

THE STORY OF
ALEXANDER RE
TOLD FROM THE
ORIGINALS BY
ROBERT STEELE
DRAWN BY FRED
MASON ★ AND
PUBLISHED BY
DAVID NUTT





LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO



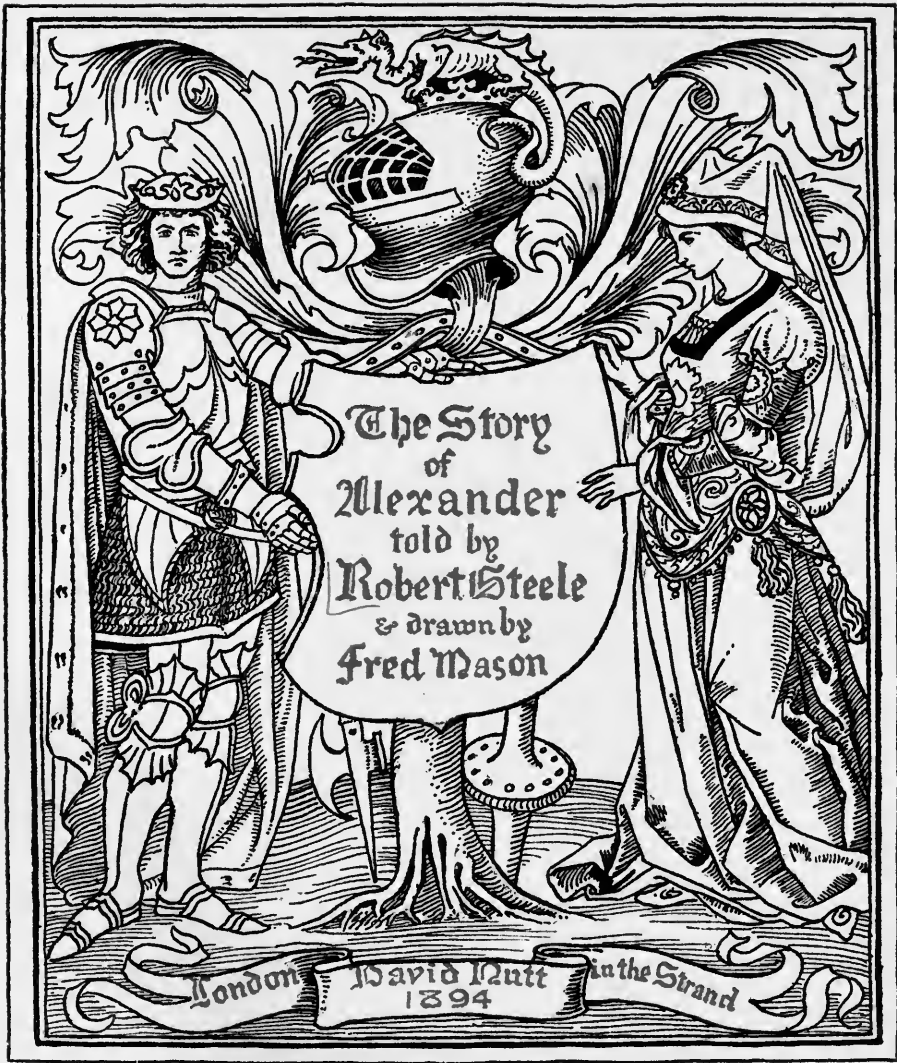






THE STORY OF ALEXANDER

#58287





M. M. S.

A TOKEN OF
FRIENDSHIP AND ADMIRATION



AN OPEN LETTER

MY DEAR GRACIE

When I promised some months ago to tell you a fairy story, I did not remember that most of them have been so well told by my friend Mr. Jacobs, and others, that it would be difficult to find any fresh ones worth telling you.

Then I remembered that there was a time, hundreds of years ago, when folk here in England were fond of hearing and telling stories, and when, in the long winter evenings, people gathered round the castle-fire in the great hall, lord and lady, squires and dames, pages, varlets, children, even the dogs, all of them listening to the old chaplain who read them a never-ending tale of a brave knight and a wicked enchanter; or, better still, to a travelling tale-teller who brought the last story from France and Italy. "Now," thought I, "the tales that pleased these folk so well would perhaps suit young people of to-day." For the men who lived then were large hearted and simple souled, and if it is true, as our great English poet said, "Men are but children of a larger growth"—and it was true of that time—perhaps the

vii stories

stories of the men of those days would still have the power to please the children of ours.

Well, I began to turn over some of those big books you have seen in my room, and to read their stories again to choose one for you, and the first story I read was the History of Alexander the Great. You must not be frightened about the tale, however; there are no dates and summaries at the ends of the chapters to learn, and, though I believe every word of it myself, I am afraid that if you were to put some of it in your examination paper on Greek History, the mistress who marked it would be annoyed, and I am certain that you will not find the pictures like those of the Greeks in your other books. This is only a tale, and the Alexander and Darius, the Greeks and the Jews, it tells about, are not the ones you have read of, but different people with the same names.

The reason for choosing the story of Alexander to tell you is this: it was the earliest and one of the most interesting of the stories of the Middle Age. Everyone liked it, everyone knew something about it, and everyone told it his own way. Even the animals (in a tale of Reynard the Fox) liked it, and one of them told it to the lion. All the English poets of those days knew and loved it. If, then, you could read any of the Middle Age tales, you could read this one.

So you must now fancy that times are changed; you are sitting in some great castle-hall, and all the people round you are in dresses like those that Mr. Mason has drawn for you; perhaps you are sitting on a throne like the queen in the picture, and I am sitting on the stool before you, and I begin to tell you a

story of the bravest knight in the world, his wars, and the wonderful things he saw and did. And as all the young folk gather round and listen, if the older folk come with them and bring the great Latin book to see if I tell the story right, when they can get it (for it is very rare) they will find that I have taken the story-teller's privilege—I have left out much that was not interesting, and I have told you some things the old story-tellers used to leave out.

Perhaps you will find that there is too much fighting in the story: if so, remember that it was nearly the only game people played at in those days, so that it took the place of rowing or tennis, cycling or cricket among the young people then. But the fighting had this serious side to it—that a young lady might wake any morning and find an army besieging her home, ready to burn it down and carry her away prisoner. So, you see, everyone understood about fighting and took an interest in hearing of it.

And now I leave you with your story. If it pleases you, and shows you who were the heroes of our ancestors, and what were the stories they delighted in, it will have reached the object of

Your loving liegeman

R. S.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I. HOW ANECTANABUS WAS KING OF EGYPT, AND WHY HE FLED INTO THE LAND OF MACEDON . . .	1
CHAPTER II. OF OLYMPIAS AND ANECTANABUS, OF THE MAGIC HE WROUGHT, AND OF THE BIRTH OF ALEX- ANDER	9
CHAPTER III. HOW ALEXANDER TAMED THE HORSE BUCEPHALUS, AND HOW HE DID HIS FIRST DEED OF ARMS	21
CHAPTER IV. TELLS OF THE EMBASSY OF DARIUS, OF THE DEATH OF PHILIP, AND THE CROWNING OF ALEXANDER.	30
CHAPTER V. HOW ALEXANDER GATHERED AN ARMY TOGETHER: HOW HE BUILT ALEXANDRIA AND LAID SIEGE TO THE CITY OF TYRE	39
CHAPTER VI. TELLS OF THE FORAY OF KADESH, AND OF ITS ENDING, AND OF THE TAKING OF THE CITY OF TYRE	47

	PAGE
CHAPTER VII. HOW ALEXANDER CAME TO JERUSALEM, HOW THE BISHOP MET HIM, AND WHAT THERE BEFELL HIM.	55
CHAPTER VIII. TELLS HOW DARIUS THE EMPEROR SENT PRESENTS TO ALEXANDER, AND WHAT WAS THE PRESENT SENT BACK TO HIM	63
CHAPTER IX. TELLS HOW ALEXANDER DESTROYED THEBES AND HOW IT WAS REBUILT, AND OF HIS RETURN TO PERSIA	73
CHAPTER X. HOW ALEXANDER DEFEATED THE PER- SIANS, AND HOW HE WENT TO THE FEAST OF DARIUS.	82
CHAPTER XI. TELLS OF THE BATTLE BETWEEN ALEX- ANDER AND DARIUS, AND OF THE SLAYING OF DARIUS	94
CHAPTER XII. HOW ALEXANDER MARRIED ROXANA, THE DAUGHTER OF THE EMPEROR, AND HOW HE DEFEATED PORUS THE KING OF INDIA.	102
CHAPTER XIII. HOW ALEXANDER AND HIS MEN PASSED THE NIGHT OF FEAR, AND HOW HE SAW THE GREATEST AND THE LEAST THING ON EARTH.	111
CHAPTER XIV. HOW ALEXANDER AND HIS ARMY PASSED THROUGH THE VALLEY OF TERROR AND SOUGHT THE WELLS OF LIFE	124
CHAPTER XV. HOW THE BRAHMANS CAME TO KING ALEXANDER AND WHAT HE LEARNT FROM THEM: AND OF THE COMING OF THE AMAZONS.	138
CHAPTER XVI. HOW ALEXANDER PASSED THROUGH THE LAND OF DARKNESS AND SLEW THE BASILISK .	148

	PAGE
CHAPTER XVII. HOW ALEXANDER CAME TO THE TREES OF THE SUN AND THE MOON, AND WHAT THEY TOLD HIM.	159
CHAPTER XVIII. HOW ALEXANDER SLEW PORUS AND WON BACK THE WIFE OF CANDOYL AND WAS KNOWN OF CANDACE WHEN HE CAME TO HER.	171
CHAPTER XIX. TELLS HOW ALEXANDER DEFEATED GOG AND MAGOG, HOW HE WENT UP INTO THE AIR AND DOWN INTO THE SEA	188
CHAPTER XX. HOW ALEXANDER CAME TO HIS LIFE'S END AND WAS BURIED, AND WHAT THEREON BEFELL.	204





CHAPTER I. HOW ANECTANABUS WAS KING OF EGYPT, AND WHY HE FLED INTO THE LAND OF MACEDON.



ONCE UPON A TIME a king reigned over the land of Egypt, whose name was Anectanabus. In his time that land was the richest in the world, and its people were wise and happy ; but Anectanabus was the wisest and the noblest of them, and under his rule all men, both great and small, prospered. The field-workers ploughed and reaped, the merchants travelled and chattered, the wise men studied and wrote and taught, and the great lords watched over the land, helped the poor, and guarded all men. Shortly to say, the land of Egypt was in those days the home of plenty and of peace, of mirth and of game.

Now Anectanabus was, above all men, skilled in the arts of magic, for he had learned the secrets of Egypt that were not written down in books, but cut

I

A

in

in the stone on the sides of the great temples, and on the Pillars of the Sun : and when he was a young man he had been taken into the secret chambers of the Pyramids, and had been laid in the stone coffin of the gods, and there the secrets had been whispered to him which the kings and priests of Egypt had discovered for a thousand years. And chief of all his crafts, he had the power of making images of men to do what he would, and whatever the images did, that the men they were like to, did : and he used this art to save his land from war. For if a fleet of ships came to attack his land he would make images of them in wax to float on water, and images of his own ships, and then he would cause the ships of the enemy to turn and flee before his ships or ever a blow was struck, and as he did, so it happened in the war. Or if an army came against him, he caused it to flee in the same way, so that no king of the countries about dared to come out and make war on Egypt. And many other arts he used, but all for the good of his land, so that men loved him and served him with joy.

It fell upon a day that Anectanabus was sitting in his palace hall on his daïs, and round him were his dukes and princes, and the great hall of the palace was filled with men in rich array. In that land, the king showed himself to men but rarely, and when he did so he was clothed in his noblest and fairest dress, with his crown on his head, and his nobles

and all men were dressed in their best, so that the hall shone with gold, and sparkled and dazzled with gems and stones, and the blue and scarlet and purple and green of the nobles filled the place with a flood of colour. The chief men of a certain city had petitioned the king about a certain matter, and a great duke had just risen from his seat to speak about it, when a cry was heard outside, and through the open doors, past the great screen, a man in half armour covered with dust and foam rushed into the presence of the king. Then the heralds hurried up to him, and crossing their wands before him, asked of him his errand, and why he entered the hall of the king in such unseemly dress. But he, heeding their words never a whit, pressed forward, called out with a loud voice, "O King, the Persians are on us," and straightway staggered, and fell down lifeless, for he had ridden hard without rest and sleep with the message of the lord warden of the sea.

A great silence fell on the hall, men looked on each other's faces but none spoke or moved; then the silence was broken by the shuffle of the heralds bearing away the body of the messenger, and the dukes drew up nearer to one another, but still no man spoke; for the king's face was dark and troubled, and he had asked none for counsel. Now Anectanabus was troubled, not because he feared the enemy, but because he had never before been taken by surprise, for ever he knew by his magic art the

words of the message before they were uttered. So he sat silent for a while, but at last he bethought himself, and rose and left the hall, going to a little room behind the daïs, where he could be alone, for he sought to know by his magic art who, and how many, and where were his foes. But the great lords sat on in silence in the king's hall, waiting till some of them should be sent against the foe, and silently and noiselessly the people passed out of the hall.

As soon as Anectanabus was alone in his room, he went to a coffer of oak covered with broad bands of steel, and opened it with a golden key which he drew from his breast. Then he drew out a robe of fair white linen, and putting off his rich attire he clothed himself in it, keeping on his golden crown. Taking some spices, he threw them on a brazier of burning embers, and opened the casements of the room, and round and round the brazier he went till a heavy smoke filled the room, and hung over a great copper bowl of water on the table in the middle of it. This done, Anectanabus took a short wand of polished steel in his hand and pointing it across the bowl to the four quarters of the earth—North, East, South, West—he began to utter spells. And now it seemed as if the smoke from the room gathered over the water, and disappeared, leaving the room full of light, and the outside day darkened, and looking on the surface of the water the king saw a fleet of ships coming in full sail towards him. But

what an endless number of them there seemed to be,—ships large and small, beating the waves with their oars, over their sides hanging the shields of dukes and earls and knights, the sun shining from their weapons, the masts and pennons rising like a forest, and high over all the banner of Persia flying, the rising sun conquering the night. Then Anectanabus touched the water with his wand, and all the ships vanished, and the air of the room was clear and bright.

With a grave face and a heavy heart Anectanabus returned to his lords, and ordered them to meet in arms on the sea-coast in seven days, there to keep the land from Persians or any other foes, and he dismissed them each to his place, after he had spoken brave words to them, and reminded them of the victories they had won, “and,” he said, “though the enemy be many, one lion puts many deer to flight, and we may well destroy our foes as we have done before.” But ever in his heart he feared, for that the foe had come upon him by surprise, and his magic art had told him nothing of it.

In the night, when all men slept, he rose and went to the room in which he wrought all his magic, and clothed himself in the white robes, and brought forth his instruments from the oaken box, and cast a yellow powder on the brazier. Then he filled the great copper bowl with water, looking black in the dim light of the room, and taking wax he moulded

ships, some white, some black, and set them to float on the water in the vessel. Next he drew from the box a rod of palm-wood and touched them one by one, and as he did so they separated and gathered into two fleets at either side of the bowl. Then throwing some incense on the brazier, Anectanabus began to mutter his magic words, and round and round the bowl he walked, and the first time he threw in some gold, and the second time a stone, and the third time some dust. Soon the two fleets began to move towards one another, and Anectanabus began to invoke destruction on the enemy as he was wont to do ; but when the battle was joined, he saw that the ships of Egypt were one by one destroyed or taken, nor could any of his mightiest spells turn the battle. So he saw that the gods had forsaken him, and that there was no hope for him ; and he deemed it better to go away and let his kingdom fall into the hands of the Persians, than to resist them without hope of victory, and to be made a slave at the end ; and his heart was great, and he had no son or daughter for whom to fight.

The next day he rose and went about with a light heart and a merry cheer, and did the things that were to be done, and when night fell he laid off the royal robes and the crown of Egypt, and dressed him as one of the wise clerks of the land, and went to the barber and caused him to shave off his beard, and cut his hair, so that no man should know him,

and he gathered store of gold and jewels, such as he could carry, and his instruments of magic and of star-reading, and called to him three of his servants who had served him all his life, and when they were loaded with his gear, he slipped out at a postern gate of the palace, and set off on foot into the world, not knowing where he should go. Long would it be to tell what lands he passed through, how he went from Egypt into Ethiopia, and from thence he passed through many countries till at the last he came to Macedon, where it fell that he settled and ended his days. But no one ever thought him to be anything but some diviner or soothsayer, nor wist the folk that he had been a mighty king of men.

The tale tells of the care he left behind him in his palace when men found that he had gone. The princes sought their lord in his private chambers, and when he was not to be seen there, knights and barons ran about with tears on their cheeks, their ladies swooned, and all men cursed the day. At the last, when they could get no news, they joined in procession to the temple of Serapis, the greatest of their gods, to ask his aid and counsel in their sore strait, and there they burned rich incense, and offered many noble gifts and sacrifices. Then the god gave them this answer: "Fear not, O folk, for your king is safe. Ye shall be subject to the Persians, nor may ye any way escape. But cease your sorrow; the son of his works shall return, he shall avenge

your

your defeat, he shall destroy Persia, he shall be the noblest Emperor of the world."

So this people made an image of Anectanabus in black marble, dressed in his royal robes, sceptre in hand, and crown on head, and beneath the statue was graven in golden letters the prophecy of their god Serapis, that men might have it in mind in the evil days that were on them. For the Persians conquered them, and year by year they treated them more hardly, and life was bitter to them, and the Egyptians looked back year after year to the happy days of Anectanabus, the last king of Egypt, and waited in hope till he should come back again.





CHAPTER II. OF OLYMPIAS AND ANECTANABUS, OF THE MAGIC HE WROUGHT, AND OF THE BIRTH OF ALEXANDER.

IT FELL ON A DAY that as Anectanabus was travelling through the land of Macedon, he came to the chief city of the land, and there his yeomen took lodging for him, and he thought to dwell there some days, for the city was fair and well placed on a fertile plain, and it was in the month of May. And when he talked to the men of the town he heard say that Philip, the king of the land, had gone out to war, but that he had left there his queen Olympias to govern the folk, and that the next day was, as it happened, the feast of her birthday. Now this queen had custom on feast days to ride out into the country near, and there sports and tournaments were held, and all folk rejoiced before her. So Anectanabus thought in his mind that he would go out and look

upon her, for he had heard that Olympias was the fairest woman in Greece,—nay, in all the world.

Early next day after meat, the queen mounted a white mule and rode through the city to the plain, with her wise men and her maids about her, and much she joyed to see the fair show that the city made, for everywhere that she came the town was hung with rich hangings and embroidery, and every man was eager to see the queen, and at all corners were bands of maidens singing and beating drums and timbrels. So the queen rode through the city, and when she came to the plain, each man did his best in the sports, if by any means he could gain a prize from her hands. Among the crowd of men on the plain was Anectanabus, and he looked not at one thing or another but only at the queen, so that at the last she turned and saw him, and because he was unlike all other there in clothing and in bearing she took notice of him and saw at once that he was a stranger: and since he looked ever at her face nor looked away when she turned to him, at the end she sent men to him to know who he was. So he came and did her reverence, and she asked him who he was and what he would, and he told her that he was a clerk, and that he went from place to place, doing the will of the great gods: and Olympias bade him come to her at the palace.

Now every day the queen sat on the royal seat in the great hall of the palace, and men came to her

10 and

and spoke before her of good and bad, and among the rest next day came Anectanabus. And as the queen looked upon him, he bowed him down, and said, "Hail, fair Queen of Macedon;" and the queen noted his speech, for he spoke as one that was a king and not as a clerk, though he were clothed in weeds of drab and went with shaven crown. So she made him to sit down before her on a silk-covered seat, and she began to question him full fairly, whether he were of Egypt, and what manner of folk were in that land, and what was the learning of its wise men—for she knew by his tongue that he was an outlander, and belike an Egyptian. And Anectanabus answered her and told her of the land of Egypt, and of its wonders, and of its wisdom, how some men told the meaning of dreams, and whether they were true or false, and when they should come to pass; some men understood the song of the birds and the voice of beasts; some could tell of the birth of children, and of the length of life; some could declare the secret counsels of men, which never were spoken to any one; and some could read the course of the stars and the signs of heaven, and say what shall come to pass in few years' time—"and, fair Queen," continued he, "I have so clear a knowledge of all these arts, that I can prove myself a master in each of them." So saying, he leaned forward from his seat, and stared in a study, still as a stone, at her face. Then said the queen, "What art thou musing on,

on, Master ; why dost thou sit so still?" "I am thinking, O Queen," said he, "on the words of my god, who long ago told me that I should sit in a strange land an exile, and see the fairest queen on earth." Then the queen prayed him to show her how he sought out these things, and he drew out of his bosom a little box with seven pieces of ivory in it, and he showed her how by casting these he could tell what should happen to men, and answer questions about their deeds. And he showed her seven precious stones, on each of which a wondrous figure was carved, which preserved men who wore them from all harm. And then he drew out his table of ivory with three rings upon it, by which he read the stars: the first ring was of brass, and on it were marked the twelve houses of fate; the second was of bright silver, and on it were marked wondrous beasts, the twelve signs of the heavens; and the third was of red gold, and on it were marked the sun and the moon; and as he showed them he told her the course of the stars, and how they governed the life of men.

And Olympias said to him, "O Master, tell me the day on which my lord that I love was born, and then I shall know thy skill." "Small skill were that," said Anectanabus, "to tell the past; is there naught of the future you would learn?" "Yea," said the Queen, "tell me what shall part Philip and me, for it is told me by my wise women that if

12 he



he returns from battle he shall take another wife, and send me away for ever." "Nay, not for ever," said the Egyptian, "not for ever, nor for long shall he put thee away, for will he nill he, he must have thee for his queen." Then Olympias wondered greatly, and she asked Anectanabus how this should be, and the wise man answered and told her, how that the great god of her country, Ammon, should give her a fair son who should help her all his life, and how that the god would protect her till her son was grown. Then was the queen right glad, and she promised Anectanabus that when these things should happen she would honour him all her life. Then the wise man rose from his seat, and after looking on the queen for a while, went from the hall to make his enchantments as at other times.

Now that night the moon was at full, when all herbs have their strongest might, so Anectanabus got him forth from the city into a wild place, where no man might see him, and there he drew up herbs for his enchantments, marking the fairest and best, and when the hour of the moon was come he plucked them out by the roots, and washed the earth from them in running water. Then he ground them together in a mortar, and wrung out the juice, and he made an image of the queen in white wax, and anointed it with the juice of the plants he had gathered, and calling on the powers of the air with his conjurations, he made a dream for the queen.

So she, lying in her palace alone, saw a huge dragon enter and circle the room three times—then it came and stood before her, and, lo! it was a man, but a man in shape like to her god; and the man told her that she should have a son who should defend her in all her cares, and override all her foes. Then the queen woke from her dream, and stretched out her hands to the god she had seen, but the room was dark, so, springing from her bed, she ran to the door, but that was safely fast, and groping round she found naught in the room; and sad that her dream was false, she fell asleep again thinking of the wise Egyptian, who, mayhap, should tell her what it meant.

