the eastern trade, including that of Malus himself, shows that the market price for nearly all the thirty years has been far higher than Malus has reported. Proof of all these statements would be submitted at the proper time. In view of them it appears that Malus is indebted to Cimon, the agent, in the sum of one million gold staters, exclusive of the interest which the law allows in such cases. The Judges could now see why Malus could wish to discredit Cimon as a low criminal and remove both him and his companion from the scene. It was to discredit and, if possible, prevent a suit that threatened him with ruin of both fortune and reputation.

Did the plaintiff accept these statements as correct? Cimon accepted.

Then the advocate of Malus briefly denied the charge, and stated as chief points of the defense—that the harbor-receipts, beyond those for goods actually found registered at the custom house, are forgeries ; that what purported to be Malus's accounts to his Chaldean principal of exorbitant duties and poor markets were also forgeries ; that very many of his accounts and remittances had been ignored ; that, instead of owing the Chaldean anything, he had dealt with him on a principle of large liberality, and had paid him considerably more than he could equitably claim. He expected to show that his client was the object of a great conspiracy—that people whom nobody knew, whose very names were fictitious, and who certainly had no visible standing and reliability, had conspired to rob and ruin a man of the first standing ; and had craftily taken advantage of old feuds and religious differences to secure abettors. The case was really one

between the allegations of nobodies and those of a prominent and honored citizen.

Did the defendant accept these statements? Malus accepted.

Here Sextus Flaccus struggled to his feet, and with the help of his father and the well-meant hindrance of the other Romans about him, feebly and slowly made his way to the opposite benches. Malus was yet standing and saw every movement. He had just finished one oath—and he felt like taking another. It was with difficulty that he commanded himself enough to sink quietly into his seat. What could this mean? Had his agents betrayed him? Had the stars, and the magic spells, and the mighty demons, and even Avilleus Flaccus at last failed him? He was almost stunned by the sudden fall from the heights of confidence to the depths of discouragement.

As soon as the room was again quiet, Piso produced his documents and witnesses. After these had been canvassed by both parties, Piso proceeded to sum up for Cimon somewhat after this manner :

“It is a very easy thing to cry ‘forgery’ and ‘conspiracy.’ Anybody can do that, provided he has no conscience. I demand that my client be *proved* a forger and conspirator. Until that is done he has a legal right to be considered innocent.

“I happened to foresee what course the defense would take, and so was very glad to meet, yesterday, in the city, the Superintendent of Customs at Myos Hermos. This man, who has held his post for more than forty years, and is well known to the authorities here as reliable beyond question, has testified that all the

parcels of goods which we claim to have been sent from the East were duly received and recorded at his port, and thence forwarded to Alexandria, and acknowledged by Malus as harbor-master. This settles the matter. Malus has received in good condition all the goods sent him—his sworn denials and charges of forgery to the contrary notwithstanding.

“Just here I call the attention of the Judges to a noteworthy fact: we did not send for this venerable witness from Myos Hermos. Though we thought of him and wanted him, we knew that we could not bring him in time for the trial. How, then, does it happen that he is here so opportunely? You have heard his explanation. He had no particular business of his own to draw him to the city, nor was he aware of the present suit; only he felt pressed and drawn to be here on a certain day by a mysterious influence which he was afraid to resist. It looks as if the very Heavens themselves were concerned to have justice done in this case.

“We have seen that Malus received, in good condition, all the goods sent. Only one question remains: Has he duly accounted for them all to his principal? The accounts which have been submitted to the Court—accounts apparently in his own handwriting, and which leading experts pronounce to be genuine—say No. They say that many parcels have never been received; that others came to hand in a damaged condition; that the duties on almost all received were much larger and the market-prices much smaller than the actual. But Malus declares that these accounts are not genuine: they are clever counterfeits, gotten up for the purpose of robbing and ruining him. The accounts which he actually sent

were very different, and correctly represent duties and prices and everything. All this he simply asserts. He makes no attempt to *prove* his assertion: and I might well content myself with a simple counter-assertion. But I will not do this. He says that he has sent to the East, accounts correct in every particular, which have been suppressed. To this I answer that all such accounts, with remittances, imply as many acknowledgments from the receiver. No merchant here, least of all Malus, would go on sending accounts with moneys, year after year for thirty years, without getting acknowledgments for the same in the handwriting of the receiver or his authorized proxy. Let Malus produce such acknowledgments. He cannot do it. He has none to present.