Early on the morrow the queen rose from her sleep, and sent her housecarles for Anectanabus in haste; then when he came she took him apart and told him all her dream. Then said he to the queen: "If thou art willing, and not afraid, I can show thee this god face to face, and thou waking; but thine eyes must be opened to see him."

So was the queen glad, and she assigned him a room in her palace; and the next night did Anectanabus, by his art magic, change himself into a dragon such as the queen had seen in her dream, and flying through the air with his heavy wings he came into the place of the queen. Then she rose up to meet him, but the sight was so terrible to her that she covered her face with her hands;

hands ; but soon she heard a voice bidding her look up, and lo ! before her was the figure of her god Ammon—a strong, fair man, bearing on his head two horns. Then was she glad of her life, that she alone of all living women had seen this thing ; and he spoke to her of all the things that Anectanabus had told her, and of how her son should ride through the world.

So fell she to sleep, and when she woke in the morning light there was none there, and the doors of the palace were fast, and great thanks she gave to Anectanabus for his magic, for she wist not that her god was but a show of the wise Egyptian.

But in that same night that the queen had dreamed, the Egyptian had so wrought his enchantments that in the hour of Philip's star he too had fallen asleep, and he dreamed that a dragon had taken him up through the air, and had borne him off to his own palace, and to the room in which Olympias, his queen, lay sleeping. Then tried he to draw near her, but she felt not his touch nor heard his voice ; and suddenly he was ware of a god in the room in the shape of Ammon, and the god came to the queen and laid his hand on her, and waked her, and sealed her with a gold seal. So Philip drew near, and saw that on this seal were three things graved—the head of a mighty lion, the burst of the morning sun rising over the world, and a sharp, keen blade of a sword ; and he heard the god say : “ Woman, thy son that

I give thee shall be thy defender." Now Philip when he woke, was so sore troubled by his dream that he called on his diviners to say to him what it should mean. Then said the chief of the magicians: "O King, this thy dream means that thy wife shall give thee a son fair and mighty. And because on the seal thou sawest a lion's head, as the lion is the chief of all beasts, this son shall be a chief and a master among all chieftains. And since on the seal was the burst of the sunrise, so shall this son ride through the world, and everywhere shall he be exalted till he comes to the Land of the East; and the biting brand showeth that by his sword shall nations out of number be conquered and bow to him. But for the dragon that bore thee from hence to thy own land, he shall be to thee for an aid, and that right soon." And then was the king glad in his heart.

But Anectanabus knew by his box of stones how that Philip should be sore beset on a certain day, and so, going out into a desert place, he called up to him by art magic a great bird from the sea, with broad wings, great beak, and strong claws like iron. And as it drew near him it circled him seven times, and then sunk down at his feet. Then the Egyptian took and rubbed him with the juice of the plants he had gathered, from wingtip to wingtip, and from head to tail, and then with his mightiest spells he sent him forth over land and sea. And lo! he

16 seemed

seemed no more a sea bird, but a mighty dragon flying through the air. But far away Philip was in deadly battle, for he had been all day fighting, and now was he wearied, and a great stone had struck him, so that he reeled to the ground, and his men were at point to fly, and his foes were clamouring with joy, and their eyes were burning to slay, when the great dragon flew towards them, and men paused to see what should happen, and lo! it fell on the foemen, and first on him who had struck down Philip, and men's swords fell on it and were shivered, and none dared to see its face, and the men of Macedon took fresh heart, and Philip sprang up shouting, "The God, the Gods for us!" and the foe were routed and their king slain, and far away the great dragon rose in the air and disappeared, no man knowing whither.

So Philip came home with much joy, honoured of men, and when he met his queen he kissed her fair, and they spoke of their dreams, and of what the god had promised them. And it fell that two wonders happened to them. For one day as they sat at meat in the hall, and folk around them great and small, a great dragon came into the palace, and men fled, save some that drew sword and turned pale, but the king cried out: "Faith, but this is the noble dragon that turned the fight for us that other even." Then the king was glad, but the great worm came slowly up the hall till it reached the queen, and

there it raised its head on her knees, and she knew it for the dragon that had come to her, and lifted its head and kissed it, and all men looked for some change ; but the dragon turned and went its way out as it came in, and those outside saw nought save the Egyptian diviner standing at the gate.

And one other day, as Philip sat in his great hall, with all his nobles and chief men round him, there came a singing-bird into the hall and sang a sweet song, and circled his head, and came and sat on his knee, and there dropped an egg and flew away. Then as the king sat and looked, the egg rolled from his knee and fell to the ground, and there it broke, and a little worm came out and crawled about, but soon it died. Then a great clerk near him said : " This signifieth, O king, that thy blithe lady's son shall walk the world and win it, and die a bitter death before he may return." These were the wonders that happened ere the birth of Alexander.

Now drew on the time when this noble child was to be born, and as he came to earth temples and towers tumbled on heaps, thunder rang through the welkin, darkness fell over the earth, the wind rose and blew, the lightning flashed over the land, and great stones fell from the sky. Then Philip feared, and said : " Surely this son that is born shall do great things, and men will call me the father of this child " ; and with that he went to Olympias and
18 comforted

comforted her. But the child grew, nor was he like to father nor mother. His hair was yellow-tawny, like a lion's, his eyes were bright and glistening, piercing like blazing stars; grim and fierce was his look, one of his eyes black as a coal, the other yellow like gold; his voice was loud, even from his first cry, nor could any hear it without inward fear. Alexander was his name, and the wisest man of all the world, Aristotle, was his tutor, nor would he learn of other. Clever and wise was he, nor did he sit with the crowd of boys, but on a bench beside his master, for it became not a king's son to sit down undistinguished from other boys. In four or five years he learnt more than many scholars learn in seventy winters. And when he was eleven years old he set him to learn the art and craft of battle, to wield a spear and a lance, to ride a noble steed in armour, so that in a few years was none equal to him, and in adventures of arms he surpassed all men.

It fell on a day that Philip the king was with him, and greatly did he praise him for his deeds, and much was his heart moved towards him; but he said: "Sorely my mind is troubled that nought of me hast thou in look, nor height, nor colour, whereby men may know that thou art my son": for Philip was tall and black and dark-eyed. Then was the noble queen Olympias grieved when she heard tell of the king's saying, and she sent for Anectanabus, the Egyptian, and he came, but with little speed,

for he was now old and grey. And when he was before her, she asked him what should fall of the king's speech, for ever she had feared the doom that was to come; but he comforted her, and bade her fear not, for he read day and night the stars for her, and none of the king's thoughts were against her.

So he went out, and Alexander with him, and as they went, ever the Egyptian looked at the stars, and down at the ground, and sighed. So Alexander asked him at what planet was he looking, and Anectanabus showed it him. Then he asked him why he sighed, and the Egyptian said: "My hour draws near, the son of my works shall slay me! Look over our heads and see that red star shine—the star of Hercules, how bitterly it moves, but noble Mercury shines ever, and great Jove, how jollily he shines—the doom of my destiny is on me." And as he said the word, Alexander stumbled forward, and pushing the unhappy Egyptian, he fell from the wall of the town where they were walking into the ditch which surrounded it, and with a cry sank. The youth plunged in after him, but when he found his body the old man was dead, and with what grief we cannot tell, Alexander carried home the body of Anectanabus to the palace of his mother. Let others tell the story of her grief, of her tears, and of the splendid tomb of the exiled king—I cannot.



CHAPTER III. HOW ALEXANDER TAMED THE HORSE BUCEPHALUS, AND HOW HE DID HIS FIRST DEED OF ARMS.

SO IT WAS THAT there was at this time a certain prince in the land of Cappadocia, and in the night as he lay sleeping a vision came to him, and it seemed that his room was filled with a shimmering blaze of light, and while he looked a great dragon came into the room, and he shut his eyes for fear. Then there came a voice, saying, "Fear not, O king, but look up, and hearken to my words," and when he raised his head he saw an exceeding fair man standing in the room, and he had two horns on his head, and a golden crown like one of the gods. Then the vision bade him convey the horse Bucephalus to the land of Macedonia to king Philip; and tell him that he who should tame this horse should rule the land after him.

him. The prince answered, "Where is this horse Bucephalus that I may take him?" and the vision said that on the morrow the horse should be brought him. And suddenly the room was dark, but the prince lay turning this matter in his mind till the grey of the first dawn, and he slept.

On the morrow as he sat on his seat under the oak of judgment, there came to him some of the country folk bringing with them a fair white colt, and his mouth was bound with iron chains. As they came near the king asked them whose was the foal and why they brought him in chains; and the men answered that this colt was so wild that no man dare go near him to mount him, and that he would take no food since he had left his mother but the flesh of men. Then they consulted the priest of the temple, and he bade them carry the young horse to the king, for he would never be tamed but by a great king's son, nor could any other man mount him. So the king gave them a great reward and they went their way. Now the horse had on his forehead two bones like small horns, and the men called him for that Bucephalus.

Now when the horse was brought to Philip the king of Macedonia he was fain of him, for he was of noble form, and it seemed as if he would be the best horse in the world, so he thanked the prince greatly, and made men build a stable for the horse of iron bars, strong and good. Therein was he put, and

men doomed to death were brought to that place and thrown to him, and he tore them to pieces, and fed on them. And no man willingly went near the stable in which he was.

It fell on a day when Alexander was come to youth, that he chanced to stand at a window of the palace while this wild horse was being led by in iron chains, and the prince wondered at the sight, for it seemed to him that this was the noblest of horses, and he could not tell why he was kept in chains. But when he had come down to the courtyard the grooms had gone, so he followed them searching for the horse's stable, and at the last he came upon the iron house, and looking into it he wondered at the horrible things he saw there. Then one of the grooms came up to him and told him how the horse fed on man's flesh, and how that should be till he was tamed and ridden by a great king's son. Hearing this Alexander went up to the bars and called the horse, and the wild animal came up to them, and laid out his neck. Then the prince put his hand through the bars and Bucephalus licked it, and folded his feet and fell to the ground, looking up into Alexander's face.

Thus was the horse tamed, and Alexander lifted up the gate-bolts and entered the stable boldly, and stroked Bucephalus on his back with his hand, while the horse turned his head round and watched him fondly. Then he got a bridle and saddle, and

girt him round and loosed his chains, and leaping on his back rode him off, while the good white horse obeyed the rein as if he had been ridden ten years. Now, while Alexander was riding him round the courtyard, men had run to king Philip and had told him how the prince had gone into the cage of the fierce man-eating horse, and the king came down to see what should hap, and found Alexander master of the horse. Then Philip the fierce remembered the saying of the gods, and he greeted him with words of praise, and said, "Son, of a truth thou shalt reign in my stead when I am gone, and the land shall wax great. Ask now a gift of me, and I will give it." "Then," said Alexander, "make me a knight, and a chief with men-at-arms to follow me."

Great was the joy of Philip that his son's first wish was to be a leader of men in war, and that he had done this great thing, so he granted it with good will. "I give thee, O son," said he, "one hundred of my best horses, and sixty thousand gold pieces from my coffers, and the best of my chieftains and proved princes to be thy men, and free of my house shalt thou be, to abide there in peace, or to go from it to seek adventure in war. Thou hast done a man's deed, and man shalt thou be called." Then the prince gave him lowly thanks, and sped off to gather together a little band of twelve chieftains, picked and proved leaders of men, whom he had chosen to lead his men, and when this was
done

done each got together tried men to follow them till the number of the band was made up.

Now when Alexander had got together his band, he made ready to go out in search of his first adventure, and in few days he rode out into the world in knightly array into a land unknown, nor did he stay until he came into the land of Peloponnesus. Now the king of this land was called Nicholas, and when tidings were brought him that a band of strange knights had come into his land, he ordered that a host should be gathered together, and he with a few knights rode out far before his following, and came to the men of Alexander and gan question them in his wrath and anger, "Oh, ye knights, who is your leader, and why come you here in my land?" Then the courteous knight Alexander came to the front: "Sir knight," said he, "Philip the fierce, king of Macedon, is my father, and I am his heir Alexander." And the king stood up in his stirrups, and sternly looking at him, said, "Whom think you that I am?" "Sir," said Alexander, "you are as now king of this folk, nor do I grudge your honour, but beware of pride, for wise men tell that the highest thing falls soonest, and that which is least of all is oftentimes brought to the stars."

"True is thy word," said the king, "and soon shalt thou prove its truth it may be; look well to thyself lest thy speech come home to thee."

Then Alexander burst into rage, and with bitter words ordered him to return to his following if he wished safety, and Nicholas the king, flaming with bitter wasplike anger, took up a handful of mud and threw it in the face of Alexander, and swore by the heart of his father that he would put him to death with his own hands if he fled not. But the noble Alexander controlled his rage at the foul insult, and keeping his face by a mighty effort, though his hands were gripping each other through, said, "As thou hast wronged me causelessly, Nicholas, I swear by my father and by my god that thou shalt see me ere long for this cause, and that I shall take thy land from thee, or thou my life from me." So a day was set for them to meet in fight, and they parted on either side.

Now were men on both parts getting them ready for the fight. Alexander hurried home into Macedon and assembled a mighty host of knights and archers, men proved and skilled in arms. And when the host was assembled, with his princes and captains, he sought the presence of Philip and took his leave, and mounting Bucephalus his brave white horse, he led, first of all, his army out of the broad gates of the town. So on the appointed day the field is covered with the array of either host, and now men lift up the banners and shake them out to the wind, and the clarions sound out till the whole field rings with the music, and the woods and the hills answer

them again. Then each noble prepares for battle, his helm on his head he strides to his horse, and jumps on his steel-clad saddle, he hangs round his throat his bright shimmering shield, and handles his lance. Then is the stamping of steeds, the stripping of banners, the clouds of dust rise in the air, and suddenly the crowds meet with a shock in the middle of the plain. Now the steeds rear up against each other, and the spears break through the blazoned shields and through the helmet bars, while the cypress lance shafts splinter into fragments, and down fall knights and dukes from their steeds.

Well and nobly did the young Alexander fight his first battle. Sir Nicholas took him a spear, and rushed on the young knight to get him a name, and to keep his oath that he had sworn. Then Alexander took another lance from his squire, for the first one was strained in the fight by this time and might betray him, and they met one another in the field, and men stayed to see this fight. So sore were their strokes that the long lances split, even from point to handgrip, so that there was not an ell long piece in either man's hand. Then each threw the fragment away, and out flashed their swords from the sheaths, and they hacked and hewed at each other through mail-coat and helmet. But mail and helm were good and gave not way, till Alexander grew mad with rage, and with one full stroke

he struck off the head of King Nicholas clear through the neck and helm, and he fell down to the earth. So it was that Alexander got him great worship by this victory, for all the men of that country and their lords came to him, and falling on their knees put them in his mercy, and acknowledged him as ruler of the land. Thus he defeated his enemy, and revenged the insult of King Nicholas, and returned home with fame and good to his father.

The tale tells that as he entered Macedon he found the town at feast, and his father at his high table; but another woman sat in the seat of the queen, for Philip had put away Olympias, as the seers had told her years before. So Alexander bowed him down meekly in seeming, and said, "Father, I pray thee receive the fruits of my first victory ere I go hence to the wedding." "And whose wedding dost thou go to?" said the king. "To my mother's," said he, "for I will marry her to some noble king, and I will make him the greatest king on earth, for it likes me not to stay here while she is in disgrace, and I know not for what." Then Philip grew white with wrath, but one Lysias, a knight at the table, said, "O king, heed not his talk, for this fair queen shall bring thee a son greater than him." Turning to him, Alexander with his truncheon struck him a blow so that he fell dead to the ground, and men said that in truth he had deserved it; but Philip started up at the deed, and snatching a blade rushed on
28 Alexander,

Alexander, aiming a fierce blow at him, for the gods had blinded his eyes so that he knew not wisdom from folly, or right-doing from wrong. But as he came on, his feet failed him, and ere he reached Alexander the king staggered, stumbled, and fell to the ground, though no man saw cause for it. Then Alexander laughed out loud, and said, "Does the Governor of Greece fear one youth? What ails thee to fall?" and he struck over the tables of the feast, and dragging the bride out of the hall by her hair he brought her to his mother, for his heart was full of wrath at the wrong done to her, while Philip was carried away stricken with sore sickness. Thus was his mother avenged, and the marriage feast disturbed.

But when Alexander's wrath cooled it came into his heart to make peace between Philip and his mother, and rising up he went to the bed of Philip, and there he spoke words as a friend might speak, and the gods put in the king's heart to forgive the death of Lysias, and to reconcile him to his wife; and so the king rose up, and leaning on Alexander's shoulder, went with him to Olympias, and there he took her in his arms and kissed her, and forgave all her faults, and she was made queen again, and reigned in Macedon to her life's end.



CHAPTER IV. TELLS OF THE EMBASSY OF DARIUS, OF THE DEATH OF PHILIP, AND THE CROWNING OF ALEXANDER.



THE TALE TELLS that on a day men told in Macedon that an embassy from the Emperor of the World, Darius of Persia, was drawing near; and the whole city came out, men, women, and children, to see them enter. But there was doubt and fear in the court of Philip, for they were coming to demand from him the tribute which he had not paid for the last three years, and the king had made up his mind to be no more subject to the Persians, and Alexander had sworn to conquer them in war if his father would raise an army against them, but Philip would not, for he knew that no man could count the armies of Darius, spent he his whole life to that end.

And so the heralds came riding up to the gate of the town mounted on their high steeds, and there

were three of them, and each of them was a king, and wore armour of proof. On each man's head was a golden crown, and their pages bore before them their helmets. The herald who was on the right wore bright silver armour; his surcoat was dark green, and on it was worked a fierce tiger rushing on his prey, and he was the herald of Media. The herald riding on the left wore black armour from head to foot, and his surcoat was of scarlet, and on it was a wild boar turning to face his foe, and this was the herald of Persia. But the herald in the middle was clad from head to foot in bright gold, and his surcoat was of a deep clear blue, and on it shone the sun high over all the world, and all men shouted when they saw him, for he was a head taller than common men, and he was the herald of the Emperor of the World.

When they reached the gate the trumpeters blew three long calls on their trumpets with a silence between each, and the drawbridge, which had been raised, slowly fell, and the great gate of the city opened, and the herald of the King of Macedon came forth and greeted them fair, and offered them rest and hostage till such time as they should see the king. But they said, "O dear brother and friend, it is not fitting that we eat or drink in this town till we have done the errand of our lord, or till we know whether we harbour with friends and servants, or with foes and traitors of the Master of the World.

Wherefore we pray you, dear brother, that you will lead us to the hall of your prince that we may do our errand, not doubting that after it we shall be beholden to your love for rest and comfort." So the heralds dismounted, and their men remained without with their horses, while they went into the town and through the streets up to the palace hall of Philip.

Now the king was sitting on his throne under the daïs at the upper end of the hall, and on his right hand sat the noble Alexander, and round the king on his right and his left were the nobles of the land, greybeards and youth. And when the coming of the heralds was told them the king rose from his seat, and as they stepped forward so did he, and he came to the middle of the hall and three steps further, for all men did reverence in those days to the herald. And he greeted them, and on the neck of each man he threw a chain of gold, and much he praised them for their fame. But the heralds spoke and said, "O king, we have a message for thee, nor may we delay." And he said, "Speak on."

So the Wild Boar of Persia spake: "O Philip, for three years thou hast not sent thy accustomed tribute to Persia, nor a part of it. Now, therefore, pay it at once, or fear the wrath of Persia." Then the Tiger of Darius the Mede, spake: "O king, forasmuch as in past years thou hast served the king, and as perchance thy land has suffered from famine
and



The Heralds of the Emperor Darius.

and war, thy king and friend, Darius, forgives thee freely thy past tribute by my mouth." But the herald of the Empire of the World added: "On this condition only, that thou payest over to me three sacks full of Grecian earth in token of thy obedience to the great Emperor, and to show that hereafter thy tribute shall not fail."

For a short time there was silence in the great hall, and then Alexander spake out: "Fair father and lord, suffer me to answer for thee." Then turning to the heralds, "Return," said he, "return to your people and to your master, and bid him to send no more messages here of this matter, for know that Philip hath a son grown that yields to no man, and obeys no lord. Tell him that the land of Macedon which in times past yielded him wealth so freely is now barren, and will give him henceforth no tribute, come what may." These words and more he said, yet he departed not from the courtesy that beseemeth great lords, and the heralds wondered at his speech, and greatly they praised him to his father. But Alexander sought out the herald of the Sun and gave him a fair jewel, and said to him that it was to retain him against the day when he should be emperor in his turn.

It must be said that these heralds had gone through all the lands subject to the Emperor of Persia, for they had a secret errand from Darius. Now Darius had no son, and but one fair daughter,

Roxana by name, and he was minded to marry her to one of the king's sons of the lands, so the heralds were straitly charged to get the portraits of the princes and kings, and in their train was a skilled painter. Thus it fell that during the three days of guesting the painter drew a likeness of the prince exactly his height and size, and it was taken back to Darius with the other portraits, that the Emperor might choose the prince who should marry his daughter, and succeed him in the empire. And after the three days of hostage the heralds took their leave of King Philip, and went their way, and in due time they arrived at the court of Darius, the proud king of Persia, and there they told him how his tribute was lost, and how Philip's son had spoken.

In Macedon meanwhile many things had happened, for it was told Philip that all the land of Armenia had revolted against him, and that the earls and princes were in arms, so Alexander gathered a host and marched against them, and, shortly to tell, he laid waste all the land of the rebels. But while he had marched away a worse thing fell to Philip, for a prince of the land, Pausanius, son of Cerastes, who dwelt in the marches of Macedon, and was one of his noblest knights, rose against him. And this was the reason of his rebellion:—For many years this lord had loved the queen Olympias, and when Philip put her away he
34 had

had come to the feast of the king's new marriage to defy him and to take her away, but when Alexander restored her to her place he departed sorrowful, and the love in his heart burned up, till at the last he summoned all his friends to make war on Philip, if by any means he might kill him, and carry off the fair queen to be his wife.

Now Philip gathered together all his men and went out to war with Pausanius, but the folk that were with him were few, and when they met in the field fear fell on him, and he turned and fled to his castle. Then all men shouted when they saw that the great Philip had shewn his back, and Pausanius sprung out of the ranks on his proud steed, and speeding after the king struck him through the back to the breast and bore him to the earth, and there he lay on the highway half dead. Then Pausanius rode on, and all Philip's men fell back, for they were sore troubled when they saw their king wounded to death. So the prince came to the castle, and joy was in his heart, for he thought to bring out the fair queen and to lead her away. But in the heat of his joy Alexander returned victorious from Armenia with the nobles of Macedon, and when he heard the noise of the weapons he spurred into the town. Now the queen had shut the door of the castle-keep, and when the noise of the host was heard she flew to the window at the top, and by the arms and spoil she knew it was her son returned victorious. Then

the queen called to her son with a loud voice, " O son, who shall never be conquered, avenge and help thy mother in her need," and Alexander heard her, and wrath rose in his heart. But when Pausanius heard that Alexander had come, he came armed out of the palace, and with him a host of mighty men, and the hosts met in mid-field ; yet short was the fight, for Alexander swung out his sharp sword and with one blow struck him dead, and all his men gave up their weapons to the noble conqueror. Then came one and told him that his father lay wounded on the highway, and Alexander rushed forth and found him as one near death, and he fell down by his side and wept bitterly. But the old king said, " Ah, son Alexander, now am I near my end, but yet am I glad to have lived long enough to see my slayer so soon killed. Well be thou that thou hast avenged me." Then he raised up his head and looked at his son, but the effort was too much for him, and with one groan he died.

The tale tells of how Alexander grieved for the death of Philip as one grieves for the loss of his father, and of the burial of the old king : how he was borne on men's shoulders to bale, how his barons and knights followed him as he was laid to rest in his own land, and how all men of the land, rich and poor, noble and simple, grieved for the loss of the great king. The next day Alexander sat on his throne, a bright gold crown studded with gems on

his head, and in his hand the sceptre of his father. Then the heralds proclaimed that all the court should draw near, and that all men should do their liege homage to him, and they came at his call, and all men acknowledged him as lord on their bended knees, and Alexander put off his crown from him and laid it on the throne, and rose up and spoke to his people in this wise: "Fair lords, I will in no wise be contrary to your wills, nor to your deeds. But I show to you that I hate frauds and malice, and as I have loved you during my father's life, so will I do in time to come. And I both counsel and pray you that ye dread the gods, and obey them; and that ye choose for king him that shall best provide for the good estate of his people, and that shall be most courteous and merciful to poor folk, him that will best keep justice and the right of the feeble against the mighty, and him that most boldly shall put him in array to destroy your enemies; for such ought to be chosen king and none other."

Now when the lords of the land had heard his reasons abovesaid, and considered his great discretion, wit, and understanding, they marvelled greatly, and answered him thus: "We have heard and understand thy great reasons, and have received thy good counsels, and therefore we will and beseech thee that thou reign over us, and have the lordship upon us. During thy life may there be

none who shall deserve to be our king rather than thou." And thus they chose him to be their king, and crowned him, and gave him their troth, and prayed the gods to bless and maintain him.

That night as Alexander lay on his bed he dreamed, and in his dream he saw Anectanabus, the wise Egyptian, come to him ; on his head were two ram's horns, and his coat was brown. It seemed that he came to him as he lay, and put his hand on his shoulder and said, "Stay thou not in this land of Macedon, but go forth into all lands, for thou shalt conquer them, and they shall be subject to thee, and thou shalt not die, except on a soil of iron, beneath a sky of gold." Then came to him one dressed in robes of blue and purple and gold, covered with all manner of embroidered figures, and on his head was a strange crown of gold and pearls and precious stones, and he said, "The God whom I serve shall teach thee to destroy the empire of the Persians." And last there came to him a very fair lady, tall and graceful, and she looked on him with love, and said, "O Alexander, my heart's lord, when thou hast overcome the Persians, indeed thou shalt reign over them, and I shall be thy queen and lady-love. Let this be the sign between thee and me, that we meet first at the feast of the Lord of Persia."



CHAPTER V. HOW ALEXANDER GATHERED AN ARMY TOGETHER: HOW HE BUILT ALEXANDRIA AND LAID SIEGE TO THE CITY OF TYRE.



AS TO THE GIVING in marriage of the daughter of Darius, the Emperor of Persia, it is to be told that on a set day the wise men of the land came before him, and the painter brought out to them the portraits he had made, and they examined them but found none that was worthy to rule, for one was covetous, and another quarrelsome, and a third given to much speaking, and these faults the wise men read in the faces on the parchment. Then they came to the likeness of Alexander and all men said "This man is born to be lord of men" and they brought it before Darius, and he sent for his daughter Roxana, and made her stand by the picture, and when she did so, she was

taller than the figure painted thereon. Then Darius turned away and said nought, but shook his head, and Roxana took with her the cast-away drawing and bore it to her own rooms, and kept it safe; and she vowed offerings to the gods if they would make this man her lord and husband.

But Alexander gathered together all the warriors of the land, and made them a speech: "Lo, barons of Macedon, Thrace, and Thessaly, and all true Greeks, how like you now your liege lord: look on my face and let fear depart: hold up your hearts, and flee from no alien while Alexander lives. The gods have granted me that all the barbarians shall obey me: and there shall be no nation so rich or great under heaven that my name shall not be honoured there, for we of Greece shall be praised and feared over the wide world. Now, then, prepare ye for war; he who has arms of his own, trusty and good, let him take them; he who has them not, let him come to me, and I will furnish him for battle."

Then answered him with one voice all the old knights and peers of his father's army: "Sire, we have fought often in hard fields with Sir Philip, your father, and many winters have gone over our heads; now our force fails us and our flesh is weak, for be the flower never so fresh it fades at the last. Sir, all the days of our youth are long past, we are over-travelled and tired, our heads are white and too weak to bear the helmet or to seek adventures of
40 arms.

arms. Excuse us, Lord, we pray, and take with thee younger men, stout in battle, and fit to deal heavy strokes."

"Nay, by my crown," said the king, "I cannot spare my old men; an army of young men will often break their line in battle, trusting to their own strength. I choose the older men who do all their works by plan and counsel." And the old knights yielded to his wishes, and all men praised his wisdom.

Now the time had come when kings go out to war, and Alexander took ship from the coast of Greece and sailed towards Italy. So at the first his army turned towards Chalcedon, a strong and mighty city, and he besieged it. And when the men of the city fought but faintly, Alexander rode up to the walls and cried out with a loud voice: "O men of Chalcedon, either fight bravely or yield up your town without delay"; and they of the city were so fearful that at the sound of his voice they owned him for master, and all the land took him for lord. Then Alexander sailed into Italy and took tribute of all men; even the mighty Romans sent him sixty thousand gold pieces, and Europe was subject to him.

From Europe the king sailed over the great sea into Africa, and many days he sought an enemy and found none, for the fame of him had gone before him. On a day he sought a temple of the god Ammon

41 with

with his earls and mighty men, and there happened on the way a marvel. For it fell as he was going, that a hart with a huge head leaped forth before them; hardly had man ever seen so noble a beast. Then said Alexander: "Lo, the emperor of harts, slay him ere he escape." And all men shot, but so fleet was the hart that none could reach him. Then Alexander bent a bow, and with a mighty shout let fly at him, and the arrow struck him and pierced him through, though all men deemed that the hart was far out of bowshot. Then his men wondered greatly, and the country folk who saw the shot deemed that Alexander was indeed some god, and the name of the place is called in their tongue Bowshot to this day. But the king went into the temple and offered great gifts.

Then went Alexander on his way and came to a very fruitful land, a land with twelve rivers running into the sea. And on a night as he lay on his bed he saw in a dream the god of the land, tall and fair, clad in a chestnut-brown robe, wearing on his head a gold crown, and having two horns like ram's horns. And as he dreamed the god said to him, pointing to a high mountain: "King Alexander, canst thou lift yonder hill and carry it on thy shoulder." "Nay," said Alexander, "who is there under heaven who might try?" "King," said the god, "your name shall ever be remembered, till yonder hill is removed from its place." Then Alex-

ander laughed out with joy, and he said to the vision: "I beseech thee now, O Shining One, tell me as at this time ere thou pass away how I shall die, and when my day shall come?" Then the god looked on him sadly, and said: "Truly I hold it better that a man should not seek to know that which shall come upon him; yet since thou hast asked me, I tell thee that thou shalt conquer all nations, and die by poison, and thy years shall be finished ere thou reach middle age. Ask me no more of this as now; far in the Land of the East thou shalt be told the end of thy days by number." And with these words the light in the room flickered and blew sideways, and Alexander started up, and behold there was no man with him. Then in the morning the king ordered his men to build him there a city, and that city remains to this day, and the name of it is Alexandria.

Now when the city was built, and men from Greece had come thither, with merchants from Tyre and from far lands, to dwell, to buy, and to sell, Alexander went forth with his host through all the land of Egypt, and the men of that land feared him as one of the high gods. And as he came to a certain city he found in it an image of a king carved in black stone, a crown on its head, and a royal sceptre in its hand; but below it were many words carven—the words which the god had told the men of the land many years before. Then Alexander

asked the chief men of the city: "Sirs, what statue is this, and what be the words that are written beneath it?" And the men of that place answered him: "Truly, O king, this man was Anectanabus, once king of all this land; yet because he was bidden of the gods he left us, and the writing below tells us that he shall come again and free us from the Persians, and make us a great people. And some men say that it shall be a son of his that shall do these great things." Then Alexander knew that this was that same Egyptian who had been his fosterer, and he said to the men of the place: "I knew the man, and for his sake I will make ye free from all men, rich and happy shall ye be." And he fell at the feet of the statue and kissed it, and they stood by him in silence.

But on a day it was told him that they of Tyre had destroyed a ship of Alexandria, and had spoken evil of him, and Alexander marched into Syria with all his host to subdue it and to conquer Tyre. Now Tyre was a fair city, built on an island in a bay, with the sea washing up to its walls. And it was so strong that no army had ever taken it, and so rich that its merchants were princes and hired armies to defend them, and all the country round owned the men of Tyre as their lords. But they of the city said: "What king shall injure Tyre, for our walls defend us, and our ships sail every sea, and bring to us the good things of earth and food and

drink, and our wealth is great, and all men shall serve us for it?"

But Alexander and his host were marching towards them, and one day the men of Tyre saw the army of Alexander on the plain before them, for he had taken two strong cities, Damascus and Sidon, and had made all the land subject to him. And as they looked the camp seemed to grow and tents were raised, and no man could count their number. So Alexander's army was before the town, and he thought that he should take it easily, but not a few troubles were suffered before Tyre submitted to him.

Now it fell that many days had been spent in fruitless assaults on the city before Alexander found out that its walls were too high for him to take it by storm. Everywhere were turrets and towers of defence, and the wild waves of the sea outside beat on the walls to as much purpose as the army of Alexander. Then men began to murmur and complain first of one thing, then of another, and Alexander ordered them to construct a great castle beside the city in the sea, and raise it up to the height of the walls of the city, that he might prevent ships coming into it to bring food and riches. But when the tower was nearly finished the army was in sore strait, for food was wanting in the camp. Princes, dukes and fierce knights were famishing, yea, all men were starving.

Then Alexander pitied his men, and resolved to get provision and help for them, so he sent special messengers to those tribes which were near, bidding them to send him help both in men and in food. And among others he sent to Jaddua, chief bishop in Jerusalem, and admonished him to send fresh men for the fight and food for the folk that were with him, and to pay all the tribute due to Darius to the Greeks. And he told his scribe to put into the letter gentle words, saying that it was better to be the helpers of the men of Macedon than to be the servants of Darius.

Now when the messengers came to Jerusalem they were received by the chief bishop in a great hall, and when they gave him the king's letter he went away into an upper room to read it by himself. But when he had read it he stayed a little, and then coming down the steps into the hall he gave this answer to the envoys : "Sirs, return to Alexander, and say thus : Many years have passed since I made oath never to harm Persia, nor to pass in arms against Darius all the days of his life." When Alexander received this answer he was very wroth, and he vowed to teach the Jews whose orders they should obey ; yet he would not leave the siege of Tyre, but sent away a part of his army to obtain food for him and the rest of the Greeks.



CHAPTER VI. TELLS OF THE FORAY OF
KADESH, AND OF ITS ENDING, AND OF
THE TAKING OF THE CITY OF TYRE.

NOW THE CHIEF of the band he sent was Meleager, one of Alexander's most valiant knights, and he had with him five hundred lances and their men-at-arms. His orders were to ride through the valley to the city of Kadesh, which belonged to Tyre, to drive together all the cattle and flocks in the plains, and to bring them to the army of Alexander. So he set out, and with him was Sir Sampson, a bold knight of the land, who knew all the country round about. They were so successful that they gathered together a host of beasts beyond number, and soon they turned towards Tyre with delight in their hearts. But before they had travelled a mile all the country was alarmed, and rose in arms against them, and a very valiant knight,

Theosell, came riding out to meet them, and to prevent their getting away before the host appeared. Now Theosell and his men were armed in plate, and they made such a sudden rush on the Greeks that they struck many down and overrode them, so that those who fell to the ground never rose after, and their blows were mighty. Then Meleager was moved with wrath when he saw the Greeks turn and flee, and mounted as he was on a young horse he seized his spear and spurred against the enemy, striking great blows. Sampson, on the other hand, broke his lance at the first encounter, and struck out right and left with the broken end, hewing down his foes; also Aristes, a noble knight, was one of those who were chief in their resistance to the foe, and Caulus had no less an enemy than Theosell himself. The first stroke of Caulus' sword fell on the helmet of Theosell, and struck down through the wooden crest—the great wild boar's head—down into the helmet, and before Theosell had recovered from the blow a great swing of the sword struck off his head. Now when this noble knight was fallen to the ground all the folk that followed him, and were able, fled away, and Meleager and his men rejoiced that they had slain the leader of their foes and had won the field.

Suddenly they were interrupted by the sound of a horn, and they saw an army marching out of Kadesh against them under the command of Beritinus, a

great lord of the country. The tale tells that there were with him thirty thousand lances clad in plate armour and mounted, with others following on foot, so that clouds of dust covered them, and the earth seemed to shake at their tread. Then the Macedonians were sore dismayed to see such a great host come out against them, and Meleager was in great mind to send a message to Alexander, asking him for aid before they joined battle. But there was no man who would go on such an errand, or leave his comrades in danger of death, and all men set their faces to live and die together.

The first onset of the foe was a fierce one, and not few of them, with their chief Beritinus, met their death, but the Macedonians lost Sampson and many another noble. Then began a long struggle between the few Macedonians and their foes, till at last they were beaten down to a little group of tired, wounded, and bleeding soldiers, breathless and faint, hardly able to strike a blow, yet resolved not to flee. Then the brave knight Aristes, although sore wounded himself, slew one of the enemy, and, leaping on his horse, spurred off to Alexander for help before all the little band was destroyed. Little need to tell that the king was sore grieved, and gathering together in haste as many of his knights as he could, he rode off to the rescue of Meleager through the valley, leaving Tyre and the camp. And ever as he went his eyes dropped tears as he thought of his

good knights slain, and most of all he grieved for Sampson, whom he loved well.

But while Alexander was riding through the valley away from Tyre the men of the town were busy. He had finished a great tower in the water over against the city wall, and had left a guard within it to keep it till his return. But Sir Balaan of Tyre, one of the chief men of the town, prepared great machines and engines for casting stones into the tower, and when he had driven the guard from its walls, he sallied out of the town with a host of armed men and attacked it. Then the men of the tower defended it sharply, and sent out showers of darts and great stones. But Balaan fought so bitterly, and sent such a cloud of stones, that none of the Greeks could show themselves on the tower, and his slaves brought engines and threw down the top of the tower and tilted it into the sea, and all the men in it were slain. Then he got boats and barges and attacked the bottom of the castle, and broke down all its lower part, and threw the heaps into the sea, and the winds and the sea helped him, and a storm arose and beat the pieces small, so that not one beam remained fastened to another. Thus this great work was destroyed in a day, and Balaan returned to the city and barred the gate as before.

By this time Alexander had come out of the valley and reached the plain of Kadesh. Before him he saw here and there a few of his men fighting in
50 scattered

scattered groups, while others of the enemy were collecting the cattle and sheep to drive them home again. All over the plain he saw his men struck down surrounded by heaps of the enemy. Then his eyes flamed out with wrath at the sight of their danger, and he struck spurs into Bucephalus his horse, and springing out with a spear rode straight at the thickest of his foes ; and ever as he rode he struck them to earth, so that through the thickest of the throng his way was marked by a clear wide path and his nobles rode after him. And when his lance broke he drew out his long sword and struck down all before him till no man of the enemy was on the plain who was not stricken down and a prisoner. Then he turned to those of his men who were still alive and comforted them with fair words, and much he praised their valour, and then bound up their wounds, and the king left order that the dead should be buried under stone or marble monuments, and gathering together the prey, great and small, flocks and herds, he returned with his men to Tyre.

The tale tells that as he rode out of the valley and came into view of Tyre his first look was towards the great tower he had built, and sore was he grieved when he found that it had been destroyed, and that his soldiers that were in it had perished ; and all the Macedonians mourned, and they trusted no longer that Tyre would be taken. But that same night Alexander was sleeping by himself in his tent,

51 and

and he thought that he saw a great vine before him, and that he put out his hand and plucked one grape out of a ripe cluster. Then he flung it on the floor and put his foot on it, and when he had broken it, lo! wine flowed out, so much that it was a wonder to see. In the morning, when the king rose, he called to him a wise man, and bade him tell what the dream should mean; and the wise man said: "O king, fear not; Tyre is thine own; for this berry that thou didst break is the town of Tyre, and thou shalt tread under thy feet its towers within few days." Then the king rejoiced, and set about to make many plans, if by any means he might come within the walls of Tyre.

Soon another tower was in building, right in the same place as the first had been, half as large again and higher than the town-walls, firmly anchored and fastened so that it could not move, close against the sea-wall of the town. And when the tower was built Alexander clad himself in armour of steel, its plates shining in the sun, and went to the top of it and looked over the town and saw its walls, and then he looked to his camp and saw the Greeks, and he resolved to make no more delay but to take it by storm at once. So he ordered the Macedonians to make ready for the battle, and when they saw him on the walls of Tyre to lose no time, but each man to follow him. Then began the beating of drums and the loud blare of the trumpets till the town and

52 camp

camp rang with their brazen strokes, and all men rushed to the assault of the walls. The archers came within bowshot of the walls, covered with great shields which they held before them, each shield covering two men, and shot keenly at every mark that showed itself, and their arrows were deadly as adders; nor were they of the town less eager to return their bowshot, and from the walls they cast great stones among the Greeks. Suddenly the gates of the town opened, and the Tyrians made a sally out, wounding and killing many of the archers, for they were good spearmen, and could cast the dart.

But Alexander and his princes had passed up into the tower, and some of the lords were armed with lances, and some bore huge two-handed swords, and many carried the battle-axe, and a few had cross-bows which shot great bolts of steel. Then from the tower they passed on to the sea-wall of Tyre and fought their way among a crowd of foes, Alexander ever the first. Long were it to tell of the fight and of his valour, for they of the town worthily withstood him, and ere they made sure their footing on the town-wall, many knights had been stricken down backward into the deep water. But when they saw that, the Greeks became maddened with rage, and no wound could make them pause, and as they obtained a footing they fell to shooting with cross-bows, and with their great catapults, each stone

like a man's head, and the yeomen got out great crowbars and began to tear down the turrets and battlements; while the knights hurried forward beating down their opponents. At last a breach in the walls was made, and then the host of Alexander rushed into the town, eager to revenge the death of so many of their comrades, and the men of Tyre thronged thick to the wall to guard the entrance. But Alexander forced his way through them all and over the broken wall into the city, and the first man he met was Balaan. Short was the fight, for one stroke of his mighty sword laid Balaan low, and he was thrown into the sea beneath the walls. Then when the Tyrians were driven from the walls the Greeks clambered up them with all manner of ladders, on each step a cluster, and those who had no ladders climbed up the stones without them, and in short time Tyre was in their hands, for after the death of Sir Balaan no man could lead the men of the town or give them heart to fight.

Then Alexander commanded to cast down the walls of Tyre, and when it was done it came into his mind to punish the men of Jerusalem for their refusal to send him help against Tyre, and his army moved down towards the city. And on his way he conquered the land of the Philistines, and burned down the city of Gaza.



CHAP. VII. HOW ALEXANDER CAME TO JERUSALEM, HOW THE BISHOP MET HIM, AND WHAT THERE BEFELL HIM.

WHEN WORD WAS BROUGHT to Jerusalem that Tyre was taken, and that Alexander was on the march towards the city to punish it for its disobedience, there was heavy grief and woe, and Jaddua the bishop was in great awe, for he said to himself: "Now have I but a few days ago refused to obey this great warrior, and when he the most needed help I denied it him; better had it been for me that anything should have happened before I grieved this man, and did not his command. Woe is me and my city." And Jaddua called together the men of the city, and said: "Now is Alexander at hand, and will destroy our city and us unless heaven help us."

So men went through the streets, and it was

ordered that all the inhabitants of the city should fast for three days, men, women and children, and that they should appear in the temple and cry with clean hearts to the King of Heaven to keep them safe from this mighty conqueror. And so it was that the whole city fell to prayers and fasting, and woe was on every face. But on the third night, when all the city was asleep and the sacrifices ended, then a shining one stood by the bishop and spoke joyful words to him, saying: "Sir Bishop, I bring thee tidings of bliss and solace. I am sent to thee from the Master of men to bid thee be not cast down. Now, therefore, rise up early and array all thy city, its streets and its houses, in fair attire, open its gates wide, let every man be apparelled in clean and milk-white clothes. And as for thee and thy priests and prelates, clothe thee in the dress of thy rule, and when this conqueror comes, go ye forth to meet him. And fear not to greet him nobly, for he must ride and reign over the round world to the day of his death."

Then when the day broke the bishop rose and called together all the chief of the people, and told them his vision and what the voice had bade him do ; and all his clergy and the city assented that so it should be, that the city should be adorned and that all men should go forth to meet this their sovereign. So all the people hurried home and brought out their richest treasure to adorn the city.

The broad streets were arched over with awnings of rich and rare stuffs. The ground was covered with Tartary silk and with taffeta, that so noble a ruler should not tread on bare earth. The pavement was covered over with woven stuffs, and canopies of fine linen were stretched on high over the gates of the city to keep off the heat of the sun, and they were gathered on either side with silken ropes, and drawn back like curtains, while the houses were hung with Indian stuff of bright blue embroidered with stars, even to the eaves. Thus was the town adorned, and when the gates were opened, men without might deem that they looked in on one of the seven heavens.

And now the people of the city began to come out in procession, clothed in their richest robes. First came the bishop with the priests of the temple, dressed in royal magnificence. He wore under all a long robe covered with birds and beasts embroidered in blue and purple, and on that a robe with gold skirts, with many shining stones sprinkled all over, and set stiff with sapphires and other gems, and powdered with pearls of the purest hue. Over this he cast on a cope of chestnut colour with rich ribands of gold, and round the hem a border of violet flowers, embroidered with satyrs and fauns and the wild beasts of the forest. And on his head he wore a great mitre forged out of pure gold, bordered with pearls, and covered with such precious

stones that no man might look upon it, for it struck out shimmering shafts of light like the beams of the bright sun. And with the bishop came the doctors of law, the judges of the city, and they were all dressed in tunics of scarlet silk brought from Tartary, and were loaded with their golden chains of office; and after them the clergy, all clothed in their brightest dress. Such a sight had never been seen before, nor will it be seen again.

After the bishop and his attendants the whole city came in order, Mayor, merchants, masters and men, widows and wives, all came with their companies, and each of them dressed in white linen pure as the driven snow. Then a company of children came forth with bells and banners and blazing torches; some bore censers with silver chains and burning spices within, whose smoke rose to the clouds, two bore a cushion of brown velvet embroidered with pearls to be held before the bishop for his book to rest on, others bore candlesticks of gold and of silver, and the relics of the temple, the richest of the world. And all the procession went on till they came to a little place outside the town whence they could see the temple, and there they abode the coming of the king.