“But Malus alleges that the case is one of contest of reputations. It is the assertion of a Nobody against the denial of a Somebody. The word of an unknown foreigner ought not to have any weight against the word of that eminent citizen and saint whom everybody in Alexandria knows, and knows to be full of riches and honors and virtues—the man who has never wronged anybody; has never ground the faces of the poor; has never sought to take advantage of Shaphan the Jew, or Athon the Phenician, or Epimetes the Greek, or Plautus the Roman, or anybody else under the wide heaven. Here, behind me, are a few of the people he has dealt with, ready to testify that Malus is not the sort of man to commit smuggling, to swear falsely, or even to be less than most merciful to those in his power! Would Malus like to hear from some of his victims?”

On this Sextus Flaccus rose, and slowly, with feeble voice and many a pause, proceeded to say that *he* was a

victim, though not an innocent one. No doubt many were surprised to see him there, and still more surprised to see him in that part of the room. All Alexandria knew that he had long been intimate with Malus, and must know not a little of his principles and practices. Indeed he had, he was ashamed to say, to a certain extent shared in them. What sort of life he had lived, disgraceful to himself and his friends, was notorious. It was not necessary for him to specify—he would spare himself that pain. But this he must say, that in all his follies and sins he was always encouraged and often prompted by Malus. His intemperance, his violence, his enmities, had always been fanned by that man to the utmost.

Without any help from Malus, he had been very hostile to Cimon the Greek, and Aleph the Chaldean. The latter had hurt his pride, and so humbled him in the presence of others that he burned for revenge. Malus whetted his passion, and prompted him to measures for gratifying it which, bad as he was, he would not otherwise have thought of.

“Malus proposed,” continued Sextus, after pausing to recover breath, “that we make common cause against the two men. He told me frankly what reason he had to fear them, and dwelt artfully on the reasons I had for being revenged upon them. He tried to make me feel that we had a common interest in humbling and suppressing them. He plied me with wine. This and the violence of my passions for a while carried me away and made me a ready tool in his hands.

“But I have changed my mind. I have been at death’s door ; and the light that came to me from behind it has shown me three things : my own folly and guilt,

the utterly unscrupulous character of my tempter, and the thorough goodness of at least one of the men (and presumably of his friend and preceptor) whom we had been seeking to injure—may Heaven forgive me, as he has done! To him I owe my life and an opportunity to mend my ways. We had sought to dishonor him, and he knew it. We had done our worst to give him a felon's name and fate, and he knew it. And yet he delivered me from my enemies, rescued me from death, nursed back my flickering life with the carefulness of a mother. I will tell the whole painful story, if Malus chooses to have me; but it would be to his disadvantage as well as to my shame. I propose, Heaven helping me, to mend my ways after thus publicly confessing the sin of them. I advise Malus to do the same."

Sextus sank into his seat exhausted. The silence that followed for a few moments thundered. What eyes were not turned on Aleph were fastened on Malus. But the wooden face said nothing; only the wood was several shades darker than usual.

Piso resumed: "The testimony we have just heard is as weighty as it was unexpected. What Sextus Flaccus has now said about the principles and practices of Malus has long been said under breath by great numbers who have dealt with him. It is well understood in the city that Malus is not a man to stop at any safe way of accomplishing his purposes of gain, or any other purposes. A whole army of victims would appear against him, if it could be understood that it would be safe to do so—would have appeared long ago but for the conviction that the monster that devours them is too big a monster and too well fenced by his scales to be successfully at-

tacked, or even complained of. He is the successor of the Lernean Hydra, from whom all but Hercules felt compelled to hide.

“This is the eminent citizen who thinks that nameless Nobodies ought not to have their testimony taken as against him. I admit that Cimon the Greek and Aleph the Chaldean were strangers here a few days ago, and are still strangers to most of our people. And yet they have found means so to introduce themselves to the confidence of some of our most honorable citizens that these citizens are willing to vouch for them: in which case they stand before the law and the public with all the prestige of their sponsors.

“But I am unwilling to have my clients rest their claim to respectability and consideration on the dignity of any other people, however high, who are willing to vouch for them. It is unnecessary. They have an honorable standing of their own. It is written in their very faces and bearing. Who is Cimon the Greek? It appears from this certified copy of the records of the University that thirty years ago a young man with that name and of illustrious Athenian descent greatly distinguished himself above all his companions in all branches of learning and gentlemanly accomplishment. This young man is Cimon the Greek—as two of the older teachers in the University have been able to recognize and are here to testify.

“And who is Aleph the Chaldean? You have only to look upon him to know that he is *Somebody*: how much of a body, so far as social standing is concerned, this packet which I now take up from the table ought to tell. Those of you who sit near me can see that the seal

is yet unbroken. I now break it; and, on removing certain wraps, come to this" (he held up to view a roll of vellum richly blazoned and bearing a broad seal). "This document is bordered with many jewels, the value of which some of you can judge of better than myself, but which yet my limited knowledge of such matters assures me to be quite great enough to authenticate the written contents. So costly a credential as this is beyond the reach of an impostor, and was doubtless chosen for this reason. What are the contents?"