And now they heard the tramp of feet and the distant sound of arms and horses, for all men kept silence in fear and doubt and half-hope, and they knew not how soon they might be ridden down and

slain or made slaves, or whether they should indeed be saved as the bishop had told them. Then they saw Alexander riding up with a host of dukes and princes and earls, and at the same time the king caught sight of their array, and when Alexander saw this multitude of men in milk-white clothes he thought it a marvel, and he turned and saw the crowd of priests in maniples and stoles, and the doctors of the law and the prelates in their robes; and amidst them all, the chief amongst them, the bishop, dressed in his array of gold and purple and fine linen; and the king's eyes fixed on him and looking up he beheld on his mitre a plate of fine gold, and on it was graven the great name of The Maker of Men. Then the king commanded his knights to approach no nearer on pain of their lives, but all, great and small, to remain behind, and he spurred on his horse till he came up to the spot where the bishop was standing, and then jumping down he fell on his knees before the bishop on the cold earth, and beating his breast worshipped the Holy Name that he saw written on his head.

Then all the people bowed themselves down before Alexander as he stood up, and meekly kneeling they cried with a keen voice: "Long may he live, long may he live." Then the fairest lady of them all came out and cried: "Lo, Alexander, the noblest lord under heaven, long may he live, the mighty emperor, the wielder of all the world, the mightiest

on the earth." And all the people of the city answered her with one voice: "Long may he live, long may he live." Then stepped out a man and he cried out: "Lo, he that overcometh all men, who shall be overcome never; The greatest, the most glorious, that ever was made by God." And all the people cried out at once: "Long may he live, long may he live."

Now there were with Alexander many of the rulers of the land of Syria who had yielded up their lands to him, and when they saw him bow down, as they thought, to the bishop of the Jews, they held it a great wonder. Then Parmeon, one of Alexander's princes, went up to him, and asked him why he bowed down to the bishop of Jews, when all other men bowed before him instead. And Alexander answered him: "Nay, I neither hailed him nor bowed down to him, but to the King of Heaven alone, the Father of gods and of men. For many days ago, when I was in Macedon, one appeared to me in such a dress and shape as this man now wears. And I mused in my mind how I might win Asia, and he bade me fear not, but that all the land should be mine, and when I saw this man, verily he seemed the same god who had spoken to me. Now have I good hope, by the help of this God whose Name is written yonder, to conquer Darius and to destroy the empire of the Persians."

And now the bishop had greeted Alexander full
60 lowly,

lowly, and all men had done him homage, and they prayed the king to enter into the town, and Alexander marvelled to see how fair a city it was, and the people of the land received him with reverence and joy as he were the leader of them all, or as one come down from the gods. Then went they through the town, and the bishop brought them to the temple that the great knight and king, Dan Solomon, had built, and the wise men of the temple came forth, and Alexander heard of their lore. Then came one of the oldest of them all and spoke words to the bishop, and he arose and bowed down before Alexander and said : " O king, verily there are words concerning thee and thy deeds in the books of our holy place," and he ordered the temple guardians, and they brought out a huge roll, a broad book full of dark sayings of the times to be, and there was the saying of a mighty seer, one Daniel by name, and Alexander read how that the men out of Greece should utterly destroy the people of Persia.

Thereupon was Alexander merry of heart, for he deemed that the time had come, and that he should indeed beat down Persia, and he ordered his men to fetch great gifts, and to each man he gave chains of gold, and jewels of pearls and of rubies, and to the bishop he gave store of bezants, great round heavy golden coins, such as bishops love, and he showed him a heap of golden talents, but the bishop feared

to take such riches. Then said the king: "O Bishop, ask what thou wilt in this world, anything mayest thou ask that I may give, and I will grant it thee ere I go hence." And the bishop bowed him down to the ground and said: "O King Alexander, this thing of all others I deeply desire, durst I name it, that thou wouldst grant us the use of our law, as our fathers before us have obeyed it; and if it may be, grant us that we pay no tribute for seven years, in memory of the joy of thy coming, then shall all men pray for thee and serve thee, and, if I may but add one thing, grant to those of Media and of Babylon that they may freely obey our law."

"That grant I thee," said the king, "ask now for thyself, and be served." "Nay, lord, no more, if I may have your love and your lordship while my life lasts," said the bishop, and he and all men meekly thanked Alexander. And Alexander appointed a lord to dwell in the town, hear what men said, and be his viceroy, and the bishop blessed him, and he departed into the cities near at hand, and all of them came out to welcome him and to acknowledge him their lord.



CHAPTER VIII. TELLS HOW DARIUS THE EMPEROR SENT PRESENTS TO ALEXANDER, AND WHAT WAS THE PRESENT SENT BACK TO HIM.

BUT IT FELL THAT SOME of them of Tyre had fled into the court of Darius, and they complained to him of their city destroyed, and "all this," said they, "we suffered because we obeyed the great king, the Emperor Darius." Then began the Emperor to question them concerning this Alexander, what manner of man he was, what was his stature and his strength, whether he were brave or no. And they, willing to bring shame on the name of their enemy, shewed Darius a painting of him on parchment. But when Darius looked on it he burst into laughter, and all men smiled, and he said: "Well for ye, ye men of Tyre, if ye were beaten by such a man as this, for never saw I such a warrior,"

for they had painted him a little shrivelled creature, more like an ape than a man, with long arms, and one leg longer than the other, blinking and stupid, the most miserable object that had ever been seen. And Darius drove the men of Tyre from his presence, and asked his wise men concerning Alexander, who and what manner of man he was ; and they told him how he was the king's son of Macedon, and how they had chosen him as fit to be the husband of Roxana, and how he had rejected him because of his small stature.

Then Darius bade search for his portrait and bring it before him that he might look on him ; but when they sought it they found it not among the other likenesses, for it is to be said that Roxana the Queen had borne it with her and treasured it up with her chief treasures. So he thought within himself that he would prove the heart and wit of the Greek, and he commanded, and they brought him presents for Alexander, and first was a ball covered with gold ; “ for,” said he, “ he must have something to play with ;” then he added a hat, “ and,” said he, “ this is better than a crown ;” and last they brought him a head-covering made of twigs and osiers ; “ this is better for such an one as thou, O Alexander, than a bright steel helm.” And Darius fell back upon his throne, laughing, and ordered messengers to take them to Alexander, bearing with them a letter under his broad seal.

So Darius called for his scribes, and they came before him, and he ordered them to write a letter to Alexander, and this was the form of the letter he wrote :

“DARIUS, the Emperor, king of kings, lord of lords, predecessor of princes, equal to the Sun, the lord of the earth, to Alexander, our subject and our servant.

“For it is reported to us that thou, through the vanity and vainglory of thy heart, hast got together warriors to lay waste parts of our kingdom, and hast now with thee a number of wretches, thieves and vagabonds, and by their means dost think to wield at thy will the power of Persia :

“Now, therefore, be warned in time, for thou art weak before me, even if thou hadst gathered against my empire all the men in the world outside it, for my people are so many that they are like to the stars of heaven in number. Submit in time ; the Persians are famed to be unbeaten.

“It is told me that thou, a dwarf and weakling, dost covet the rule of all the lands under the wide heavens, and that, like a storm of wind-blown snow, driven hither and thither, thou passest over all lands with a train of ruffians behind thee. I have not yet armed my men against thee ; beware, when my hand shall be raised, thy life is done. Turn again, boy, to thy mother’s care ; take these toys I send thee. Know that the riches of Persia are so great, that a

heap of its gold would shut out the light of the sun, and blame thyself for all the evils that shall fall on thee if thou disobey.

“Now, therefore, return at once to Macedon, or, not as the son of Philip, but as a leader of a band of petty thieves shalt thou be hung.”

And when the letter was written the bearer of the king's seal came forward, and the letter was closed, and cords of green silk run through the edges, and dipped in wax, and the great seal was stamped upon the wax, and it was given to the messengers of the king, with strait commandment that they should tarry neither night nor day until the king's letter was given into the hands of Alexander.

Now, Alexander was standing in the midst of his barons when the messengers of Darius arrived, and as their commandment was urgent, he bade them to be brought to him at once. And when he saw the letter his heart was filled with rage, nevertheless he read it out in the hearing of his knights and nobles; and when these heard it their hearts were moved with fear of the mighty words of Darius. So Alexander looked on them and he saw that they were afraid, and he spoke to them: “What now! my worthy warriors, my bold knights and barons, the best under heaven that ever king had, let it never be told against you that the proud boasting of a letter of Darius brought you to doubt yourselves, else were it shame indeed. Look you, now, every
66
day



When he saw the letter, his heart
was filled with rage never-
theless he read it out in the hear-
ing of his knights & nobles
& they were moved with fear.



day we ride through a village you may hear as loud a yelping from any cur at a cottage door, but loud as they bark they never bite. But methinks his letter should rather make you rejoice, when he tells you what treasure of gold he has, for it needs but to be bold and that treasure shall be yours." And then the anger in the king's heart broke out, and turning to the messengers of Darius, he said: "But for ye, that dare to bring such threats to a Greek, ye shall learn the anger of Alexander. Take them by the throats," said he to the attendants, "and for their master's sake, hang them on the gallows."

Then the messengers were amazed, and with a keen cry called to Alexander: "Alas, O king, what fault lies in us, if it please thee, that we should die thus suddenly." "The sayings of your sovereign lord," said he, "force me to such deeds as I would never have done else: lo, now, he calls me a thief in this letter." But they fell on their knees before him and said: "O king, Darius himself dictated those words, for he knew not of your knighthood, nor of your strength, nor of your worthiness, and so he wrote boldly; but grant us our lives, and leave to go, and we will show him all your power and your might." So Alexander forgave them and made them a great feast in his own tent, and made much of them, so that he won their hearts; and they said to him: "Sir Alexander, send with us, we pray thee, but one thousand of your knights, and we will deliver

deliver Darius into your hands." But the king answered them with little love: "Rejoice in your feast, O messengers; verily no knight of mine shall be sent to aid in betraying your lord."

But in the night, one of the Persian messengers, a little man and a crooked, having one arm longer than the other, came to the tent of the king, and when he was admitted he asked that all men might be put forth. So they were left alone, and the messenger drew from his breast a leathern roll, and in it was a blue embroidered silk bag of fair work, the lion on one side and the rising sun on the other, and he laid it in the hand of the king. Then Alexander opened it, and found within a scarf of green covered with fair half-open flowers, and he looked on the messenger, and he answered: "O king, the fairest dame in Persia sends thee this to the end that thou mayest wear it in thy helm. One day, if the gods will, thou shalt see her and know her name." Then the messenger bowed low, and went his way to his fellows, and all men slept.

The next day the messengers were called before Alexander and his council, and a letter was given them, closely sealed up, to bear to Darius. Now this was the form of the letter:

"I, ALEXANDER OF MACEDON, son and heir of Philip the defender of Greece, and of Olympias the fair, to thee Darius, prince of the
68
Persians,

Persians, the conqueror of every land—as you say yourself—thus write under my seal.

“Let no man despise any neighbour who seems to be smaller and poorer than himself, since the lowest is often raised to the heavens, and the proudest ground to dust. And thou, Emperor of the World as thou callest thyself, dost dishonour to thy name when thou sendest such gifts out of Persia. Thou speakest as if thou wert one of the gods that cannot die. I am but a mortal man, and I will attack thee.

“Thou hast destroyed thine own renown. If I am beaten, thou thyself hast called me but a petty thief, and no honour shalt thou have: if I overcome thee, the greater glory is mine, and men shall ever tell how I have conquered a king, the greatest in the world. Nevertheless I hope that one of thy tales is true, that of the greatness of thy riches, for it has raised our hopes, and sharpened our wits, and made us eager for battle, that we may the sooner exchange our poverty for thy riches.

“But as for thy presents, know, O Darius, that the ball thou hast sent represents the world, and thou hast handed over the mastery of the world to me: the hollow hat held before the head when it is bowed, shows that all kings shall bow before me: and this headpiece of twigs is to say that ever shall I overcome, and be overcome never. In the day of

thy defeat, O Darius, remember my interpretation of thy gifts."

Then great gifts were given to the messengers, and they were sent out of the camp to Darius, and Alexander made all his preparations for the war against the Persians. But when Darius had read the letter of Alexander, and heard the words of the messengers, he was sore angered, and he made up his mind to fall on the Greeks and to destroy the power of Alexander. So he wrote to two of his greatest satraps, the duke Priam and the duke Antigonus, ordering them to get their forces together and to go out and seize this insolent lad who was so bold as to defy the army of the Persians, and who had entered the borders of Asia with such a large number of followers. "Then," said Darius, "bring him bound to me, that he may be well beaten with scourges and then I will sew him up in a mantle of bright purple and send him to his mother. Since he is so proud, the punishment of a child will be best for him, and when all is over he may play at home at bowls or handball with his mother's servants."

Now this letter reached the dukes soon after they had fought a great battle with Alexander's men and had been defeated; so when they had broken the king's broad seal and turned the leaf to read the letter, they looked on one another, and they thought that Darius could not know what manner of man

Alexander was, or how hard it was to stand before him in battle. So Sir Priam the duke wrote to Darius by a special messenger that this child, whom they had been ordered to seize, had wasted all their lands, and had passed through the province, and that when they had raised an army to meet him, neither prince nor soldier could face him sword in hand: and the letter ended by begging the king to come at once to their aid with as many men as he could, that the honour of Persia might not be put to shame.

So Darius called a council to advise him as to the best means of meeting Alexander, but before they were met another messenger came with tidings that the Greeks had crossed the river that was called the boundary of Persia, and that they were now in the Emperor's own land. And when this was told the council all men wondered how that Alexander should be so bold as to enter Persia, or to disobey the letter of Darius, and they advised the king to write once again to him, reproving him, and that if he still disobeyed, that he should be crushed to the earth, and the king did so, for he knew not how a man could disobey his order.

The tale tells that when this letter reached Alexander it found him in great grief, for messengers had come from Macedon telling that his mother was like to die, and Alexander had bidden his men strike their tents and return home to Macedon. So the

messengers drew near trembling, and gave the letter of Darius to Alexander, and with it was a glove full of poppy seeds, which are almost the smallest of all seeds. So Alexander read the letter and he laughed out, for Darius had told him that even the gods obeyed him on earth, and now bade him return to Macedonia ere his wrath should arise. "And as a token," added Darius, "I send thee this glove full of seeds, count them if thou canst, and thou hast the number of knights in my army. But the seeds are numberless, and so are the soldiers I rule."

Then Alexander called to him the messengers, and said: "Hearken, and tell the king that which you see and hear." Then he took the glove and poured out some of the seeds into his hand, and biting them he said: "Here I see that the soldiers of Darius are passing many, but they seem to be soft and feeble, as these seeds prove. But be they soft or hard, it matters but little." And he wrote a letter to Darius telling him that though he was returning to Macedon it was not on account of the threats of the Persians, but because his mother was at point of death, and that he would return with an army larger than before. "And in answer to thy glove full of seeds, I send thee a purse full of black pepper, that thou mayst see the comparison between the Persian and the Macedonian."



CHAPTER IX. TELLS HOW ALEXANDER DESTROYED THEBES AND HOW IT WAS REBUILT AND OF HIS RETURN TO PERSIA.



THE TALE TELLS THAT when the messengers of Darius departed, loaded with rich presents, to carry the message of Alexander to their lord, Alexander and his host set out on their homeward way, and passing through Arabia, a great army of Persians fell on them, under the leadership of duke Amonta, the head of all that province. Long were it to tell of this fight, for Amonta was one of the bravest of the Persians, and it seemed that Alexander had found an equal. Two days the fight had lasted, from the grey morning till dark night; many were the noble knights overthrown on both sides, and such showers of blood fell that the fetlocks of the horses were covered with blood. But on the third day, the story tells

tells that in broad mid-day the battle was at its highest, when suddenly the sky began to grow dark, and, looking up, men saw darkness over the face of the sun. Then all men feared for the wrath of the gods, but Alexander cried out to the Greeks with a mighty voice: "See, the Greeks have conquered the sun of Persia," and with a great shout, the men of Macedon fell again on the Persians, and they turned and fled from the field, and many of them were slain, struck from their horses by the mighty blows of the Greeks. Then Amonta the duke was borne away from the field by the mad rush of the frightened horses, and his wounds were sore, so that he could not face the enemy, and at the last he fled with the rest.

But so it was, that when he came to the Court of Darius, that he found there the king's messengers, who had just arrived from the camp of Alexander, for they had ridden slowly with the letter and the gifts. And Darius the emperor was seated on his daïs, holding the letter in his hand unopened, and he questioned the messengers: "What said he of the seeds I sent him?" Then the messengers answered: "The king caught up a handful of them and bit them, and he said, truly the Persians were many, but there was one thing that pleased him, they were but soft." Then Darius put forth his hand to the purse and bit at one of the grains in it, and he said: "Truly, be his men even as few as these, if
74 they

they be but as keen and sharp, all the world would be too weak to meet them in arms."

Then the Duke Amonta spake up among the peers who were standing round, and he said : " By your leave, my most gracious lord, this king leads but few men, but never were there fiercer in the field than they are. For I fell on them with an army greater than their own by five thousand men, and yet they defeated us and slew many fierce earls and brave knights, and threw down my banner. Three days we fought with hard blows on either side, yet at the last hardly did I escape unslain from their hands. Yet was Alexander none the prouder for their victory, but he buried the dead Greeks and Persians side by side in the grave with all honour." Then the King of Persia grieved for the death of his knights, but he rejoiced more at the going of Alexander.

The march of Alexander took him on through Cilicia and over the mountains of Taurus and into the land of Troy, and there he saw the place where Troy had once been, and the famous river Scamander, and grieved because there was no noble poet like Homer to tell of his deeds. And at the last he came to Macedon, and there he found his mother mended of her malady, and great was his joy. Then he stayed with her some days rejoicing, and he got together fresh soldiers, and set his face against the land of Persia, ready to begin a journey from which he was never to return.

Now Alexander marched through the land of Greece, and the story tells of many adventures which fell to his lot, for some cities welcomed him gladly, and others closed their gates against him, and once the horses of his army were like to have been lost for want of forage, so that his knights feared, and murmured against him ; but the tale tells chiefly how he warred against Thebes and Athens, and what there befell him. Now the town of Thebes was famous for deeds of arms, and Alexander sent to the town to ask for four bold knights to go with him to the war with Darius ; but the folk of Thebes shut the gates of the town, and bade him pass on if he did not wish to meet his death at their hands. Then Alexander laughed out in scorn and said : “ Ye be brave men, O Thebans, the mightiest on earth, and now ye have proffered war to my princes and to me. Why shut ye your gates, for honour bids you come out and meet me in the field to maintain your words ? ”

Then the siege of Thebes began : he placed four thousand archers round the town, with orders to shoot at every wight that showed himself on the walls ; he set two thousand men, armed with coats of mail and plate armour, to dig down the walls and buildings ; one thousand were told off to fire the gates of the town, and three thousand were appointed to the engines of war. Alexander got together too a body of slingers to help any of these that were

overpowered. Now when all things were set, the trumpets blew out and the assault commenced. First the archers advanced, covered with their broad shields, till they got within bowshot of the walls, and all at once the hemp cords were drawn and the arrows flew through the air. Then the arbalesters bent their crossbows and out whirred the quarrels, crashing through the coats of mail. The engines shot out their great stones into the towers, and then the fire began to burst out at the gates, and soon the four gates of the town were in flames, and the town itself began to burn. Then those who were unslain in the town yielded them up.

But there were two minds in the camp as to Thebes; some of Alexander's peers rejoiced to see the town burning, but a minstrel of Thebes, Hismon by name, came before Alexander with a sad face, asking Alexander to have some mercy on the town. Then said the king: "Why art thou so sad of cheer, my clerk, before me?" and the minstrel answered: "O mighty conqueror, if by any means thou canst show mercy on our rich town." Then was Alexander wroth that any man should be sad before him at what the king had willed, and without more words he gave strait command that the walls of the town should be beaten down and every house in it burnt; and that done he went on his way with his men, and many of the Thebans went with him, for that they had no longer a city.

The tale tells that one of the knights of Thebes who followed Alexander's host, a valiant and a mighty man, asked at the temple of his god when Thebes should be rebuilt and who should build it, and the god answered: "He who shall build the town shall conquer thrice in strife; when that shall be, then shall he raise the walls." Now as the knight returned to the army of Alexander he heard the herald proclaiming with the sound of a trumpet that the king would hold a tournament at Corinth, and that great games should there be played. So when the day came the Theban knight came into the ring, and asked of Alexander permission to wrestle, and the king appointed a champion to wrestle with him, and soon the champion was thrown. Then another wrestler came forth, and he too was cast to the earth. And Alexander said: "Now, in faith, if thou conquer but once again, thou shalt be crowned for the noblest wrestler in Greece." Then came forth a mighty man, the tallest of the Macedonians, and the Theban knight deemed that he should indeed be beaten, but he thought on the words of the god, and the love of his city filled him, and they scarce grappled before he threw the giant on the ground, and a great shout went up from all men.

Then he was brought to the king and knelt before him, and Alexander took a fair gold crown filled with precious stones, and set it on his head ;
78 and

and the heralds came to him and said: "Tell us thy name, O noble knight, that we may write it in our books." And he said: "Truly, sirs, my name is Cityless." "How so," said the king; "what name is that, and how got you it?" "My lovely lord," said the knight, "before you came I had a people and a town, now have I none, and Cityless am I, and Cityless must be my name." Then the king knew that he was a knight of Thebes, and his heart relented for the city, and he gave orders to cry aloud that all men might return with the knight to rebuild the town in its first state. So was the saying of the god fulfilled.

So Alexander went on his way through the land of Greece, and from each town he received help and tokens of his lordship. But two great cities refused at first, the cities of Athens and Sparta, though afterwards they obeyed him. Then he came to the ocean and sailed over into Asia, and with him were two hundred thousand men, and tidings came to Darius, and he called his council and said unto them: "Lo, how this Greek grows in might, the more I despise him the greater his power. I sent him playthings, but now he will master us if we take not heed." Then said the king's brother to him: "If your majesty do not as this man does, we may leave our land to him, for in strife he helps his men in all their needs, and so his name increases." And another lord spoke: "This Macedonian is like

a lion who leaps on his prey with joy." "How so?" said Darius, and the knight answered: "Years ago, I was sent with your heralds to Philip his father to claim our tribute, and then I saw and heard him. For your herald told how all men would gather at your orders against the foe of the empire—Medes, Parthians, Italians—and the youth said: 'Yes, but one wolf will worry many sheep, and a Greek army will rout many barbarians,' for so he called the army of the great king." So Darius got together his army.

The tale tells that Alexander on a day went to bathe in a river, and the king was heated and the river cold, so that he fell sick of a fever and was like to have died. And all the men of his army mourned, and said: "Did Darius but know this he would fall on us with his might;" and truly they did well to grieve, for the health of the head keeps all the body well. Then one Philip the Leech, a young man, but well skilled in all manner of medicine, came to the tent of Alexander, and said: "My lord, I can cure you in few hours with a syrup of herbs." When the duke Parmenides heard this he was jealous of Philip, for he feared that Alexander would promote him to great power, so he came privily to the king, and said: "O king Alexander, take not the drink of Philip, and trust him not, for verily it has been told me that Darius has offered his fair daughter and great wealth to the man that shall

shall slay thee," and with that he showed the king a letter in which these things were written. Now Philip had brought the cup to Alexander, and the king stretched out his hand, and looked him in the face, and took the cup, and drank it, and gave the letter to Philip, and the physician looked on it, and said: "My life for thine, O king, as I am guiltless of evil towards thee." So Alexander fell into a sleep, and all men kept such watch that no noise was heard in the camp, and when he awoke he was whole and healthy. So he called Philip the Leech to him, and gave him great rewards, but Parmenides the traitor he beheaded.

Then marched he through the land of Media and Armenia till he came to the great river, the river Euphrates; and there was no ford over which the army could pass, so needs must they make a bridge, and men brought boats and bound them together with chains, and then they passed over, first the horses and the baggage, and then the army. And when they were all over the king took his axe and smote the chains in sunder so that the swift stream drove down the boats, and the bridge was broken; then turning to his men, he said: "If we flee, here shall we be overtaken and slain; better is it that never we turn our back to the foe, for he that follows has the flower of victory, and in no wise he that flees. Be happy and rejoice, for never shall we see Macedon till the barbarians bow before us—then shall we blithe return."



CHAPTER X. HOW ALEXANDER DEFEATED THE PERSIANS, AND HOW HE WENT TO THE FEAST OF DARIUS.



OW FOR THE FIRST TIME the armies of the Macedonians and the Persians came in face of each other, and hopes of victory were on either side, for the Persians were many, and their battle-leaders were five hundred noble knights. The sun shone brightly, the trumpets rang out against each other, and the long streamers of the lances danced in the wind; the horses pranced, and the young knights clashed their arms. Soon Darius ordered the battle to begin, the knights laid their spears in rest, and each, with his shield hung before him, spurred his horse; the Greeks came on to meet them, and they crashed into each other with a thundering noise and a shout, and all the fair field was covered with stumbling steeds and knights dismounted

mounted and wounded and dead ; and the clash of sword-strokes cutting through coats of mail sounded like the noise of a giant's smithy. For few minutes the field was covered with clouds of dust, and Alexander could see nothing of the result, but soon it appeared that the Greeks had driven back the foe, and that the first attack of the Persians had failed. So he called the Greek knights around him, and after a breathing space he gave orders that in their turn they should ride on the enemy.

But Darius had seen how his men were being borne down, and had noted how their king was first among the Macedonians, and how that no man stood before his blows, so he called to him one of his bravest champions, and said to him : "Sir Knight, seest thou yon leader of the Greeks, look you now, he wears the colour of my daughter ; go thou, arm thee in fresh armour as a man of Macedon, and slay him. And if thou so doest, I will give thee my daughter Roxana to wife, and thou shalt be after me in the land of Persia." Then that knight answered and said : "Thou art my lord ; whatsoever thou biddest that will I do, and I will smite his head from off his shoulders, that no man may hereafter stand against the Emperor." So he arrayed him in clean bright armour, and over his armour he put on a silk surcoat in colour like to that of the Macedonians, and rode out among them.

Now Alexander was ranging his knights for their grand attack on the Persians, and the trumpets blew, and all together they charged down on the foe. Close behind Alexander rode the Persian knight, and no man could see who he was, for the bars of his helmet were closed. And Alexander, as his wont was, rode into the thick of the fight, and struck great blows here and there, and no man stood before him. Then the knight drew his sword and spurred on his horse, and struck the king such a blow that it cut through his helmet and down into his cheek, and then as the king wheeled round his horse the sword broke in the helmet. And when the knights around saw the blow they rushed on the disguised Persian, but Alexander stayed them from hurting him, and said :

“What, my knight, why hast thou wounded thy lord and thy helper?”

“Nay,” said the knight, “I am no knight of thine; this did I for Sir Darius, who promised me his daughter if I hewed off thy head.”

“Take him away,” said the king, “but harm him not till I give order about him.”

Then Alexander turned to his lords and said :

“What shall be done to him for this deed?”

And one man advised to hang him, and another to cut off his head, and another to burn him alive. But Alexander looked displeased, and said :

“Nay, he has but done his duty to his lord, in
84 that

that he obeyed his word, and his lord has all the blame of his deed. He that condemns him judges himself, for did I order one of you to slay Darius that must ye do. Let him depart and go to his lord, for he strikes a good stroke."

So that Persian knight went unharmed from the camp of Alexander, and told all these things to Darius.

Then Darius feared, for his army was put to flight, and his knights began to compare him with the king of the Macedonians, and he rode away to a strong city near that place, and there he stayed but short time, for Alexander followed him, and came against that city and took it, and found there treasure untold, and the wife of Darius, and his mother, the wisest woman in all Asia; but Darius himself escaped him and fled away. There came one of the princes of Persia to Alexander and offered to deliver Darius into his hand, for that he had served that king for twenty years, and yet he had never given him reward; but Alexander refused to take Darius by treachery, and he said: "One king must not betray another." So day by day the Persian lords came into the Greek camp and owned Alexander as their emperor.

Now was another army and a greater one being got together, for all the lords of Persia and the kings of the countries about, and Porus, king of India, were summoned for a set day. But letters

came from the king of India saying that he was sore sick, and could give no aid till he was recovered, and that then he would come; and letters came from the mother of Darius, an exceeding wise woman, in which she bade him make peace with Alexander and submit to him, or otherwise the empire of the Persians would be utterly overthrown. But he would not obey her, for he hoped to destroy the army of the Greeks from the face of the earth. So all the might of Persia met at its chief town, Susa.

After short time the army of the Greeks had got them ready for the fight, and they began to follow up the war against Darius, and they went not so quickly as the Persians, since they were in an enemy's land; but at the last they came in sight of the town of Susa, and behold, it lay in a great plain, and a river a furlong broad lay between it and them. So Alexander purposed in his mind to send a herald to challenge the Persians to fight, for he would not be said to attack them without granting them due time. That night, as he lay asleep in his tent, he dreamed a dream, and a man of Macedon stood by him, dressed in rich attire, with two horns on his head, and he knew that it was one of the gods, and the god said to him: "My son, send no messenger to Susa, but go thyself, so shalt thou see Darius and his court, for I will be with thee, and no harm shall come to thee." Then Alexander arose early in

86 the

the morning and told his knights his dream, and how the god had promised to guard him. So he dressed himself as a herald, and rode off with one of his knights before the sun rose to the army of Darius. Now when they came to the great river Granton, which lay between them and the town of Susa, they found it frozen over with ice a foot thick, so he bade the lord that was with him to wait there for him, and he himself rode over the river alone to the camp of Darius.

The tale tells that this river was wondrous cold by nature, and that whether by art magic, or because it was so cold every night, it froze into ice after the sun went down, and the ice was exceeding thick ; but when the sun rose and the day warmed, then the ice cracked and melted, and the river ran so fast that no man might swim in it, nor might any boat cross it but with danger, and no bridge could be built across it for the ice. When the day broke the ice began to thaw, but Alexander was safely over, and he rode slowly towards the town. Now when he came to the wall of Susa he stopped at the barrier, and bade the men bring him before Darius, and they obeyed him, for his rich clothing and his speech showed him to be some great man. And Darius asked him : “ What man art thou, and what doest thou here ? ” Then Alexander answered him : “ O king, I am sent to thee by Alexander, he bids thee prepare for battle ; why dost thou stay in the
87 walls

walls of thy town ; either come out and fight him or own him for master." And Darius said : " Wert thou the man himself thou couldst not speak more proudly, but I care never a deal for all thy bold sayings. Still for thy sovereign's sake that sent thee hither, thou shalt sit at supper with me this even ;" and Darius did him great honour, for all men in those days revered the heralds.

So the heralds of Persia welcomed him, and there came clerks and wise men and talked with him of the lands of Greece and of the West, and they told him of the nobles of Persia and of the wonders of the land and its richness, and of the land of India and the marvels that men spoke of it. Now among the clerks was one who was short and crooked and ungainly, and the others took little heed of him, and he stayed for a while behind and listened, saying nought. Then Alexander noticed him and said within himself : " Such a crooked and misshapen man would not be in the court of a king if he were not exceeding wise," so he spake to him, and the clerk answered him in few words but weighty. But when those of the court were without for a space, the clerk said : " Were Alexander here, he would see the fairest maid on earth at the supper this even ; and much honour would she do the knight who wore her scarf in the front of battle." And with that he drew back, nor did he speak when Alexander drew out the scarf from his breast. Then

88 the

the clerks and wise men departed and the great lords came to ask him of the arms of the Greek lords, and of their deeds in battle, and of Alexander.

When even was come the king gave his hand to Alexander and led him into the hall of his palace, and he sat at meat with Darius. And ever he thought within himself: "This barbarian does me great honour in this hall, but soon shall the hall be mine by right." Now the hall of the palace was of beaten gold; the walls, the seats, the tables, the floor, all were covered with thick plates of gold, and the vessels of service, the cups and dishes and platens, were of fine gold. And those of the Persians that were there looked upon Alexander with curiosity, and they thought little of him since he was so short, for the heralds of the King of Persia were taller than any man in Persia, and the Persians are tall men; but they knew not the wisdom and the valour of the man, for they wist not that it was Alexander himself.

As they sat down to meat, Alexander was put in a seat on the left hand of Darius, and as he looked around him he saw at the table on the right hand of the King the fairest damsel that man had ever seen, and his eyes saw, almost without seeing, that her robe was of green covered with fair opening buds, the crown of spring and the promise of summer. And as he looked on her she lifted her
89 eyes

eyes on him, and saw the scarf of green he wore, and she looked on his face eagerly and then looked down and away, and fear and longing and content and hope and joy struggled in her heart, but her face was that of a king's daughter in the palace hall of her father. Then Alexander rejoiced in his heart and he said: "This maid shall be my very love and my queen."

Now the feast began, servants ran to and fro, busily helping one another and serving the guests diligently; lutes and harps were played by the minstrels, and as fast as one dish was taken from the table another was brought, and the butlers brought forth the wine in great goblets of gold, studded with gems, and handed them to the guests. Now Alexander did after the manner of heralds at the feast of a king, for when he had drunk from the cup that which was in it, he took it up and put it in the breast of his doublet. Then Roxana the Queen called to her the servants and they brought her a cup of wine, and she bade them carry it to the herald of the Greeks from Roxana the daughter of the Emperor, and they did so. Then Alexander bowed low, and rejoiced, and drank from the cup, and when it was empty, he put it also in his breast. So the servants of the Persian King saw it and they were envious and wondered, and one said to another: "Let us see if he will do it again;" and they brought him a third cup, yet more precious, and

Alexander took it, and again when he had drunk he put it in his breast for himself. Then these servants went and fell before the king and told him of the case, how that the Greek herald had drunk from the golden cups, and had put them in his breast to take them away from the feast. So Darius rose up in his seat, and with a proud, disdainful look, said: "O friend, why dost thou take my vessels from me? That is shame to thee and me." "Sire," said Alexander, "it is custom in our king's feasts that the goblet given to the guest is his with what is in it; but since you keep not this custom here, I give you your cups," and taking them from his breast he gave them to the butlers. So all men's eyes were on Alexander, and they wondered that he could stand before the face of Darius, and they began to consider his face, his form, and his voice.

Now amongst them that were at meat with Darius that even was one Anepo, the Herald of the Sun, he who had formerly visited Macedon, and to whom Alexander had given a golden chain in earnest of the days to come. And Anepo looked on him, and said to himself: "Is not this the son of Philip?" and just then their eyes crossed, and he saw the face of Alexander, and noticed how that the eyes were of two colours—one blue, one dark—and getting up from his seat he came softly near Darius, who was sitting on his high seat, and he said to him: "Verily, O king of kings, this messenger that sitteth
here

here is no herald, but Alexander the Macedonian himself, or I am no true herald." Now Alexander had seen the eyes of Anepo, and when he got up he watched him, and he heard the sound of his name in the whisper, and he rose from the table as if he would handle a lute, but instead he snatched a torch from the hands of one of them that stood by, and was out of the hall towards the stables before any man could say he was gone.

Now by good fortune his horse was fed, so he loosed him and sprang on his back, and out of the court like a spark from a fire, and no man could stop him. But when the alarm was given, Darius ordered all men to follow, and men rushed in all directions; they searched the rooms of the palace, they searched the stables, some clad them in armour and rode out into the night, and some to the city gates. But little avail they made, for there was no moon, and the clearness of the night served but to mislead them, and their shouts served to warn Alexander of where they were, and if they kept silence one rode against another, and many rode into the deep ditches of the fields or stumbled in the miry ways, and at last, one by one, they came in, and no man among them all had heard or seen aught of Alexander, and well was it for them that they had to face the wrath of Darius, rather than the sword of the Greek.

In that same hour that Alexander fled out of the palace of Darius a golden image of the emperor of Persia

Persia fell to the ground, and when men came to raise it they found it broken into fragments, and they feared greatly; and when Darius heard of it he fell weeping, and he said: "Surely this tokens trouble to the empire, and death to me;" and he sat in sore grief thinking of the boldness of Alexander, and his courage left him, so that he became weak as a woman.

Of Roxana it is to be told how her heart was glad that she had seen the lord of Macedon, and great thanks she gave to the gods because he had seen her face, and noted how fair she was, for she had watched without looking at him the turning of his eyes toward her, and the joy of his heart in her beauty. That night she sat with her maidens, and ever she sent one or another for tidings of the herald, and none brought answer, and at the end one came and told how all the knights had come back from the pursuit. Then her maidens came round about her and praised her beauty above all other times, and she gave a great gift to that one who had brought the news of the safety of the Greek, howbeit the maiden knew not that it was the meed of her tidings, and thought it was the pay of her flattering words.



CHAPTER XI. TELLS OF THE BATTLE BETWEEN ALEXANDER AND DARIUS, AND OF THE SLAYING OF DARIUS.

BUT ALEXANDER HAD RIDDEN out into the night, and knew not at first in what direction he was riding, but soon, when the lights borne by the mounted men began to scatter over the fields, he reined in his bonny steed and looked up to the sky, and there low down he saw the seven stars rising from the plain, and he turned his horse's head and rode slowly towards them, and ever he waited for some sign, for he knew that he was coming near the river Granton. But while he was waiting he saw a great flame rise in the air far on his left hand, and its rays lay along a stretch of smooth ice, and beside it was a man on horseback, and he knew him for his companion that he had left at the river, and he shouted to him in the

the Greek tongue, and when he heard the answer he spurred his horse and rode on to the ice. But it was well for him that the fire was before him, for far on the right the river ice began to crack and grind, since it was not yet firm, and suddenly his horse slipped and both sank into the river; and the man struggled out by the help of the thin ice which broke off piece by piece before him till he touched bottom, but the good steed was belike struck by the ice, for it sank and was drowned. Now when he came to the shore he was amazed, for there was neither fire nor light, so he called to the Greek knight, and when he came up he questioned him, and he found him sore afraid, "for," said he, "a great dragon has circled me about for hours, so that I feared to raise my head." Then Alexander straitly charged him that he should not speak of this thing, and they returned to the camp, and all men rejoiced to see him.

On the next day King Alexander called to him his dukes and his captains, and they brought up their men in fifties and in hundreds and in thousands, till they were assembled on the plain; and Alexander rose on high and told them how that he had seen the might of the Persians, and he encouraged them and told them that never should the crowds of the Persians equal the Greeks, for, said he, "It takes many flies to make war on wasps, be they but few;" and all the army laughed and rejoiced in his bravery and

and knowledge. Now by this time Darius had assembled his host and led them forth on the plain to the shores of Granton, and there he set up the tents, and prepared him a royal seat and passed his army before him in review. First the war-chariots drove by, drawn by swift coursers, and on either side the chariots were set with scythe blades, keen and sharp as knives, then the knights passed him in full armour, and every man followed by his squire and his footmen, and then passed a host of archers and crossbowmen : and as each host passed, they went on into the field and set themselves in array, and the knights mounted their huge war-horses. And on their side the Greeks were drawn up in array, and Alexander was at their head, mounted on his steed Bucephalus, the best horse under heaven. Now Alexander spurred out into the open space and rode before the army of the Persians, and dared any of their champions to come out and fight with him, but not one of them durst meet him, for their hearts were stricken with fear.

So with the sound of trumpets both sides advanced to the attack, and in few minutes they were at the sword's point. The tale tells that for two miles there was a fight all along the line between the Persian and the Greek knights. From sunrise to sunset the slaughter lasted and both sides fought bravely, the air was thick with arrows, a hail-storm of winged darts ; and now the Persians began to

give way, their noblest captains were dead, and nowhere had they driven back the Greeks. King Darius had set himself on his golden car at the early dawn, and all day he had watched the fiercest of the fight, and messengers had told him of what befell, but in the end he lost hope, and took to flight; and suddenly darkness came upon the land, so that men feared to move, for the great war-chariots were thundering over the plain, and whoso got in their way was cut to pieces by the blades on their wheels, and the hosts of Persians were mowed down like corn before them. So Darius reached the Granton which his men had crossed so proudly the day before, and he rejoiced that he found it frozen over, and he rode over the stream in the dead of night, and many of his great nobles were with him. Then after him came the flying host of the Persians, and on they came, till the broad stream was covered with men and horses. But their weight was too much for the ice, and it bent down and broke away from the banks, and then of a sudden it broke into thousands of pieces, and the night was filled with the screams of horses and men and their shouts and cries, and the dark water was filled with struggling crowds striving to pull themselves up on to little pieces of ice that would not bear their weight; until one by one their struggles ceased, and the rush of the river bore them away, so that of that mighty host scarce a tenth reached the shore in safety.

Now over against the plain was a certain castle, not very strong, and Darius had brought thither his daughter Roxana, that she might see the battle, for she had much besought him to let her see the field, though she told him not that her chief desire was to see the glory of the Lord of Macedon. But when the battle was over, and the Persians were fleeing, the lord of the castle shut the gates, and set a ward, opening to no man small or great. So on the morrow the host of the Greek's came near and summoned this lord to yield up the castle to Alexander, but he withstood them and laughed at them. Then Alexander came near, and swore by the gods that if he yielded not up the castle in an hour he would hang every man in it on its battlements, but if they yielded to his power he would save them alive. Then the lord came forth and sought speech of Alexander, and prayed him concerning the safety of Roxana, and the King laughed out and said: "Where should she be safer than with her mother and her grandam, who are with me in my camp?" So the lord of the castle opened his gates and they brought forth Roxana in her litter to Alexander, and he opened not the litter, but bowed before it, and bade them bear it to her mother in the camp; and great was the joy of the queens when they met, for Alexander bore him to them as a son and not as a conqueror.

Then was Darius in sore grief; for his empire
98 was

was broken, his mother and his wife and his only daughter were in the hands of his enemy, and nought of hope was there save the help that Porus had promised him : so he sent messengers to Alexander offering him all his wealth if he would return his family into his hands, and go to his own land. But when the messengers had come to Alexander and had done their errand to him, Alexander received them roughly, and though all the Macedonians rejoiced, he said, " Why does your master speak thus to me ; if I have conquered him, let him own me as lord ; if not, let him come out and meet me in the field. As for his gold, it is mine when I wish to take it, without his offer." And the messengers returned to Darius loaded with gifts and honour, while Alexander's men were gathering together the bodies of them that were slain and tending the hurts of the wounded. And after the army was rested, Alexander gave them leave and they scattered over the plain up and down, and they found the old-time palace of the kings of Persia and the tombs of the lords of the land, and one of these was made of a noble amethyst, graven over with palm trees and with birds, and so clear was it, that men might see within it the body ; and the name written on it was Ninus. Others among them came on a great tower, and they forced it open and found in it men of all nations, Greeks and barbarians, who had been put there by Darius, and some had

lost a hand, and some an eye, and some a foot. So when they were brought before Alexander, they cried to him, and he set them free and gave to each of them a talent, and they went their ways whither they would, blessing the Greeks.

Now when the messengers returned to Darius and told him the words of Alexander, and how that he needs must give up his empire if he could not conquer him, the Persian set him to try one last chance to recover his power, and he sent letters to Porus, king of India, offering him great wealth and honour if he would come and fight with Alexander, and saying that he would pay the wage of the armies himself, and that all the spoil of the Greeks should be theirs. And the messengers went their way to India, but one of the chief men of Darius' council came by night secretly to Alexander, and told him all that was in the mind of Darius. So Alexander was wroth, and he swore that he would never take the name of Emperor till Darius was slain, and he began to prepare his soldiers for an attack upon Susa, but ere he had given his orders tidings came that Darius was slain.

And this was the manner of his death. When it was told in Susa that the Greeks were preparing to assault the town, all men feared, even the knights of Darius, and the king withdrew himself into an inner room of his palace. There came to him two of his knights whom he loved, and whom he had
100 raised

raised up from the lowest of the people, and had made great and rich, so that they were equal with great peers. These foul traitors had said within themselves, "Surely Alexander has sworn the death of Darius, and he will give us great praise and honour if we slay him," so that when they came into the room to the king, they drew their swords and looked on one another, and smote at Darius. But their hands failed them for fear, so that they slew not the king at first, and he cried out, "O sons, why slay ye me; is not my sorrow great enough, that ye of all men should turn against me? Yea, and the lord of the Greeks will reward ye and avenge my death at your hands." But his words moved them not, and they thrust their swords through him, so that the royal robes were covered with blood, and he fell down, as if dead; while the knights went out, and none knew that they had been with the king.

Long did he lie there alone, for his servants feared to come in before him, but at last his nurse, an old dame of eighty winters, made as if she had a petition to offer, and opened the door of the room, and saw him stricken to death. So she cried aloud, and the servants ran in, and bore him to a bed in the palace.



CHAPTER XII. HOW ALEXANDER MARRIED ROXANA, THE DAUGHTER OF THE EMPEROR, AND HOW HE DEFEATED PORUS THE KING OF INDIA.



WHEN CAME MESSENGERS to Alexander bringing word that Darius lay in his palace nigh death, and that there was no man among the Persians who might give orders or make head against him. So the king bade arm his knights, and he rode into the city of Susa, and when the men of the city saw them coming the chief of them went out to the gate of the city and received him royally with reverence and joy, saying, "Welcome be thou, O warrior, famed o'er all the world," while the hearts of those who had rebelled against Darius failed them, and they fled from him and hid their heads till they should know Alexander the King's thought of the death of the lord of the Persians.

Then Alexander rode through the town to the palace of Darius, and when he entered it he wondered at its beauty, that any mortal man should make one so fair. The floor was wrought of clear stones and crystal in divers colours, the walls were covered with golden plates, on which were set gems and stars of blue, whose sight dazzled the eyes, and high over all rose a beautiful dome covered with enamel and ornaments of trees and flowers. Now when Alexander had seen these things he went through the hall and into the chamber of Darius, and there he saw him laid on his bed at point of death ; for he was so sore smitten that no man could bind up his wounds, and at every breath the blood gushed out. And the king of the Greeks was moved by pure pity, and he leaned over the dying man and kissed him, and said, "Comfort thee, my lord, and rise and be emperor still in all thy former honour and dignity, for as for these defeats they are the fortune of war, which exalts one man and puts down another ; but I, O King, will defend thee and avenge thee on thine enemies ;" and he burst into sobs of grief. And Darius raised him on his bed, and kissed his hand and his neck, and said, "O son, this is but the common fate of man, nor must I grieve overmuch. I was rich and grew proud, now am I poor. Bury me, my son, among my fathers, the lords of Persia, and rule thou the land. My mother and my wife are with you ; guard them as

you have done and help them. My daughter Roxana I leave to you for wife ; it suits well that a noble king should have the fairest wife on earth. Take heed of what I have said ; be tender of my knights," and Darius the king fell back and died.