He paused, and read in silence. Then, holding up the vellum so as to display the seal, he resumed:

"This seal bears on it the figure of a crown. The script is in three languages—Latin, Greek, and Chaldean. I will read the Greek:

"'TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

"'I, Jasper Daniel Atropates, King of Median Atropatene and pontiff of the Most High God, foreseeing that occasion may arise for such a document as this, do hereby certify that the bearer is my only son, Prince Aleph Daniel, whom I send with his Greek preceptor and my chief counsellor into Egypt for purposes altogether peaceful, viz.: to study the institutions and learning of the West, to enlarge his knowledge of life and man, and to act for me, in conjunction with his companion, in all my business affairs in that land.

"'To this I affix the seal of my kingdom.'

"Such is the document," said Piso, handing it to the Judges for inspection. After a few moments he resumed:

"In explanation of this document, I would remind

the Court that Atropatene is a Chaldean kingdom of great beauty and fertility, unassailably entrenched among the mountains of Media, where for five hundred years have ruled the descendants of the Hebrew prophet Daniel, to whom it was given by Cyrus the Persian, and to whose descendant Atropates it was confirmed by Alexander the Macedonian. The monarchs of this dynasty have not thought it beneath themselves to do as did Solomon the Magnificent—to engage in commerce with foreign countries and make the superfluities of one land supply the deficiencies of another. Accordingly, when, thirty years ago, Jasper with two other princes passed through the land, he arranged with Malus, then not so well known as he is now, to receive and dispose of such eastern goods as might be sent him by way of the Red Sea, Myos Hermos, and Coptus. Malus did not know that his employer was a sovereign: probably has never known it till now. This is the man whom he has defrauded—trusting that the remoteness of his principal would secure him from detection. But the Heavens have decreed against him—the Heavens which he seems to have forgotten.”

The advocate of Malus made only a brief reply. He dealt in generalities. He asserted and reasserted in many forms, and with much strength of voice, the innocence of his client. Whatever the appearances against him, they were deceptive. To get at real facts we often have to go below the seemings. Wise men have to be on their guard against even their own senses. He would not condemn the notable citizens and officials who had given their support to the other side: at the same time, he must be allowed to say that they have made a grave mis-

take. They have been misled by circumstantial evidence, as many other intelligent and upright men have been. He had no doubt but that they would some day see their mistake, and be sorry for it. How would they like to have their own reputations and fortunes fall a prey to some plausible adventurer? He hoped that they would never come to that; but it now looked as if no man's fortune, or even life, would henceforth be safe in Alexandria. He trusted that the eminent Judges would see the peril to which they and all people of consideration are exposed, and, by their verdict, discourage attacks on prominent men, to which envy and cupidity so strongly tempt.

It would not be surprising if his client, amid the pressure and anxieties of so large and varied business, had sometimes made mistakes, sometimes been forgetful, and even sometimes been overborne and distracted to the point of irresponsible insanity. In such circumstances he may have done things which, in his right mind, he never would have done. In the conduct of great and complicated affairs the strain on the mind is often very great; and, for his part, he wondered that it did not give way oftener than it did. He hoped that the Judges would take these considerations into account in making up their verdict; and would not ruin one of their own citizens for the sake of a foreigner, whether prince or peasant. A verdict against Malus would send a large sum out of the country, never to return. Alexandria would be impoverished for the sake of Chaldea.

So the case was submitted. The Judges conferred among themselves for a few moments, and then one of them spoke in a low tone to the Prætor.

The public crier summoned attention, and the Prætor announced :

“I. The Judges have decided that the suit of Malus against Cimon is unsustainable, and order that the defendant, discharged from custody, receive damages to the amount of 50,000 staters, the estimated value of the jewels said to have been stolen.

“II. Also, the Judges have decided that the suit of Cimon against Malus is sustained ; and order that the latter pay to the former the arrears for thirty years as determined by certain dealers in eastern goods, hereafter to be designated, in view of the actual duties and prices during that period, and counting as genuine both the harbor receipts of Malus and his accounts to his principal as they have been shown here.

“III. Also, it is ordered that Malus be taken into custody until the payment now decreed has been made, and until it has been legally determined whether he is guilty of the crime of smuggling. LICITUM EST DECEDERE.”

Aleph and Cimon were overwhelmed with congratulations. The Governor pressed them to become his guests and occupy a vacant palace at Bruchium ; but they excused themselves, and begged to be allowed to return unceremoniously with Seti to the Serapeum. They were unable, however, to return as inconspicuously as they wished : for the delegation of students, with Cornelius at their head, insisted on escorting them, and cheering crowds gradually gathered about them, and before they reached the temple they met nearly the whole enthusiastic membership of the University, whom nothing could prevent from rending the air and shaking the city with cries of “LONG LIVE ALEPH THE PRINCE!”