So it was that in few days after the chief men of Persia and of Medea came to Alexander and led him to the throne of Darius, and crowned him with the golden crown, hailing him Emperor of the World ; and they brought to him the fair damsel Roxana, the daughter of Darius, covered with a thick veil, and set her on the throne beside him. Now Alexander had not seen the damsel, except once at the supper of Darius her father, though she had been in his camp for many days, but she knew him, for she had preserved his portrait since the time that Darius had thrown it aside, and her heart was glad that she was to be his queen. And as the rulers of Persia brought Alexander to the throne they showed him that it had seven steps—the first an amethyst, which showed the king should be of sober mind ; the second an emerald, to show that a king should see clearly ; the third a topaz, to remind him how things are not what they seem always ; the fourth step a garnet, to remind him of fame and honour ; the fifth an adamant, to show a king should be steadfast ; the sixth of pure gold, to show a king should be chief ; the seventh of earth, to remind the king that he must die. And at each

104 step

step the wise men explained its meaning to him, and on the seventh they crowned him, and fell down before him, and Roxana with them, and he lifted her up and raised her veil before them, and when he saw her he loved her, and with his own hands he put a crown on her head.

After Alexander was crowned he sent messengers into all parts of the land to spread the news, and to give orders for the safety of the land, and he made a proclamation offering their due reward to the slayers of Darius. When they heard this the two knights came forward in hope, and looked to get great riches, but he ordered them to be hanged near the grave of Darius, and all the Persian nobles rejoiced, for they loved Darius, and had grieved sore at his murder. Then Alexander appointed one of the uncles of Darius to be lord and governor of Persia, and he married Roxana, and made a great feast through the land, which lasted for eight days, and all the land of Persia rejoiced and was glad.

In few days, however, the warlike spirit of Alexander came upon him again, and he resolved to set out and conquer the king of India, Porus, who had threatened him with war if he attacked Darius. So he gathered together a great host of Medes and Persians, and added them to his own Greeks, and with them he marched out of Persia towards the borders of India, through the great desert which lay

between them, leaving Roxana his queen behind with her mother and uncle. And after they had spent many days in the passage, and were wearied of the wild waste where no water was, and the high hills and the hollows and the broad plains, the Greeks began to murmur among themselves, and to ask, "Why should we do more, since we have conquered the Persians, and seized the empire which formerly took tribute of our fathers? This land of India is inhabited but by beasts, and as for Alexander, he lives but for fighting, and if he lived in peace he would die as if he were starved. Let us leave him to fight with these barbarians, and go home in peace." When Alexander heard them, he gathered together his knights and peers, and reproached them. He told them how he had saved them in their troubles, how he had exposed himself to danger on their behalf, and how he had always been first in battle among them. Then he said that if they feared and deserted him, he would keep on alone till he had fulfilled his fate, nor would he return to Greece until he had conquered all lands under heaven. And when he had finished his speech the hearts of his princes turned to him, and they sought his grace, and promised to follow him everywhere to the death, without question or murmur.

In these days a messenger arrived from Porus bearing a message of threats and sneers to Alexander,

ander, and when the message was given to him in the presence of his men, some of the Greeks feared, for this was a new land to them, and they knew not what wonders Porus might bring against them. But Alexander cared never a whit for any of his words, and the message he sent back was bolder than that he received, so that Porus became very angry when he heard it, and he assembled his army in haste and sent them out forthwith against Alexander, without waiting for a part of it not yet come to him. And though he had not all his army, yet he had more soldiers than Alexander, and he had with him chariots armed with scythes, ten thousand at least, and he had unicorns in his host, and more than all he had four hundred elephants, each with a castle on its back and thirty men in armour. Now the Greeks had never fought against elephants, nor had they even seen them, so that they were sore afraid, for their swords could not pierce the skin of the elephants, and the great beasts trampled them down, and the men on their backs threw darts at them and shot arrows, and there was no means of turning them back. Thus the Greeks and the Persians were driven back that day by the Indians through their elephants. But when night came on Alexander ordered all his men and they got great suits of armour and hammered them together, and they filled them with coals and lit great fires round about them, so that they became red hot, and all the

night the Greeks made these brazen men and kept them hot, and at first dawn the fires were put out and these red-hot brazen men were brought before the host, and when the elephants attacked them as before and threw their trunks round them to cast them on the ground and trample them, the hot metal burnt their trunks and their feet, and they turned and fled, and trampled down their own men, hooting horribly. Then Alexander ordered the Persians to attack the Indian army while it was in confusion, but Porus rallied them and there was a great battle ; but at the last Alexander with his men came to the aid of the Persians, and the Indians were defeated and Porus took to flight, and fled away in haste, and Alexander and his host were left masters of the field.

Next day he marched to a city near that place, the chief of all that Porus was lord of, and no man hindered, so that Alexander entered it and found there the palace of Porus, and his house was noble and fair. It had four hundred pillars of gold, and between each was a grape vine with carved leaves and grapes of all precious stones, some of clear crystals, some of pearls, some of emeralds, and of other gems. And all the walls were covered with thick plates of gold, the thinnest of them was an inch thick, and they were set with stones like the stars of heaven, and the doors of the rooms were of ivory carved and adorned, and the bars and bolts

108 were

were of ebony ; the upper rooms were all of cypress or of cedar, and in all the rooms there were golden statues and images seated on thrones of gold, and over them hangings of rich embroidery ; and in the palace hall there was a fair tree, and on the branches of it were all manner of birds, each painted and made like to its nature, but with their bills and claws of fine gold, and whenever the king wished they made as sweet a melody as if it were the month of May. But time fails us to tell of all the beauties of this palace. And when Alexander entered the palace he wondered greatly and went through it till he came to a room which was shut, and on it was a label, "For Alexander alone." Then he stayed, and he would not enter the room, for he feared some wile of the Indian King, and he got together his wise men, and with them he opened the door. But when he did so, he heard a burst of merry laughter, and he looked, and lo, before him was a fair young girl, and she said to him, "It is bravely done of thee, O Alexander, to open this door with such aid ; am I then so fearful ?" And Alexander was abashed for a moment, but he said, "O damsel, the presents of Indian kings are not always so charming as thou art," and he sat down beside her and talked with her. But while she was speaking, one of the wise men of Greece had watched her, and he liked not the manner of her eyes, and he came near to the king and spoke to him, "O King, beware

109 of

of this damsel, for methinketh that she is not of human kind like to other women." Then the damsel said, "Away with this dotard, O King, kiss my lips and see if I be not a woman." And the wise man said, "O Alexander, verily this is one of the poison-maidens of India, for in this land they feed girls from their birth on deadly poison, so that poison is their food, and food their poison, and whoever kisses them dies immediately." Then one of the lords of the Persians came forward and said, "O fool, how tellest thou such a tale to my lord Alexander," and turning to Alexander, he said, "May thy slave show this dotard is wrong?" And the king doubted, but he trusted his wise man, so the Persian lord leaned forward and kissed the girl on the lips, and fell down dead. Then she laughed merrily, and said, "O Alexander, if thou hadst not been guided by the counsel of thy wise men, such would have been thy fate." But all the Greeks fled out of the room. Then the maiden blew a whistle and two great serpents came from their holes in the corner of the room, and circled round her.

Now the next morn, when men went to fetch the damsel before King Alexander, they found the room empty, but for one great snake that lay on the divan, and they came and told the King, and he knew that the damsel had been left there to cause his death, and he was on his guard.



CHAPTER XIII. HOW ALEXANDER AND HIS MEN PASSED THE NIGHT OF FEAR, AND HOW HE SAW THE GREATEST AND THE LEAST THING ON EARTH.



WITHIN A MONTH CAME tidings that Porus had gathered together another army, and would wage war with Alexander, for the hosts that had been on the march to him were there, and those of the Indians who had fled from the first battle, and all were anxious to overcome the Greeks. Alexander set out with his men, though it was in August, in the hottest of the year, for it was his habit to attack the enemy and never let them attack him. But his men suffered greatly from the heat, and some died of it alone, since their way led them into a desert place where they had to wear all their armour, for the land was full of snakes and adders shining in gold and bright colours, and if

a man put off his armour and one of these bit him, his death was certain.

And when they passed the place of the snakes they came into a dry land where were no rivers or wells of water, and the army suffered greatly, for the water in their vessels dried up, and no man had to drink. For two days they toiled on, searching for water and finding none, and in the evening a certain knight, Severus by name, came on a little water in a hollow beneath some stones, and put it in his helmet and brought it with joy to Alexander and offered it to him. Then Alexander thanked him greatly, and before all his knights he took it up in his hands, as if he were going to drink it, and then he put it down and said, "If I drink this, will it sustain all the army, or shall I only be refreshed, and they thirsty still?" And the knight said, "Lord, our will is that you be first refreshed." "What, and all ye perish?" said the Prince, and he held out the helmet before his lords, and poured out the water on the dry ground. "I will thirst first and feast last of all my men." And the hearts of all his army were rejoiced, as if they had drunk abundantly.

And that night the wind began to blow, and the camels smelt water on the breeze, and they lifted themselves up and went towards it, and none could stop them, all the hosts followed them, and they led them after four hours' journey to a little stream full

full of reeds. The soldiers of the host drank therein, but when it came to watering the beasts they found that there were too many of them, for all the goods of the camp were loaded on elephants, and on camels, and on mules. Then they searched about, but they found no other water near, so they made up their minds to follow this brook till they came to its end in some great river or lake, and in a day's time they came to a great castle in a lake all full of reeds. So the beasts and the men drank, and when they had rested they began to enquire whose was this castle, and what was inside it. Now they rode round the lake, but nowhere did they see any road by which the castle could be entered, nor any gate to it, but there seemed to be men on the walls who were looking at them and their array. At the last, however, they saw two rows of great trees running across the lake towards the castle, and some of the knights spurred their horses into the water between them, and found a passage where the water came up to their horses' necks. Then they sounded the trumpets from the shore, but there was no answer from the castle, nor any banner displayed. So the knights rode into the water along the causeway, and on and on till they came near the castle, and saw a great gate closed, and over it a notice carved in great letters filled with bright gold.

And when they had read it they tried to pass on to the castle, but they found that the road sank, so

that their horses had to swim, and great beasts like sea lions rose through the water, and threw them off their steeds, so that they turned their horses' heads and came to land again, and shewed all these things to Alexander.

Now these were the words on the stone :

“NO MAN MAY ENTER TO THE GREATEST AND LEAST TREASURE OF THE WORLD, TILL HE HAS PASSED THE NIGHT OF FEAR.”

And as the day began to fall, the whole camp heard a roar as of many wild beasts, and they looked and saw an army of tigers and dragons coming against them, and Alexander and his men drew their swords, but the beasts of the army were so terrified by the roaring of the wild beasts that they fled away and no man could stop them, and needs must the knights and soldiers follow them. But not far from there was a small lake of sweet water, and the horses and mules, the camels and the elephants, crowded into this pool, and gathered together in a ring in the middle of it, and stood there trembling and shivering. Then Alexander ordered his men to pitch their tents round this pool and to remain on guard, and they began to cut down wood for fires, and to prepare to lie there at their ease for some days. When night fell the moon rose over the mountains, and men ceased work and rested to enjoy the sweet coolness of the evening air, and the quiet rest of all things in the moonlight.

On a sudden, the plain seemed covered with crawling monsters making for the pool round which the Greeks were encamped ; giant crayfish, of many colours, scorpions, and scaled adders. At first their coming was silent, and they could only be seen in the bright moonlight coming nearer and nearer, and then the hiss of the adders and the clash of the shells was heard, and then the sound grew louder till it seemed that all the hills resounded with it, and men heard the keen cry of great dragons coming down among them. Under the moon the knights could see the dragons' crested heads and their golden breasts, and their eyes flashing out flames of fire, as they came on and on, nearer and nearer the line, and they said one to another, "Verily, this is a night of fear, beyond all other."

And Alexander looked to the safety of all men, for he went round the camp, and saw that all men were in their place, and he called to him his knights and strengthened their hearts, and bade them take example by him and do as he did. Then he armed himself and took a shield and a sword, and with his knights went out before the line and began to slay the loathsome beasts that had come against them, while his archers and bowmen were shooting them down. But ever as they slew and slew, the reptiles swarmed up, and now and then the shrill cry of a man in agony would show that one of his knights or archers was overborne by the flood of writhing
beasts,

beasts, and carried away or slain. For hours the fight lasted, but when the moon was high in the heaven the flood of reptiles seemed to cease, and in a few minutes there were no more living round the camp, and Alexander gathered his knights and found that twenty knights and thirty archers had been slain in this attack.

After the fight was over, men began to light fires around the camp, and there was soon a ring of flames round the host, but before an hour had passed and men called the fourth hour of the night, the watchmen raised a cry, and all the army saw a host of great crabs drawing near the camp. So the knights in armour of plate came out against them with their lances, for no swords could smite through their shells. And again the fighting was fierce, for the lances were shivered against the crabs, and when men hewed off their claws they clung still to the armour and bit through it, till at the last the knights snatched up brands from the fires and thrust them into the open jaws of the crabs, and they turned and fled, and left the camp at peace.

And when the watchmen called the fifth hour of the night, there came up from the desert a band of fierce great lions, white and large as bulls. These the knights went out to meet, and a fierce battle took place, but the Greeks feared them not, and soon these also were put to flight. And there followed them a rush of wild boars, with great teeth and
116 stout

stout bristles, and these too were slain or driven away.

Now the sixth hour of the night drew nigh, and the moon was low down in the heavens, and the burden beasts of the army began to come to shore and lie down, and the men of the host were a-weary, when the watchmen cried out with a loud voice and there came up a host of wild men of the woods, having six hands, and these came up, and they feared not to rush on the knights, for they knew not the use of iron, but with bowshots and handblows they were driven off, and they escaped to the hills and the woods.

And in the seventh hour there came up a great fierce beast against them, with a black head, and on it were three huge horns, and he was larger than an elephant, and so sore was his attack on the host that he slew eight and twenty men, but Alexander ran up to him, and with his sword he slew him, and men rejoiced, for their hearts began to fail them for the long watch of the Night of Fear.

Now the day began to break, and the earth was lightened, though as yet there was no dawn, and the watchmen called the eighth hour, and there came up mice as large as foxes, and they came near and fed on the bodies of those things that were slain, and when men or beasts came near them, they bit them, and whatever was bitten fell down dead, and the archers shot at them and drove them away. Then
117 came

came a crowd of foul bats as large as doves, and they flew about and flapped their wings in the face of the soldiers and bit them where they could on cheeks, or nose, or chin, or ears, and none could deliver themselves from them, but suddenly the dawn came, and the sun leaped up over the hills, and the black bats fled away, and men saw birds of a red colour come flying in among them, yet without harming them, as if to wish them joy of the day; and the Night of Fear was over.

Then the trumpeters of the Greeks sounded out their morning blast, and when it was over men heard another blast of the trumpets from the castle that they had seen the day before, and a great draw-bridge was let down, and a boat was brought to it and set on the lake, and into it entered an old man dressed in long flowing robes, bearing a precious casket in his hands, and with him were heralds and trumpeters. And when they came to the shore they were met by the guards whom Alexander had sent to meet them, and they came on to the camp, and at the gate of the camp the aged man halted, and Alexander came out to him. Then they greeted each other, and the elder told Alexander who he was, and that the castle was set there to guard a precious thing, the greatest and the lightest thing in the world, and to show those who came there what they should do in times to come. Then Alexander was glad of heart, and he besought him to

show him some of his wisdom. So the elder took a gold crown out of the casket he bore, and put it on Alexander's head, and bade him come with him to the castle, for that there he should see all these things.

In going to the castle, Alexander went by boat with the elder, and his chief knights rode after him on horseback along the path through the water, and when they came to the deep place the drawbridge was let down to them and they mounted it and rode through the gateway into the courtyard of the castle, and Alexander and the elder were with them. So they were led into the great hall of the castle, and when they entered it they saw, at the place where the seat of the lord should be, a niche cut in the wall, and on the arch over it were written the words, "THE GREATEST TREASURE," and below it were the words, "AND THE LEAST." Now when they went up to it, they saw a rich cushion, and on it was lying an egg-shaped stone, and as they looked on it they saw a circle of brown on it and inside a clear black ring; and the stone was clear as crystal, and when one looked into it one saw men, and houses, and riches, and wealth, and all that man could desire or think of. So they brought out this treasure and laid it in the hand of Alexander, and lo! it became so heavy that he could not hold it, and they laid it on a beam of a balance, and in the other pan they placed gold and silver, a great quantity, and it weighed

weighed more than all. Then they cast on the beam all the treasures they had, and the stone outweighed them all. Then Alexander sent for the gold that he had with him, but the stone was heavier than all the treasure of the Persians and the Greeks. And Alexander said. "Truly, this is the greatest of treasures."

Then the elder bade them take away all those treasures to their owners, and he took up a pinch of dust from the ground and laid it on the stone, and lo! from being so great, there was no mean thing that did not outweigh it; a blade of straw, a scrap of wood was heavier than this, and all its beauty and goodness were gone from it, so that no man would desire it or look upon it. Then Alexander asked of him what was this wonder, and why it did thus, and the elder told him the meaning of all this, and the name of the stone, and he said that the castle was put there to guard the way to the Wells of Life, and he told Alexander things that should come to pass. Then Alexander asked him how long he should live, and how should he die, and the elder told him not, but he said that he should learn from the trees of the sun and of the moon when he came to the shores of the great sea. And he told him that first must he go north into the desert and meet and conquer King Porus, and that then he should pass into the east through the Valley of Terror till he saw the Three Wells of Life, and that

then he should find the Temple of the Sun and the trees which should tell him of what was to befall him. And Alexander gave him great gifts and left him and returned to his camp.

Thus Alexander turned northward, and in few days he was in the land of Bactria, and all the men of the land came to him with presents and gifts, and he received them, and abode there thirty days, that his men might recover their strength. And there came to him messengers and told him that Porus was encamped with his host a four days' journey off; and Alexander disguised himself as one of those that supplied the camp with wine and flesh, and driving some cattle before him he came into the camp of Porus, that he might see how many men he had and what was their mind towards him. The guards of the camp laid hold on Alexander, for that he was a stranger, and brought him before Porus, and the king asked him who he was and whence he came. Then Alexander answered that he was a poor man of that land, and the Macedonians had taken away his cattle and his goods, but he had escaped with some which he was trying to sell. And Porus asked him had he seen Alexander, and what was he doing, and Alexander answered that he was sitting in his tent warming himself at a fire. Then Porus laughed out, and he was glad to hear that his enemy was so feeble that he had to sit in his tent, and he asked how old he

was. And Alexander answered that he was a poor herdsman and knew not the king's matters; so Porus gave him a letter to Alexander and a great reward, and promised him more if he should bring an answer again, and Alexander returned to his camp.

Now the letter of Porus was a challenge to Alexander, offering to meet him in single combat, for he said that no king or emperor should be such a coward as to send men to battle unless he joined in it himself, and that it would be better if only the kings on each side fought, for it would spare the blood of the people; and he offered to let the whole matter rest on this combat, so that if Alexander won he should be king of India, and if he won then all the lands should obey him. Now Porus was a tall man, a head and shoulders taller than any man of his army, while Alexander was short even among little men, and Porus counted on an easy victory.

When the armies drew near in line of battle, Alexander sent out a herald to Porus accepting his offer, and in short time all was ready for the fight, and the two kings, armed in full armour, were opposite one another. When the fight began, Porus advanced, proud of his strength and size, and ignorant of the great strength of Alexander, and both spurred at each other full tilt, and their lances broke to shivers, but neither was unhorsed. So

they turned their horses and drew their swords, and Porus struck Alexander with his sword, and cut into the helmet, but the blow of Alexander was so fierce that it struck Porus out of his saddle and threw him to the ground senseless. Then all the knights of India cast up a keen cry, but Alexander dismounted, and caused the heralds to take off the helmet of Porus and to give him aid ; and when Porus came to life again he owned him vanquished, and Alexander gave him back his kingdom, and from an enemy he became a friend and a subject to the lord of the Greeks.

On a night after Alexander lay in his tent musing alone, and he fell to thinking of his short life, and of the way he had come, and of the wonders of the land, and of the deeds he should do, when it seemed that there was with him in the tent his fosterer, the whilom King of Egypt, and he said to him, " O my son Alexander, many deeds shalt thou do, and many wonders shalt thou see, yet trust thou not to thy sight. Remember the stone in the Castle of the Lake, which was but the eye of man, for while he lives it may not be satisfied. Trust men who seem thy friends, but trust them not overmuch : fear the gods and them alone, for I am with thee to help thee." Then the god departed, and Alexander lay alone asleep.



CHAPTER XIV. HOW ALEXANDER AND HIS ARMY PASSED THROUGH THE VALLEY OF TERROR AND SOUGHT THE WELLS OF LIFE.



ANY HUNDRED YEARS before, one of the great heroes of the Greeks, Hercules by name, had come into India, and had conquered the people of the land, and had set up great pillars of marble wherever he had come. So Alexander, now that he had beaten Porus in battle, made up his mind to follow in the footsteps of Hercules and to see the wonders of India; and King Porus promised to go with him and to guide him. But before this he sought to find the Wells of Life of which the Elder had spoken to him in the castle in the lake. But Porus knew not of the way, nor any of the men in his army. So he turned again towards the South as the Elder had bidden him, and fared on his way.

Now as the host was on its march, it fell that the Greeks came among a poor folk which lived in holes and caves of the earth, and so poor were they that no man or woman of them had clothing or ornament, but they all went naked, save that their king wore a ring of gold on his head. As Alexander and his host drew near, this folk sent messengers to him asking what he wanted among them, and telling him of their poverty, so that he could win nothing from them. Then the king made strait inquiry into their lives, and he found that they were indeed so poor that they lived in caves and holes of the hillside, and he was moved by compassion, and made up his mind that they should be the better of his coming to them, so he offered to give them what thing they should ask of him, however great it should be. Then the king of that folk of naked wise men drew near, and said: "O Alexander, this is our request; that thou grant us never to die, for nothing else do we need." Then said the king to them: "O people, needs must that I die one day myself; how, then, may I grant ye this thing?" And the naked wise men said: "Since thou must die, O King, why dost thou hurry from one side of the world to the other to slay a peaceful folk?" For a short while Alexander was silent; then he spoke: "Know, O feeble folk, that as the sea is stirred not by itself but by the breath of heaven, so I am driven to do the will of the gods." Then the

naked wise men left him and returned to their own place, for they would take no gifts from Alexander lest they should become rich.

Two days after the parting with these men the host of Alexander came on a desert place in which men saw a great temple, but no man was therein. Then entered the priests and wise men, and they saw nought save two great images, one of gold and the other of silver. And as they considered the images they saw thereon writing in the old language of the Greeks, and when they had read it they understood that these were the images of Hercules which he had set up when he came into India. When Alexander saw them he wondered at their size, and could not believe that they were of solid gold, so he ordered his men to pierce them through, and they found no hollow within, but all was of pure metal. Now by the finding of these images Alexander knew that he was in the right way, because here it was that Hercules had turned back when he came into the land; but Alexander and his host went on, for he desired to see all the marvels of the land of India. So it was that, on the third day from their parting from the temple, they heard the sound of a river, and going near it, they found that it was very broad and deep; and when the men came up they found that in no wise could men swim in it to cross it. On the further side they saw women carrying great maces and battle-

126 axes

axes of gold and silver, but there was no man among them, or any weapon of iron or bronze, only of gold or silver. Then Alexander and his men sought to cross the river in boats, but great black beasts rose out of the river and bit the boats in half, so that scarcely did they escape to land with their lives, and they gave up the thought of seeing the land guarded by women, and marched on by the side of the river.