Who were they who said that poetical justice is *always* done in this world? Ah, I remember—they were the friends of Job. Who were they who said that poetical justice is *never* done in actual life? No matter: whoever said it smote facts in the face. I mean such facts as are recorded in this chapter: also such as are recorded in the Bible history of Joseph, but especially of Daniel the prophet, the great ancestor of our Aleph, against whose fortunes the floods of wrong not only surged in vain, but floated them up to higher levels.

Under the sun, the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men of skill. Sometimes good men have to wait long for their due—sometimes even into the next world. Of course, sooner or later justice will be done. As sure as there is a God in Heaven, justice *must* be done, sooner or later. But we are always thankful when it is done *sooner*—when a good man does not have to wait for his due till he is dead; when some Daniels and Aleph-Daniels are not only recompensed in the earth, but find the feet of justice not so heavily weighted but that they can reach their goal within a few days of the starting. The weak in faith then thank God and take courage.

XVII.

THE CONCLUSION.

Όταν εδτυχήσωμεν τότε χαίρειν παρέσται.

SOPHOCLES, *Electr* 1299.

When we shall succeed, then is the time to rejoice.

1. Neither impotent nor lame.
2. Each to his own place.
3. By way of Jesus.
4. Home.

XVII.

THE CONCLUSION.

WERE it not for a most conspicuous example, now and then, of large success in committing an enterprise to God and then mightily trusting His Providence, faith would lack a very desirable inspiration.

In the case of our Chaldean friends, the success was very large indeed. As we all soon come to know, many good enterprises end in complete failure. Only a few attain complete success, and realize all they proposed to themselves. Still fewer *surpass* their aim, and accomplish far more than they expected or ventured to hope. Yet such was the enterprise of Cimon and Aleph in Alexandria.

What had they proposed to themselves? To investigate Malus, and bring him to justice; to gather reliable information concerning Him who was born king of the Jews and to whom the miraculous star had guided the Magian sovereigns; to broaden and enrich the education of Aleph, not only by giving him a wider outlook on the world and humanity, but by throwing him, divested of all the insignia and glamour of his rank, entirely on his own resources for guidance and help in dealing with men in new and difficult circumstances. All these objects had been accomplished.

Within a few days from the close of the trial the authorities had placed in the hands of Cimon the full amount of his claim against Malus, together with interest on all delayed payments. This, in itself, was not sufficient to ruin the rogue financially. But he had already drawn considerably on his resources in his attempt to bribe the judges and secure the countenance of other influential people: for they had not hesitated to take silently his gifts though no equivalent was rendered. But the greatest drain upon him came from another quarter. Other victims of his rapacity, encouraged by the result of Cimon's suit, attacked him successfully; and before long it seemed as if there would be no end to the suits. Under these circumstances, Alexandria was not much surprised, one fine morning, to hear that Malus (latterly they had fallen into the way of calling him Pessimus) was nowhere to be found—nor any of his remaining assets. The guard set upon him was not incorruptible, and he had disappeared between two days. No one knew where he had gone. Some said to Ethiopia; some said to Spain; some said to Marseilles in Gaul; and some would have it that he had taken to the desert with Draco. A few declared that he had committed suicide. This last supposition, however, was considered extremely improbable, on the ground that so shrewd a person would not take the trouble to carry away with him goods which he did not mean to use. There is no use for current money of the merchant in Hades. Whatever supposition was correct, it is certain that Malus never reappeared in Alexandria.

But our friends had a still more important object in coming to the commercial metropolis of the West. It

was to learn about Him who was born king of the Jews. Some things they already knew from the Magi—that his coming was divinely heralded and accompanied by supernatural events, that his mission was a great and glorious one, having significance for all nations. What had they learned in addition? That the life which had opened so grandly amid the ministries and songs of angels, and the worship and gifts of star-led pilgrims, had come to a still grander sequel—that into the glowing dawn had at length come the sun in his strength; a mingled glory of miracles and character and teaching such as never before gathered about a single life—that Jesus is surely the Messiah of the Sacred Books and their sufficient credential—that this Messiah is not, as has been commonly supposed, a secular warrior, conqueror, and king; but a spiritual monarch ruling over willing hearts in the interest of truth and righteousness, and whose victories are salvations—that his mission in the world is one of humiliation instead of exaltation, of suffering instead of pleasure, of death instead of life; and that in dying he completed a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of the world—also, that to express the dignity of his being both the prophets and himself use language which exalts him far above angels and claims for him a Divine nature. To know all this was a great gain, more than they had ventured to hope. And if, on their way home, they should be able to see the Messiah with their own eyes, witness personally some wonderful work, and obtain for themselves and theirs his personal benediction, they would feel that their way had been wonderfully prospered.

And then the educational object which the father of Aleph distinctly proposed to himself—was that object

well secured? How well Aleph carried himself when thrown on his own resources for guidance we have seen; and my belief is that when his parents come to see him and to hear the report of Cimon, they will be quite satisfied with their experiment. They will realize that the promising bud has beautifully flowered, that the rare plant which had started and grown so thriftily in their sheltered and sunny conservatory was now hardy enough to be transplanted into the open field, and even to the windy summits of life.

So all the ends proposed in the visit of our friends to Alexandria were accomplished—and more. For these unknown men had been the means of introducing not only a loftier moral element into the student life of Alexandria, but had so drawn upon Cornelius and Metellus, who had specially attached themselves to them, that they had begun to study the Septuagint, to frequent the services at the Diapleuston, to admire the sublime monotheism and hopes of the Jew, and finally to give sure token of becoming, the one the devout Cornelius of the Acts of the Apostle and the other one of those Christians saluted by Paul as belonging to “Aristobulus’ household.”

But the influence of Aleph on Sextus Flaccus was still more remarkable. His frequent interviews with that penitent man ended not only in his thorough reform, and in his renouncing idolatry, but also in his accepting Jesus as a Divine sacrifice for sin.

And it was on this wise. The young Roman at first was terribly oppressed with a sense of sin. He could hardly say too much against himself. His misdeeds and follies haunted him like ghosts, and hunted him like

the Eumenides. Their horrible faces scowled at him, their serpent-hair hissed and leaped at him, their clenched hands shook themselves at him from behind almost every object he saw. Sometimes in his sleep he would see a mountain, traced all over in fiery characters with the names of his sins, moving swiftly toward him; and he would wake drenched in sweat and terror as the ponderous masses came rushing in upon him and buried him thousands of feet beneath their munitions of rocks. At other times he dreamed that, like Andromeda, he was chained to a rock at the ocean's edge, and that great storm-billows in long succession were sweeping in upon him, and that on the crested summit of each a great sea-monster with lurid eyes and open jaws came rushing and shrieking *Sin*, SIN, SIN. He shrieked as loudly—and awoke in despair.

It was in this state that he first sent for Aleph. His first sense of relief came when Aleph told him the story of Jesus, and suggested the idea of a Divine incarnation and atonement for sin. The wretched man clutched the idea as a drowning man does a plank. Here was something solid to rest upon. Here was a sufficient sacrifice for even his enormities. The weight began to lift from his oppressed breast. At last one day as Aleph was reading to him the sublime description which Isaiah gives in his 53d chapter of Him on whom "were laid the iniquities of us all," a mighty deliverance came. Suddenly all his doors and windows sprang open musically to welcome Jesus as the Lamb of God. The sense of need opened them. From that day the sick body mended wonderfully; and soon the streets of Alexandria saw a new man under an old name. The name continued to be Sextus

Flaccus, but it stood for a very different person. It stood for the first Roman Christian of rank who dared to avow himself. Paul on his arrival at Rome some years later found him a member of Cæsar's household, and ready to help him with all his influence in founding the first Roman church.

This was a great and unexpected success. But, in addition, our eastern pilgrims, with nothing but their cultured manhood to show, had found other friends such as they had never counted on finding—friends well worth the having, even by a prince; friends whose friendship was for themselves and not for their rank; friends among whom was one—but I must not anticipate. Nay, I must go back a little.

Though Alexander had reached home early in the evening before the last trial, it was very late before he could get to his rest—he had so much to tell and so much to hear. And this was what he had to tell. He had succeeded in both the objects for which he had hastened to Rome. Of course, one of these objects was to prevent the disturbance at the Diapleuston from being misrepresented to the emperor as a personal affront. It was not reported at all. For some reason Flaccus had not thought it best to say anything about the matter in his dispatches. Probably he thought that some of the circumstances would not bear telling; and then the presence of Alexander at the ear of the emperor was in itself a caution to be prudent. So Flaccus was dumb.

The other object which Alexander had in view was really to find out some safe way of declining the marriage proposals in behalf of the Cæsar.