As they were in camp next evening, they heard suddenly the sound of trumpeting, and the watchmen told of a host of elephants coming toward them. Then Alexander asked Porus and his men, but none knew of any king of this land who could gather such a host, so men on horseback rode out to see them, and when they came near they saw no man with the elephants, and they returned and told the king. All men were in fear, and the Indians most of all, for they knew the madness of elephants, but Alexander bade a few of his men mount their steeds, and to drag with them each man some swine before the elephants, for he knew how that the elephant loathes the swine and cannot remain in his presence. And it fell as Alexander had said, for when the elephants heard the squealing and grunting of the swine their wrath fell, and they turned, with lowered trunks and flapping ears, and hurried away from the loathsome sound. Then the Indians praised the wisdom of Alexander, for that,

127 though

though he was mighty in fight, he would not risk the lives of his men when he could use craft to save them.

Now no man in the army had ever been in this land before, and their hearts began to fail them when they thought that Hercules had turned back from the journey, and they grew afraid, and Alexander began to think that the gods were angered at his boldness, and had sent the herd of elephants to drive him away; and so next day he moved the camp to the west instead of keeping on his march to the south, and pitched it on a great plain where there was no shelter of hills or trees, save that to the south many miles off there was a range of hills. When even was near, suddenly the clear sky became covered with thick clouds, the sun became red and then seemed to go out, and from the thick gloom a storm broke on the camp. The winds blew, as it seemed, from all sides, north and south, east and west; they tore down the tents and scattered them, so that no shelter was left; and then the thunder rolled, the lightning flashed, and the hail and rain ran along the ground. Never had the Greeks and Indians seen such a storm, and they said among themselves, "We are rightly served for leaving the road we were told to follow, till we had seen the things we were bidden to see." So at morning light Alexander turned his face towards the south, and the army marched towards the hills. Now

though these hills seemed small and near, yet they were really great and far off, so that it was five days before they came to a valley near them by which they could enter into the hills ; and as they came near it they found but a narrow passage into it, and well-trodden. When they were in it they found that the valley was broad, and shut in between high hills on all sides, that no man could climb them, and there was no water in that valley, and no living or green thing. Here then they pitched their tents.

Next morning when they awoke they found the air thick with snow, and the cold was piercing, so Alexander ordered great fires to be lit on all sides, while the varlets were bidden to tread down the snow and stamp it flat with their feet. Then, as it grew near midday, the air grew darker and a cloud filled the valley, and they heard a great noise as if the earth was being torn apart, and sparks of fire fell through the cloud, so that the tents were burnt where they fell, and if they fell on men they burnt into the flesh and left a scar. Then all the host were in terror, and Alexander bade them offer incense and sacrifices to the gods, and they did so, and a wind sprung up and drove away the clouds, and left the air clear and cold. When men had rested for a short time and given thanks to the gods for their safety, they began to move to the other end of the valley to pass out, and they came to an altar

in the midst, with the bones of dead men lying round it, but they had not been slain there, for there was no mark of wound or gyves. On sight of this the leaders of the host halted around it, but none of them could read the marks on it or know to what god it was raised. Now while they were gathered round it men came running in haste from the front, and they bore news that there was no way by which men could leave the valley, and that they must needs turn back by the way they came in. Then Alexander gave orders to return, but when the army did so, lo, there was no way out in that direction or in any other, for no man could tell the way by which they had come into that vale. In short time all men were seeking for a road, but none could be found, though great rewards were offered by the king to him who should come upon the path. Then were the host in great fear, for they said that the gods were wroth with them, and had brought them into this land to slay them ; but Alexander had trust in the words of his god and feared not.

The wise men of the army and the priests of the gods were all this time gathered round the altar in the midst of the valley, trying to make out the meaning of the marks upon it, and now an old Egyptian diviner came and stood before Alexander and said to him, " O King, I have read the writing on the altar, and I can tell thee the way out ; " and

the king said, "Say on." Then said he, "O Alexander, this valley is the Valley of Terror, of which ancient stories tell, and whatsoever men come into it, they cannot leave it except one man of them stays behind a willing victim, to save the rest, wherefore on the altar are these words, 'THE ALTAR OF WILLING VICTIMS.' Now, O King, we cannot leave this valley till one man of the host stands at the altar and offers himself to stay here for the safety of the army, with a willing mind." And when the other wise men heard this, they bade the king to make speed before the whole army should die of fear, or of hunger. So Alexander called the host together by the sound of the trumpet, and when they were all in one place, he rose up and told them how that the whole army was doomed to die, except that one man would offer himself willingly to die for the host. Then all men burst into grief, for many men there were who would not fear death for the army, but there was none who would willingly die. So for the space of half an hour no one came forward. Then Alexander the Emperor arose and said, "O Greeks, Persians, and Indians, seeing that I have led ye into this land it is fitting that I lead you out, and since this may not be, I myself will stay here so that ye may safely depart." Then the leaders came round him with tears and sobs, but he would not listen to them, but bade them prepare for their journey. The trumpets sounded again, and all men

kept silence, for they saw Alexander with his left hand on the Altar of Willing Victims, and his right hand raised on high, and they heard him devote himself to the God of the Valley—a willing victim for the release of the army.

Soon as the words were said, a crash was heard at the head of the valley, and when men looked they saw that a huge cliff had fallen, and had opened a broad way out into the open plain beyond, and men hurried to load their beasts and the knights rode on, and at the last Porus rode on with them, for Alexander had bidden him fear nothing, for the gods had promised him that he should not die save between a soil of iron and a sky of gold, so that needs must he escape from this Valley of Terror, and Alexander had told the leaders of the host to abide forty days for him on the plain outside if need be. Now when all the army had passed through, and no man was left in the valley but Alexander, standing at the Altar of Willing Victims, and Bucephalus his horse by him, it was already evening, and the earth seemed to shake, and the way out was closed up. When night fell, and all was dark, then the air seemed full of fright, and from one side or another groans were heard, but none came near. As hours drew on, the horse shivered with fear, and when Alexander patted his flanks they were covered with cold dew, and at last Bucephalus put his head under his master's cloak, and stood still, trembling.



Now when all had left the valley
but Alexander, standing at the
Altar of Willing Victims, and
Bucephalus his horse by him, it
was already evening & the earth
seemed to shake & the way out was closed up



But Alexander stood all that night by the altar with one hand on it, and he saw nothing, and heard but the groans which echoed through the air.

When day dawned all was still in the valley, and as Alexander looked about he saw around him nothing but high rocks coming sheer down from the mountain sides, but when the sun shone into the valley, he took heart and began to ride round the sides to examine them for himself, and this he did three times, but he found no way out. Then he sat down by a great stone, on which was marked a five-pointed star, with many letters written on it, and as he did so the words of Anectanabus came into his mind, how that this star was put for a seal over spirits in prison, and he remembered the mighty words that call on the spirits of the air and the earth, and he said them, and bade the spirit under the seal answer him. Then a voice came from under the stone and answered him, and told who he was, and how he had been shut under that stone for hundreds of years to work the will of the gods; and he asked Alexander to let him go free. So Alexander knew that if he set free this spirit he would destroy the enchantment of the Valley of Terror; and he determined to let the spirit go, but first he questioned him as to the way out, and the road to the Wells of Life, and how he should know them. Then said the spirit, "O Alexander, there be three Wells of Life, nor is it easy to find them. These be

their properties. The first is the Well of Life, and in it if any dead thing is put, it straightway comes to life again. The second is the Well of Youth, and in it all who bathe come again to the age of twenty-five, be they an hundred winters old. The third is the Well of Never-dying Men, and he who bathes in it shall not die of any disease or hurt of iron, yet may he suffer pain of disease and hunger, but he cannot die. Nor can this well be seen of all men, or at any day, for but once in a year can it be seen, and then no more of any man for another year. For the way out, I myself will lead you and your horse, and I will give you the stone Elmas, which shall guide you to the wells, for it shall shine and sparkle while you are in the right way, and when you are in the wrong it shall grow dull and dark. Long and dreary shall the road be, and few may go with thee to that land."

Then Alexander drew his sword and cut away the words marked on the five-pointed star, and when they were rubbed out, he hacked away the corners of the star, and as he did so, the earth shook, and the stone rolled over, and a young man stood by him holding a ruby in his hand, and he said, "O King, take the stone Elmas, and set it in the handle of thy sword, and come thou and thy horse with me, for the valley is open, and men shall call it no longer the Valley of Terror." So the king came with his horse, and he passed out where the army had gone,

134 and

and mounted his horse, and turned to thank his guide, and lo! he was alone. Then he rode into camp, and all men rejoiced to see him.

Now, as Alexander came into the camp of the Greeks from the valley, an old man of the country came up on the other side, and the guards brought him before the King. Then he asked him concerning the land, and who was the lord of it, and the old man said that no man ruled in it, and few lived in it. Then Alexander asked him of the Wells of Life, and the old man answered that he had seen them in his youth and had bathed in the Well of Youth. Then Alexander asked him if he would guide him to them, and the old man said he would, but that he would not bathe in them, for he wished not to live past his time. So he went with Alexander and his host as they travelled far into the land of Ind.

For many days the host travelled, till at last the old man said that they were near the land of the Wells of Life, and then Alexander bade the army to halt, and he chose out a few of his Greeks and with them he set out on his search. It had been told Alexander that in the land there were many wells, and that none could tell one from another, till they came to the right one, so that he had prepared a way to find them out. Now the first well they should come to was the Well of Life, and Alexander bade all his men take in hand a salt fish, and wash it in
135 every

every well they came to, till they should see some strange thing, when they were to tell it to him. It must be said that they of the host knew not what Alexander was seeking, nor what was the reason of this washing of salt fish. So the men went from one well to another, laughing and joking, and washing their salt fish, till one of them, Andreas by name, dipped his fish into a certain well, and suddenly the fish came to life in his hand and slipped out into the well. Then he cried out with a loud voice, and all the men near came running up to him, but he could say or do nothing but point to the fish swimming about in the spring. So they fetched Alexander to the spring, and he gave orders to fill a cask with the water of it, but the old man said that the water was useless except it were drunk when it was drawn from the spring.

Then he came to the Well of Youth, and it was in a dry land where no man dwelt, for there was no river or tree near. And Alexander would fain have the old man bathe in that well, but he would not, for he said that it was good to be young once, and to be foolish once, but to be young twice would be to be always a fool, and old age was best when a man was tired of life. So the young men bathed in the spring and their hearts grew hopeful, and they rejoiced in their youth.

There remained the Well of Never-dying Men to be sought for, but the old man told them that this

was not here, nor was there any way to it from that place, for they must seek it in the dark desert. On this Alexander asked him of that desert, and he said that there the land was dark day and night, the sun shone not there, and there was no track or path for men to travel by. "Yet," said the old man "it will be easy for thee to enter into the land and to find the well, for thy stone Elmas will guide thee to it when thou art in the land." And with these words the old man turned away, and when Alexander looked for him, behold, he was not with them. Then Alexander and his men returned to the army.





CHAPTER XV. HOW THE BRAHMANS
CAME TO KING ALEXANDER AND
WHAT HE LEARNT FROM THEM: AND
OF THE COMING OF THE AMAZONS.



NOW THE TALE TELLS THAT by this time the army was encamped near the great river of India, the river Ganges. The river was very broad so that men could just see across it from one bank to another, and it was full of all manner of living beasts, crocodiles, scorpions, and snakes, so that men dare not swim in it nor drive in their horses. It happened on a day, that three men came to the other side of the river, and stood there, so that the guards came to Alexander and told him of it, and he came to the bank over against them. Then the king bade one of his nobles ask them who they were, whence they came, and what was their wish; and they answered, "We be Brahmans, that never thought or did harm, and we bear a message from

our lord Dindimus to the lord of this army, Sir Alexander of Greece." And when he heard this the king ordered a carpenter to make a boat to pass the river, and as soon as it was ready, he sent a knight over the river with a message inviting them to come: so they crossed the river and stood before him. Now they were very old men.

Then Alexander spoke to these Brahmans of one thing and another, and found that they lived in another manner than the Greeks; for what he esteemed rich and noble and good, they set little or no store by, and what they admired he thought mean and poor. But since he was a wise king, and one who desired to learn the secrets of things, he sent a letter to the chief of the Brahmans asking him to describe what their nation did, "for," said he, "you differ from us very greatly, it cannot harm you to tell us about yourselves, and we may learn from your example. A candle when it is alight can light many others without burning less brightly." And with this letter of Alexander's the Brahmans went away to their lord, and in due time they returned bearing an answer.

The tale tells in full of these letters, though it likes me not to write them here at length, but the answer of Dindimus astonished the Greeks. He told them that the Brahmans were a lowly folk, who neither ploughed nor reaped, fished nor hunted, who lived on the fruits of the earth, and who drank
139 water

water, who fought not and lied not, who studied not, nor wore fine clothing, who loved the sun and the sea, the woods and the song of birds, and who cared neither for iron nor for gold. Then he went on to reprove them for their worship of evil gods, for their pride, cruelty, and avarice. However, Alexander answered him fairly, but only drew on himself a worse reproof. Then Alexander seized eight of the chief Brahmans, and put to each of them a question, saying that the one who answered worst should be put to death first.

So the first of them was brought before him, and he said to him, "This is thy question: Why have you no graves in which to bury your dead?" The old man said, "We are buried in the cave in the hillside where we pass our days, that we may know that our present life is but a training for the future." Then came the second, and the king asked him, "Which are more in number, the dead or the living?" "Those that are dead are more in number than the living, thou thyself knowest how many men thou hast slain," said the old man. Then came the third and Alexander said, "What is the most wicked thing in creation?" "Man is the most wicked thing, and thou thyself art one of the worst of men, for many men hast thou slain, and few hast thou saved from death." "Is night older than day, or day older than night?" was the next question of the king, and the Brahman answered him that night

140 was

was older than day. Then he asked the others these questions, and to each of them the wise men gave him a good answer. "How do you live, and how do you die?" "Is death mightier than life?" "Who is it that has never been born?" "Which is man's strongest limb, his right hand or his left?"

At the last the lord of Macedon forgave their bold speech and let them go; but, before they went, Alexander asked them, as his custom was, what were the wonders of their land?

Then the eldest of the Brahmans told him of a wonderful well in the land, that few men dare drink of, for he that was miserly or unfaithful to his trust and drank of it, went mad on the spot. But Alexander did not fear this, for no man had ever thought him miserly, for when he had shared the spoil at Macedon, he left for himself only hope and glory. Then the king asked to be led to that place, and he went with few of his knights without fear, for the Brahmans were an unarmed folk. Now, as he went on his way with the Brahman, he came into a certain town of the land, and saw two men pleading before the Judge, and he drew near to listen to them. The first of them stood up before the Judge, and said, "Sir, in time past I bought a house from this man, and dwelt in it; now, long after, I have found in it a treasure hid under the earth of the garden, which is not mine. Accordingly I offered to deliver the treasure to him, and carried it to his house, but

141 he

he has refused it and will not take it. Wherefore, sir, I beseech you that he be compelled to take this treasure, since he knows full well that it is not mine, for I have no right to it." Then Alexander said to the Brahman, "Surely this man is foolish, for he might keep this treasure to himself." But the Judge turned to the other man, and bade him answer what was said against him. So he stood up and said, "Sir Judge, that same treasure was never mine, but he has digged in a place that no other man who had the house has digged, and hath made that his own which before had no master. And, therefore, I have no right to take it." Then Alexander said to the Brahman, "Surely this man may take it, for the land was his, and the other man wishes him to take it."

As he spoke, the two men talked together for a moment, and then they turned toward the Judge, and begged him to take the treasure himself, for they would have none of it. Then the Judge answered, and said, "Since ye say that ye have no right thereto, so that neither he to whom the heritage belonged in time past, nor he to whom it now belongs may have it, how should I have any right thereto, that am but a stranger in the matter, and never before heard a word spoken of it. Would you escape the burden that falls on you, and give me the charge of the treasure; that were evil done of you." And, after awhile, he took them and asked of him that had

142 found

found the treasure whether they had any children or no: so one of them answered that he had a young son. Then he asked the other if he had a daughter, and he said that he had. When he heard that, the Judge was glad, and he ordered them to make a marriage between the two, and that they should give them the treasure between them as a marriage portion. And when Alexander heard this judgment, he had great marvel thereof, and said thus to the Judge: "I trow there is not in all the world so righteous a judge as thou art." Then the Judge looked on him with wonder, for he knew that he was an outlander by his speech, though he wist not that he was Alexander, and he asked him whether any Judge in his own country would have done otherwise. "Yea, certainly," said Alexander, "in many lands would they have judged otherwise." Then the Judge had great marvel thereat, and he asked the king whether it rained, and if the sun shone in that land; as if he would give him to understand that it was strange that the gods should send any light, or rain, or other good things to them that do not right and true judgment. But Alexander had greater marvel than before, and he said there were but few such nations upon earth as the people of this land.

Then king Alexander went with the old Brahman in search of the well, and at the last they came to the place where the well was, and it was a great square tank, built down into the ground with blocks

of stone, the sides covered with green moss, and the steps damp and slippery, the water at the bottom dark and clear, but the Brahman put forth his hand and said to the King, "O foolish of heart, bathe not in this well, for thou art both miser and unfaithful. Miser art thou for thy words about him who found the treasure: unfaithful in that thy heart judged not as the Judge of the land did." And Alexander turned away in silence, for his heart judged him, and he dared not enter the well, so he returned to his army.

And as Alexander went out of that land he passed through a city, in the which all the houses of the city were of one height, neither was any house greater in show than another. Now before the door of every house was a great pit dug, and this pit was always open. Then Alexander asked for the lord or judge of that city, and they told him that there was in their city no judge or lord. And the king wondered greatly how such a thing should be, that a city could remain without a head or a judge; and he asked of the inhabitants thereof whereto such things should serve. So the dwellers in that place answered him and said: "O king, whereas thou dost wonder that we have no lord over us to do justice among us, know thou that we have learnt to do justice ourselves, wherefore we need no man over us to do it for us." Then said he to the men of the city: "Why do ye make these
144 pits

pits before the doors of your houses?" And they answered him: "Know, O Alexander, that these pits are our graves, which every man makes before his door to be his own house, to which each of us must go, and there dwell until his deeds are judged." And Alexander asked them yet another question: "Why are your houses built of one height?" and they answered him: "O King, love and justice cannot be even among all the people of a place if some of them are greater than others, and no house nor family shall be greater than other in this our town." Then Alexander departed from them, wondering, but well pleased.

The tale tells that before Alexander fought against Porus he sent messengers to all lands in Asia, and among the rest to the land of the Amazons. It is said of that land that only women live in it, and it is governed by women, and whatever man comes into it he is straightway slain; for the first founders of that land were the wives of the men that were called Goths, the which men were cruelly slain, and then their wives took their husbands' armour and weapons, and fell on their enemies with manly hearts, and took revenge of the death of their husbands. For by dint of sword they slew all men, both old men and children, and saved the females, and parted out the prey, and purposed to live ever after without company of men. And by the example of their husbands they

had ever two queens among them, one to lead the host and fight against enemies, the other to govern and rule the kindreds. In short time they became such fierce warriors that they had a great part of Asia under their lordship nigh a hundred years; and among them they suffered no man to live or abide, but of the nations that were nigh to them they chose husbands, and they nourished their children till they were seven years old, and then their sons they sent to their fathers, but they saved their daughters and taught them to shoot and to hunt. It is told that the great Hercules was the first who daunted their fierceness, and that was more by friendship than by strength.

Now came messengers from Calistris, queen of the Amazons, to Alexander, bearing letters from her in answer to his demand of tribute, for she had heard how Alexander had followed in the footsteps of Hercules, and had gone into India, and the letters told of her land and its customs, and of the number of warriors she had, and she went on: "I wonder at thy wit, that thou purposest to fight with women, for if fortune be on our side, and if it hap that thou be overcome, then art thou shamed for evermore, when thou art overcome of women; and if our gods be wroth with us, and thou overcomest us, it shall be little honour to thee that thou hast overcome a band of women." And when Alexander looked over the letter he laughed, and
146 wondered

wondered on her answer, and said that it was not seemly to overcome women with sword and anger, but rather with love and noble dealing: and therefore he sent messengers to them offering friendship and a treaty. Then the queen of the Amazons came with many of her maidens, and they reached Alexander when he returned from the land of the Brahmans, and abode with him many months, and at the last they departed from him and went to their own land, being subject to his empire, not by violence, but by friendship and by love.

And after these things Alexander reared up a pillar of marble, and upon it he wrote in the tongue of the Greeks and of the Indians. Now the inscription in Greek characters was but this :—

A B Γ Δ E

the first five letters of the alphabet, and they stood for the same words as those in the Indian inscription :

ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΓΕΝΟΣ ΔΙΟΣ ΕΚΤΙΣΕ

“King Alexander the God-born built this :” and he graved it deep on the sides of the pillar.



CHAPTER XVI. HOW ALEXANDER PASSED THROUGH THE LAND OF DARKNESS AND SLEW THE BASILISK.

FEW DAYS AFTER Alexander and his army entered into a plain full of fair flowers and trees. Now the trees of this land were fruitful and bore all manner of food for man, and amongst them were apples and almonds, vines and pomegranates, and plums and damsons; and it was in this land that the Greeks first ate of damsons, for they did eat of them three days while they were in the forest. But as they went through the wood, they came upon giants twice as high as other men, clad in coats of skin, and covered with long hair. So the Greeks and the Indians were sore afraid lest these giants should fall upon them and slay them, while the giants called one to another, and came together through the trees to gaze on them

them, for they had never seen men before. When the Greeks saw that these giants were calling to one another and coming together, they drew up in line of battle, and the knights clad in armour mounted their battle horses, and the archers and spearmen prepared their weapons for the onset: for the Greeks had never heard of giants who did no harm to men. But these giants were great stupid oafs who stood gazing with open mouths at Alexander and his men preparing to slay them, and their food was grapes and pomegranates. And when the army was drawn up in line, and all men were ready, Alexander gave the word and they raised a loud shout so that the woods rang again, and the giants turned and fled, for they had never heard sound of man or of trumpet. Then the knights followed them and slew some six hundred of them in the field and in the chase, so that none of them were left in the land round about.

The tale tells that Alexander passed on with his army, still seeking the wonders of the land and finding no man in this part of it, till he came to another river where he halted for many days. And there came men of the land to him, and Alexander asked them of the wonders of the land, so they told him of certain trees near by which grew with the sun, and when it was high they were great, and as the sun fell below the earth so the trees grew smaller and sank down into the soil. But when

149 the

the king would set out to see this marvel, they told him that no man could go near it for there was a wild man who guarded the wood and suffered no one to pass. Then Alexander sought counsel of his wise men, and they bade him take a fair white maiden such as the wild man had never seen and hold her before him, and so they did, and the wild man became quiet and still at the sight of her, so the Greeks crept up to him and bound him in great chains, and brought him before the King's tent: now this wild man was covered with hair stout and strong, and his arms were great, and his strength was as that of ten men. And when the King had gazed on him they bound him to a tree, and slew him, and burnt him to ashes, for he had slain much folk of that country.