Notwithstanding the fears of his daughter, he had

never been so much attracted by the offer of an imperial alliance as were some of his Jewish friends. He had been too much behind the scenes at the Palatine. He knew too much of Tiberius and Cæsarism. He knew nothing to the disadvantage of Germanicus and much to his advantage; but he also knew that Tiberius as a young man had won golden opinions; also, that to be the nephew and heir apparent of the jealous and capricious emperor was very far from being foreordained to empire. So one of his objects in going to Rome was, not to see whether the proposals were desirable, but to see how they might safely be declined. That was a hard problem. But Providence favored him. He found that Germanicus, who had never seen Rachel, had many times seen Agrippina, the granddaughter of Augustus, and to very good purpose. The growing intimacy and attachment between the young people which he was not slow to discover he promoted to the utmost. And when the matter was ripe he found means of bringing it to the knowledge of Sejanus, the emperor's favorite, and of so enlisting him in its support that under his influence Tiberius began to regret his Egyptian proposals, and to seek some excuse for recalling them. "He did not know, when they were made, of the situation at home. It had only just come to his knowledge. He was sorry; but he hated to break young hearts." Alexander allowed that it would be a pity. The emperor also thought that, inasmuch as Germanicus and Rachel had never met, it might not, after all, be a very hard matter for the fair Alexandrian to have the matter dropped in such a quiet and honorable way as could easily be devised. Alexander candidly allowed that the fact which his majesty had stated was a weighty

one. In short, Tiberius receded from his proposals; and, to soften the supposed disappointment to the mighty banker for whom his treasury had so much use, he sent him home in the imperial galley with new guaranties and privileges for the Jewish community in Egypt, and with a broad hint to Flaccus to let it be known that the honor of the imperial alliance had been declined from religious considerations which the emperor felt bound to respect. The Alabarch expected nothing less than that early the next morning all Alexandria would be in possession of the news, and would be wondering how he could so rebuff the emperor and yet stand higher in his favor than ever.

This, for substance, was what Alexander had to tell. Of course Rachel was vastly delighted at her escape; and showed that she was by flinging her arms about her father's neck and rapturously kissing him.

But the father wanted to hear as well as to tell. Something of what had transpired had reached him by letter; but he wanted to know all. And Seti rehearsed all that had happened since that memorable Sabbath at the Diapleuston. Rachel sat uneasily silent, leaning against her father and toying with the splendid jewelled badge of the Order of the Golden Eagle which Tiberius at parting had, with his own hands, fastened on his breast—listening with burning cheeks as her grandfather in his graphic way reproduced the events and expressed the confidence and admiration with which Aleph had inspired him. Every now and then she stole an anxious look at her father's face; not quite sure how the shrewd man of affairs, professionally accustomed to deal with men on a principle of suspicion and abundant caution, would view the eulogiums of the priest and philosopher,

founded on so brief an acquaintance. When Alexander had heard all, he said slowly :

“ If I had never seen the young man, nor known Seti so well, I might have challenged the sobriety of the account I have just heard. But, having seen him twice, and you a thousand times, I have nothing to say, save that I wish he was emperor of the West, or at least the Cæsar. In that case, perhaps, I would not take so much trouble to keep the Cæsar at arm’s-length, as I have been lately taking in another quarter”—and he nodded smilingly at Rachel. “ But who can he be? ”

“ No matter who he is,” returned Seti with emphasis, “ since he is a *Man*, a sovereign man. He has a broader empire within him than Tiberius sees without him ; an empire of which no caprice of fortune can rob him. And his body is as sovereign as his soul. He needs no herald to go before him and cry, *Make way, for the king is coming*. Men know it as soon as they see him.”

To such words Rachel could have listened all night. But she wondered whether they would have been spoken had father and grandfather known what she knew. She had not yet mustered courage to speak to Seti of her new relation to Aleph ; in fact had about made up her mind to leave all explanations to Providence and Aleph. So both Seti and Alexander remained ignorant of that wonderful conversation between the young people which I have lately recorded till Aleph the Chaldean had become Aleph the Prince, and had asked leave to substitute for the proposals of Tiberius certain proposals of his own. Then the whole matter came out. The Alabarch found that his daughter had no serious objection to being a princess provided the prince was of the right sort. He

was in very much the same mood himself. Indeed, he went so far as to say that he would not have refused his daughter to Aleph had he always remained simply Aleph the Chaldean, of unknown birth and fortunes: how much less could he do it now that the young man stood revealed a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a descendant of Daniel the illustrious statesman and prophet, and the heir of the stablest and choicest, though not the largest, sovereignty of the age!

So, before many days (but not until the arrival of Rachel's mother from Jerusalem, and her express sanction, and even her joyful confession that Aleph was a very welcome substitute for even so good a Cæsar as Germanicus) a formal betrothal took place; and all Alexandria took to busily talking over the gracious ceremonial. Now they understood why Germanicus had been respectfully declined. The ground had been pre-empted. Another prince had spoken, and spoken in person. "And no wonder," said they, "that he was successful; for never did we set eyes on a goodlier person or a princelier." So Alexandria was in excellent humor; and for once all the five quarters of the city ceased their mutual wrangling and railing and consented to say the same complimentary things. Even the elders of the Diapleuston who so much wanted to see a second Esther on the imperial throne were by this time ready to allow that Rachel had chosen very happily for herself, if not for the Jewish public. They offered congratulations. They sent in rich presents—especially Ben Simeon, who, from the first, had been so drawn to Aleph, and was now in charge as consignee in the place of Malus. But the richest and most valued presents that Rachel received on that

auspicious day were two—from opposite quarters. One was a copy from the Septuagint of all the Messianic prophecies in their order, beautifully done on vellum margined with jewels—this came from Aleph. The other came from Flaccus, in the name of his son Sextus, and was no less than the Setian palace on the Nile which has had so conspicuous a place in this narrative. Some damage had been done to it by Draco and his band in their orgies and final rummage for concealed treasure: but he had been so thoroughly frightened by what he had done to Sextus, as well as by the escape of Aleph and the numerous foot-prints found about the premises early the next morning, that his search was very hasty and ended in the whole gang betaking themselves precipitately to the desert—to the great misfortune of the desert and travelers, but without much damage to the stronghold they had left. It was soon put in prime condition by Flaccus, and then, in an elaborate communication, presented to Seti for Rachel and Aleph as an “Egyptian home to which his excellency hoped they would very often return.” It was a question in the mind of Seti whether a man could give what does not belong to him; but this question, wise man that he was, he kept to himself, and was very glad to have the ancient heirloom come back in any way into his family.

And these were the ulterior arrangements. Cimon and Aleph would return home at once by way of Palestine, with the hope of falling in with the Messiah ere his return heavenward. Then, as soon as possible, Aleph would come again with his father’s formal sanction to claim his bride; and then her father and mother and dear mother-father would take a long vacation and accompany

her and Miriam (henceforth inseparable) to their new home. Alexander even went so far as to intimate that, mindful of the uncertainty of the imperial favor and of the Jewish position in Alexandria, he was thinking seriously of transferring the bulk of his fortune to a safer region; and to facilitate this had already arranged to open a branch banking house at Ecbatana, where converged many routes of commercial travel. By all means do this, O great financier, and tarry not in the doing; for the times in the west are threatening, and Rome is a volcano that may at any moment send streams of lava farther than Alexandria. Plant thy family and fortunes amid the safe Chaldean mountains, hard by the tombs of Daniel and Esther in Eden; and, looking calmly forth from your impregnable observatory, see distant Cæsars rise and fall, see distant legions march and counter-march, and, above all, see the friendly star that offers to guide your faith and gifts to Jesus the King. Then push out the antennæ of commerce vigorously into all lands, and gather the spoils of peace wherewith to decorate the Prince of peace. It is your mission. You have a genius for honorable money-making. Use it vigorously. It is as sacred as a genius for eloquence, or a genius for science.

A brilliant caravan files through the gate of Canopus. Our friends are moving homeward. They came by the way the Magian fathers returned; they are returning by the way those fathers came. They have just said farewells to Shaphan and Nathan: a little before they had said still more tender ones at the palace of Alexander.

Flaccus had insisted on sending with them an escort of cavalry as far as the frontier; and Alexander, and Seti, and Cornelius at the head of a large delegation from the University, will go with them a day's journey.

We will not go with them even that distance, though we would be glad to do so; but will say our farewells and godspeeds just here before the khan where Shaphan and Nathan once reluctantly parted with the Divine Child. Our parting, too, is reluctant. We are vastly sorry, O wise men of the East, to say good-bye to you, though it be for only a few moons. It is not often that such as you have crossed our path, or any path. But partings must be; and so, comforting ourselves with the expectation of seeing you again when all Alexandria is ablaze with that rare thing, a royal marriage made in Heaven, we gather courage to say ADIEU! May the Father above prosper your way to the father below. We foresee that He will. You and yours are well mounted; and though only Aleph has a Parthia beneath him, there can be but a few days of travel between you and the Messiah. The longings of your hearts will be gratified. You will reach Galilee in season. There, on a certain mountain, with more than five hundred fellow disciples, you will see with your own eyes Him in whom you have blessedly believed without seeing; will be welcomed by Him for the fathers' sake as well as for your own; will perhaps see some of the "many other signs which are not written in this book"; and, finally, in the early morning, as you resume your journey and are taking a look backward on the city of so many sacred memories, you will see over the Mount of Olives a human form slowly rising through the air with outstretched hands of benediction. The son

of Daniel will need no interpreter. Behold the Heavenly King going to his home even as you are going to yours! And you will worship and go on your way rejoicing; bearing to your Chaldean home such news that all its silver trumpets will sound as it exclaims:

THANK GOD! YE, TOO, HAVE BEEN STAR-LED PILGRIMS.

When forth the Tribes to Canaan went,
 In travel long and sore,
 What guide had they along the way,
 Save cloud that went before—
 Save cloud that *goes* before,
 And goeth evermore ?

And when the Wise Men of the East
 A pilgrim banner bore,
 What guide had they along the way,
 Save star that shone before—
 Save star that *shines* before,
 And shineth evermore ?

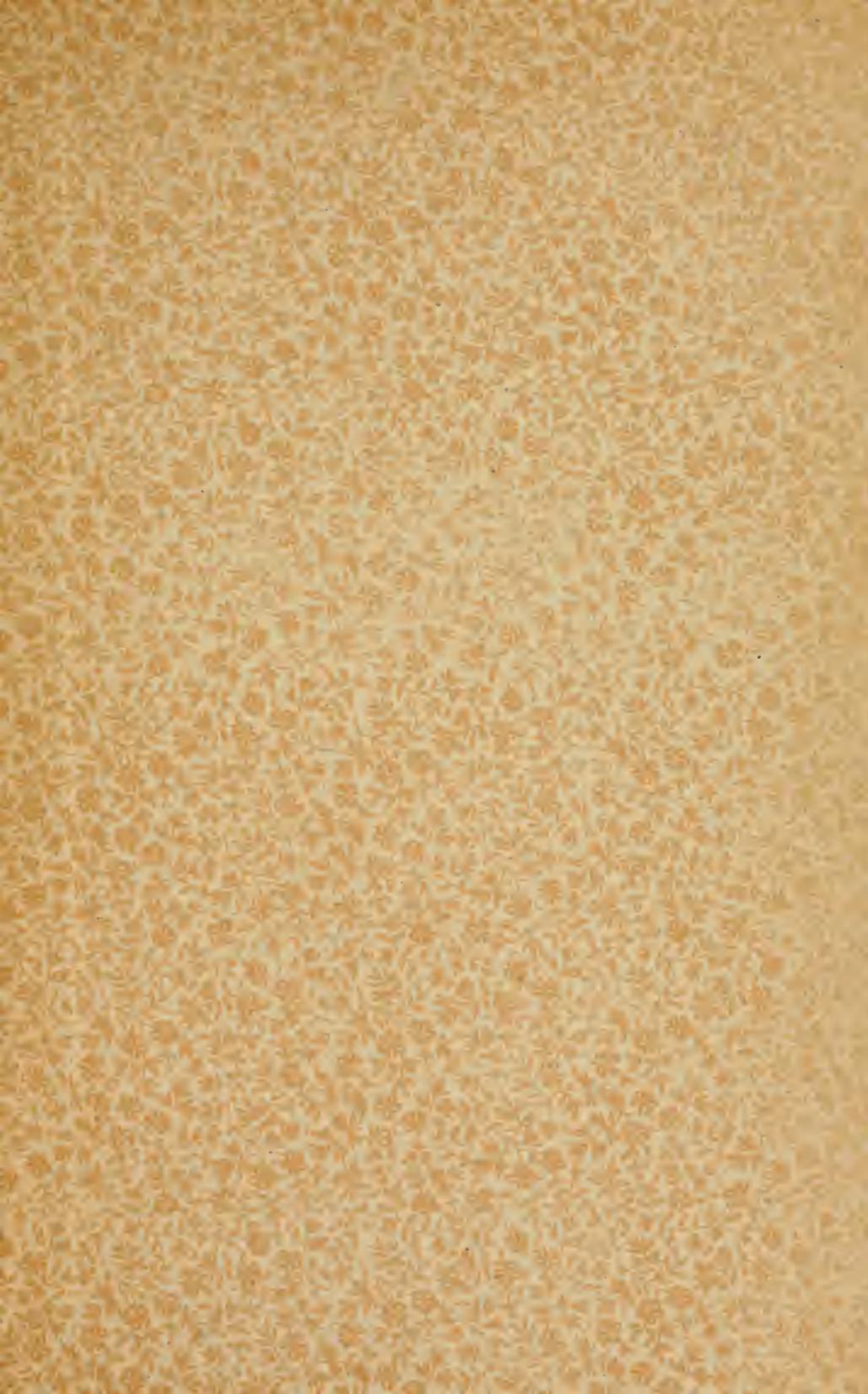
And when the Wise Men of the West,
 Wise in a saving lore,
 Set forth through wilds to find the Child
 And win the Golden Shore,
 That shineth evermore,
 And moveth nevermore ;

Some cloud from God will surely go
 Their doubtful steps before,
 All through the light—and through the night
 Some star its beams shall pour,
 Some star their path explore—
 Guide faileth nevermore.

Who to the Lord his way commends
 Shall never lose his way,
 But ever find the Lord is kind
 To lead from dark to day :

Shall even find the Lord doth know
A way so kind that e'en the blind
 Straight to his mark can go—
At least *His* mark, which, kinder far,
The daily cloud and nightly star
 Go seeking evermore,
 And missing nevermore.





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Aleph, the Chaldean; or, The Messiah as

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