Next day the King and his company came to the place of the trees, and they wondered at the sight, how they grew as the day grew, and the height of them was a spear's length, and on them were fruits like to apples, and men called them the trees of the sun. Now the tent of the King was over against the place where the trees grew, and in the hot sunlight he felt thirst, so he bade one of his carles fetch him an apple, and the man sprang forth to do his bidding, but when he laid his hand on the fruit he fell to the ground as if he was slain. There were birds on those trees among the branches and some men wished to put their hands on them, for
they

they did not fly away from them, but as they did so, flames of fire came out from the trees ; and the men of the country told them that no man could touch these trees and live. Then Alexander asked them of the Land of Darkness, for the stone Elmas shone brightly, and he knew that he was drawing near that land : but they said that no man went to that land, for the way was through a desert that none could cross.

Then Alexander chose him out of all his army three hundred young men, able to endure hardship, and they made them ready to go with him to the Land of Darkness, while the army was left in the hand of King Porus ; and he gave orders that the young men should carry with them stores of food and water to pass through the desert to the land they sought. Now there was a certain old man in the army named Bushi, who had two sons chosen to go with the King, and he bade them to take him with them to the Land of Darkness, but they said to him that the King had straightly commanded that no old man should go with them. Then said the old man, " O Sons, make strong a box, and put me inside it, and set the box on a mule and carry it with the baggage, and it shall be for your good, for a party without old men to advise can come to no good." So his sons did as he bade them, and closed him in a box, and set him on a mule's back, and carried him with them to the land. And as

Alexander went on his way they met men of the land, journeying in the desert, and these told them of the Well of Life, and how a man had drunk of that well, but he could not find his way out of the Land of Darkness, and ever he wandered to and fro, up and down, till at last he gave up the search, and dwelt in a tower alone, and as the years rolled on he grew smaller and smaller, and more and more cruel, and when men came into that land, he slew them and fed on their flesh.

Now when Alexander drew near the Land he came to a desert land, where was neither well nor living thing, and they hastened through it for five days, but on the morrow of the sixth day the sun rose not, and there was no light of day: and so the king knew that he had come on the Land of Darkness, but the tales that he had heard came to his mind, and he feared, for he had no mind to wander through that land without a guide. Then he went back with his men for half a day's journey, and lo! the light of the evening, so he camped in that place and waited for morning light. On the morrow he took counsel with his men, as to the way of return, and he offered great reward to any man who should show the way of a safe journey back, but his young men said, "O King, it is ours to go where thou dost order us, and what thou biddest, that will we do:" and he found no counsel in them. Then the two sons told their father how the King had stopped
and

and asked for counsel, and Bushi bade them bring him before Alexander, and when they feared he bade them be bold, for he had good counsel to give.

The tale tells that the King was sitting sorrowful in his tent that day, for he dared not enter the Land without some means of safe return, and he was unwilling to go back to the army without having reached his object; and when the guards entered and told that an old man sought speech of him, he thought that one of the gods must have come to his help. So he made him to sit in his own seat, for the man was very old and feeble, and asked him what he would. Then Bushi answered and said, "O King, hear the words of an old man; there is no love like the love of a mother for her young. Now thou hast here with thee many asses with their foals. This is my word to thee. Leave here on the borders of the Land, half thy men with their baggage trains, and leave with them the young foals, and go thou with their mothers and the rest of thy men into the Land, and do thy heart's desire: then when thou wilt return from this Land, loosen the mothers and leave them free, and take them for thy guides, and they will lead thee back to the place where their young ones be."

Then Alexander the King praised him greatly, and gave rich reward to the young men, his sons, and he offered to take the old man to the Well of
153 Life,

Life, but he would not, for he said, "How should I desire to live for ever, being such a man as I am, for the bitterness of death is past to me." Then he gave counsel to the King that no man should bathe in any well in the land, till he had seen it, for if he did the well would disappear for a year. So Alexander did as the old man Bushi advised him, for he divided his men into two bands, and one he left on the borders of the Land of Darkness, with their baggage and with the young foals, and one he took with him, and the men he took with him he straightly charged to come to him when they found the well, and on no account to bathe in it. So he entered the Land, and the stone Elmas shone with a light like a star, and guided them on the road for three days. But on the fourth day it grew duller, and Alexander knew that he had passed the place of the Well of Life; and he ordered his men to search for the well in all directions, but not to go out of sound of the trumpets which rang out every hour, and to come into the camp when it sounded. Seven times did the trumpet sound, and the scouts came in, but on the seventh time, one of them, Philotus by name, came in with his hair wet, and Alexander knew that he had disobeyed the word of the king, and had bathed in the well. Then said he to him, "O Philotus, canst thou lead me to the well thou hast bathed in," and the man answered, "Yea, Lord;" and they set out together, but no well

could be found. Then the wrath of the King burst out, for he knew that he should see the Well no more for a year if he remained in that place, and that all the labour of his expedition was spent for nought but to make this Indian immortal, and he bade men bring great stones, and build them in a pillar round the Indian and close it at the top, and they did so, and he was left alive inside the pillar, for indeed the Greeks could not slay him. This done, Alexander put the reins on the necks of his asses, and they turned and led the way to their young, and in three days he was out of the Land of Darkness and on his way to the army.

In few days the King set out again with his host and went on his way towards the mountain lands, and ever the way led upward till after eleven days' journey they came to a great plain among the mountains, covered with trees and plants, and well watered by noble rivers. The fruits were of the finest savour, and the water was sweeter than milk or mead, and clearer than crystal. So they went on through the land for many days, but they found no man in it, and no houses or temples of the gods; until they came to a high mountain which seemed to reach even to the clouds, and no way was there of crossing it, it was so steep and rugged. But when they came up to this range they found two passes which led through the range, and where they met was a great temple, and the one path led to the
East,

East, the way of the sun-rising, and the other to the North. Now there was no man to tell them where these paths led, or what was to be met in them. Then Alexander thought within himself that he would go to the East, for the Gods had predicted that in the East he should learn when and where was the end of his days, and the army of the King went through the pass for seven days.

But on the eighth day, a sudden death fell on many of the men in the host, for when they came to a certain spot or place among the mountains, ever one or another noble knight would fall down suddenly and lie dead on the road, nor did all men who passed the place die, but some only. Then fear came upon all men, and those who had passed the place dared not move either forward or backward, and those who had not passed it would not go forward, nor indeed did the King command them, for all men said, "The wrath of the gods is upon us for coming into this land." So Alexander sought to find the reason for this death, and he went with one of his knights up the mountains at the side of the pass, till he came to a place whence he could see the whole of the pass and the mountains behind it, and looking down into the valley he saw in one of the clefts of the hills a loathly serpent, old and wrinkled, his thin long neck and great head lying on the ground before it. And while the King looked down, the ungainly worm slowly raised its heavy head and

looked down on the valley, and let it fall again, and a cry of grief from his men told him that two more of his knights had fallen dead on the pass, and Alexander knew that his eyes saw the Basilisk.

The tale tells that this beast is the most deadly of all serpents, for its venom is such that whatsoever living thing it looks on it slays, yea, the very grass is withered by its deadly breath. And no man may slay it unawares easily, for once a man slew one with a lance, and the venom of it was such that he died from it, though he came no nearer the body than a spear's length. This the king knew and he sought not to slay it with a weapon, but he worked so that the worm should kill itself; for he caused his men to make a shield larger than a man, and on this shield he bade put a bright polished mirror, and he wrapped his feet in linen, and put off his armour, and going softly he bore the shield with its mirror before him, and set it down before the den of the basilisk, and went his way. But the basilisk raised its head as its manner was, and looked before it, and saw its face in the mirror, and the poison of its own look killed it, so it fell dead with its eyes wide open, and lay along the path. Then the knight who was on the mountain watching blew his horn, and all men heard it and rejoiced and praised the brave king who had delivered them from the basilisk.

All this while the march of the host had lain between mountains, and when men climbed to the top
157 they

they saw nothing but other mountains stretching away as far as they could see, no towns, no villages, no living things, and on the day after the basilisk was slain, the road suddenly stopped among the mountains, and the host could go no further. Then Alexander the King bade them turn back to the parting of the ways, and as they passed the place where the basilisk had been he bade them burn it in asbestos cloth, and take its ashes, for the ashes of the basilisk are a precious thing, able to turn lead into pure gold, but the men found it not, though the great mirror was still there. And at the last they came to the temple at the parting of the ways, and the army lay round the temple for a day to rest, for they were sore wearied with the passage through the Eastward way. The next day at sunrise two aged men came out of the temple, and Alexander spoke with them and they told him of the ways, how that Bacchus, one of the gods, had made this road when he came into India and conquered it, and how he had caused the mountains to come together and block it up, so that no man should pass through by it after. Then Alexander asked them of the Northward way, and they told him how it led to the Trees of the Sun and Moon: and they told of the wonders of the trees, and how they spoke with men's tongues, and told what should be in time to come, and Alexander the King rejoiced.



CHAPTER XVII. HOW ALEXANDER CAME TO THE TREES OF THE SUN AND THE MOON, AND WHAT THEY TOLD HIM.

HOWBEIT ALEXANDER made no sign to them of his joy, for he seemed not to believe the old men, and he said: "Have I spread the might of my name from the East even unto the West to no end but to become a sport to old men and dotards." Then the old men made oath by the gods that this thing was true, and they told the King how that these trees spoke both in the Greek and the Indian language; and Alexander asked them of the way to this marvel, and the men answered: "O King, whosoever thou art, no greater marvel shalt thou see than this we tell thee of. The way to it is a journey of ten days, nor can your army pass because of the narrow paths, and the
want

want of water, but at the most four thousand men with their beasts of burden and their food." Then all the friends of the King and his companions besought him to go and see this great thing, and he made as if he hearkened to their prayers, and consented to go with them. So he left the army with its baggage and the elephants in the hands of King Porus his friend, and set out on the Northward Way to seek the trees which spoke to men.

Now the Northward Way was like the Eastward one, a narrow road among high mountains, and little ease was there in going through it, and for three days they came to no water, but at noon on the fourth day they came to a spring which flowed out of a cave on the hillside. Then the Indians told Alexander that this cave was sacred to Bacchus, so he entered it and offered up a sacrifice to the god, and prayed him that he might return safe to Macedon, lord of the world, but he got no sign from the god that his prayer was heard. Then on the morrow he set out, and on the tenth day at even they came to the foot of a great cliff, shining in the setting sun from thousands of brilliant points like diamonds, and from chains of red gold leading from step to step up the face of the rock, high up beyond the ken of men. And as the sun shone on it the steps seemed carved from sapphires and rubies, so deep were the blue and red of their colour. Then Alexander the king set up altars to the gods of
160 heaven,

heaven, and offered sacrifices to each one of them, and he and his men lay that night at the foot of the cliff.

Early in the morning he arose, and when he had called to him his twelve tried princes, he began to ascend the steps on the side of the mountain, and as he went up it seemed to him that he was going into the clouds, and when he looked down, the path by which he had come seemed as a silver ribbon among the hills, and the men of his host seemed smaller than bees, and nothing that might happen seemed strange to him, for his joy and lightness of heart. So on and on they went and at length they came to the last of the steps, two thousand five hundred of them, and they found that on the top of the cliff was a wide plain, and in the distance they saw a fair palace set in a garden, and a noble minster shining in the sun like gold. All the plain was full of rich and noble trees bearing precious balm and spices, and many fruits grew on their branches, and the inhabitants of the plain fed on them, for there were many men on the plain, and all men and women were clothed in the skins of panthers or of tigers sewn together, and they spoke in the Indian tongue. As the Greeks drew near the palace they saw it, what a fair home it was, and how it had two broad doors to its hall, and seventy windows of diverse shape, and when they came to the doors they found them covered with beaten gold, and set with fair stones.

But the doors of the palace opened and shut, and there stood before them a negro, ten feet high, with great teeth showing over his lips, his ears pierced and a great pearl in each, and clothed in skins. And when he had saluted them he asked them why they had come to that land, and they said that they wished to see the trees that spoke, and to hear something from them. Then the negro bade them to take three of them, and to put off their shoes, and their weapons and ornaments, and to clothe themselves in fair white linen, and Alexander and two of his companions did so, and the negro brought them within the palace, leaving the rest of their companions outside. And as they went in they marked the fair garden, and in it were golden vines bearing on them grapes of rubies and carbuncles, and they saw how precious a place it was, so that Paradise alone excelled it.

Now when they were come to the inner door of the hall, the negro bowed himself down before them, and opened the door before them, but went not in himself, for that room was the chief of the palace, and when they lifted up their heads they saw before them a couch and on it was a man. Now the hangings of the couch were of golden brocade, and its coverlet was blue, embroidered with shining ones in bright gold, and the bedhead was embroidered with cherubim with glancing wings, and the canopy with the bright seraphim.

The curtains were of silk and on them was a fair garden of needlework, and in it were beasts and birds, and the pillars were of the same, and all the points and ornaments were of pearl. The romance tells that he who rested in that room was one of the noblest-looking men that ever had life, with a face bright and bold as fire, his hair was long and grey, and his beard was as white as the driven snow. When the King and his peers saw him they knew that he must be of the blood of the gods and not of mankind, and they knelt down on the ground before him, and saluted him with all reverence. Then he reached out his arms to them, and raised him on the bed, and answered them: "Hail, Alexander," said he, "All hail, thou who wieldest the earth, thou and thy princes are welcome. Sir, thou shalt see with thy sight such marvels as never before man saw; and thou shalt hear of what shall come, things that no man hath heard but thee." Then was the King astonished that his name was known, and he said, "Oh, holy happy man, how dost thou name my name, since thou hast never seen me before?" And the god answered: "Yea, I knew thee ere a word of thy fame had spread over the earth. Then he went on: "Wish ye to look upon the trees that bloom for ever, the trees of the sun and of the moon, that can speak and tell thee of what is to be?" And Alexander the king said, "Yes by my crown, this would I do more than

than anything else in the world." Then the god said, "Art thou clean of body and mind, thou and thy friends; for no man may enter the place where they are who is not pure of all stain?" and Alexander answered that they were. So the Elder arose from his bed, and cast on him a mantle of gold, and the ground glittered for the glory of his weeds, and he led them to the door, and there stood there two elders like to those Alexander had seen at the Parting of the Ways, and he gave them into their hands, and bade them lead them to the place where they would be. Then he turned and departed, and Alexander and his friends Ptolemy and Antiochus went with the elders.

As they went the elders asked them if they had any metal or rich thing with them, and bade them cast it off, and one of the elders stayed at the door of the minster while the other led them through it, and after that the three Greek lords passed through a wondrous thick wood, full of most precious trees, olives and sycamores, cypresses and cedars, with balm and myrrh trickling down the trunk and all manner of incense and aromatic spices. In this wood they came upon a little round clear space, and when they looked they saw a great tree whereon was neither fruit nor leaves, bark nor bast, and it was one hundred feet high. And on it they saw a bird resting on one of its branches, and the bird was of the size of a peacock, with a crest such as

164 the

the peacock has, and its cheeks and jaws were red like a fowl, and its breast was of golden feathers, and its back and tail of blue speckled with crimson, and its body of gold and red speckled with grey. Then Alexander the king stayed and considered this bird and wondered at it, and the guide answered his thought: "Why dost thou wait and wonder, yon is the Phoenix, the bird that lives a hundred years, and has no mate:" and he turned them a little way and they saw a spot where two trees grew side by side, the trees of the Sun and the Moon. "Behold now," quoth the guide, "these holy trees; form in thy mind the question thou wouldst ask of them, but say it not in words that can be heard; and thou shalt have an answer in plain words, such as no other oracle gives. And this shall be a sign to thee that the gods are good to thee, since they read thy thoughts and need not words to tell them thy question."

The tale tells us that these trees were not like others, but their boles and leaves shone like metal, and the tree of the sun was like gold, and the tree of the moon was like silver, and the tree of the sun was the male, and that of the moon the female. Then Alexander asked his guide: "In what way will the trees answer me?" and the Elder answered him: "Truly, O King, the Sun-tree begins to speak in the Indian tongue, and ends in Greek; but the Moon-tree, since it is female, speaks

165 in

in a contrary manner, for it begins in Greek and finishes in Indian, and thus in two tongues each tells us its mission of fate." Then he wished to offer sacrifices before the trees to honour them as gods, but the Elder forbade him, for he said that no living thing was to be injured in this place, and no fire must be brought there, but that the only sacrifices offered to the trees were kisses on the tree-boles. And when he heard this Alexander the King knelt down on the ground and kissed the boles of the trees one after the other, and asked within himself whether he should return to Macedon, where his mother dwelt, having conquered all the earth.

Now, when he had asked this question in his mind, and he and his fellows were kneeling on the ground before the tree, suddenly it began to move, and the leaves began to quiver, though all was still and calm in the forest, and there was a sound of going in the tree-tops, and a sighing as if the wind was rustling through the leaves, and the sighing and moaning of the leaves grew louder, and with a swaying sough this answer came to the King: "O Alexander, unbeaten in war thou art, and shalt be lord of all the world, yet never shalt thou see the soil of thy sires, or return to thy dear land of Macedon; thou shalt see thy mother and thy land no more." When they heard these things the companions of Alexander fell down to the ground as if

166 dead,

dead, so great was their grief, and they heard no more of what was said ; but Alexander knelt down before the Moon-tree to ask of it a question. Then the Elder came to him and said : “ O King, the tree of the Moon answers not till the night has come, and the moon is full in the sky.” So the King turned to his companions, and comforted them with his kind words and gifts, and bade them be of good cheer.

When the night was come Alexander rose up again to go before the Moon-tree, and to hear its oracles, and his companions told him of the danger of being unarmed and alone by night, but Alexander feared not, for it was not lawful to slay any one in that forest, neither was there any man in it save the guide and themselves. And having adored the tree and kissed it, he knelt down before it, and thought to ask when and where should be his end. Then at the moment when the rays of the moon made the leaves shine with splendour, he heard a voice from the tree : “ Alexander, the end of thy life draws near ; this year shall be thine, but in the ninth month of the next thou shalt die at Babylon, deceived by him in whom you fully trust.” Then he was filled with grief and he looked at his friends, and he knew that they were ready to die for him if need be, and he thought of the other companions in whom he trusted, and that if he slew them he might save himself, and then he thought of the endless
suspicion

suspicion and sorrow he would live in for the rest of his days, and he remembered the words of the god when he told him that it was not good for men to know the end of their days, and he strengthened his heart and comforted his friends, and he bade them swear never to reveal the things they had heard, and again they returned to the minster, and found tents thereby where they might rest, and beds of skins, and on an ivory table there was food and drink set for them, fruit and bread, and water from the stream. So they slept and rested.

Then in the morning the Elder woke him from sleep, and led him before the bare tree, and bade him ask of it what he would, and he knelt before it and kissed it, and asked in his mind, "Who is it that shall harm my mother or sisters or myself?" Then he had this answer from the tree: "O mighty lord, if I should tell thee the man who should betray thee it were easy for thee to slay him and to overcome thy fate, and the oracles would be made of none effect. Therefore thou shalt die at Babylon, not by iron, as thou deemest, nor by gold, silver, nor by any vile metal, but by poison. Thy mother shall die by the vilest death, and shall lie unburied in the common way, to be eaten by birds and dogs. Thy sisters shall live long and happy lives. Short as thy life shall be, thou shalt be lord of all lands. Now ask no more, but return to thy army and to Porus thy friend." And the Elder came up to him
168 and

and said : “ Let us depart with speed, for the weeping and moaning of thy companions have offended the holy ones of the trees,” and Alexander and his companions departed from the forest. Then he asked the Elder who was the god of the palace, and he told the King it was Bacchus, who had sent him to the temple at the Parting of the Ways, and who had welcomed him in the palace. So Alexander came to his peers, and with them went down the golden stairway and joined the host, and hurried on day after day until he came to the Parting of the Ways, and there he found his army under the command of Porus his friend.

And after the army was gathered together, Alexander the King spoke of his journey to the oracles, and how he had climbed the stairway, and how he had been guided by the god, and had asked the trees of his fate, and he told them that the trees had promised him that he should conquer the world, and return to Macedon, and live a long life, and all the army shouted with joy. But the comrades of Alexander and his twelve peers were sad, for they knew what was foretold, yet they said not a word of it, but shouted with the rest. Then Porus the Indian doubted of the truth, and he questioned the king's companions closely, but they told him not of the oracle : howbeit he was assured in his heart that Alexander was to die, and he thought to seize on the empire, and he began to contrive the king's death ;

death ; and Alexander knew of his questionings, and kept watch over his doings.

Then orders were sent to the host to prepare for their march, for Alexander was minded to set out and conquer the nations that had not yet submitted to him, yet before he started, he bade men set up two marble pillars at the temple of the Parting of the Ways, and between them a pillar of gold, and on it was written in the language of the land, how that Alexander the king had come to this spot and had conquered all nations, and it said how that there was no passage to the Eastward but to the Northward only. And when this was done all the tents were struck and the host moved into a land to the north, where they had not yet been ; and the people of the land brought him tribute.





CHAPTER XVIII. HOW ALEXANDER SLEW PORUS AND WON BACK THE WIFE OF CANDOYL AND WAS KNOWN OF CANDACE WHEN HE CAME TO HER.



AFTER THESE THINGS the host of the Greeks and the Persians and the Indians was gathered together in one place, and messengers came from all the kings of the land to it to Alex-

ander the king, bringing gifts of rare and precious things, of gold and spices, of the skins of a fish like to a leopard's skin, of living lions and other wild beasts. Now, among these was the messenger of a Queen of the land, Candace by name, the widow of a great king friend and cousin of Porus; and they brought with them letters to King Porus from her. And when Alexander heard tell of her, he asked the King of India concerning her, who she was, and what manner of men she ruled over, and Porus answered

and told him how she was the fairest woman in India, and how she had married his near kinsman, and had borne him three sons, Candoyl, Marcippus, and Caratros. Then he told him how he had sent his daughter to her for safety, and how she had married her to Caratros, her youngest son, who should reign after her, as the custom of that folk was : and he told of the gods she worshipped, and of the people she ruled, and of the riches of the land. Then Alexander was fain of her presence, and sent rich gifts, and a golden image of Ammon his god, and a letter in which he asked her to journey towards the mountains and meet him there, and he gave the messengers wealth and a strict command to tarry not till they brought him word again. But Porus purposed evil in his heart, for he sought to stir up wrath against Alexander in Roxana the Queen.

Thus the messengers came to Queen Candace and they laid before her the letter of Alexander, and his gifts, and told how she had been honoured by the wealth given to her messengers, and besought her to meet the Lord of the Greeks, but she would not, for she knew the double mind of Porus, and would not adventure herself where she could meet him, yet was she willing to please Alexander, so she sent again her messengers, and richer gifts than before, and a letter praising his knighthood and his valour, and the power of his gods. Now these were her gifts, a crown of gold set with a hundred

precious stones, and two hundred and ten chains of red gold, and thirty rich goblets carved with pelicans and parrots, five Ethiopian slaves of one age, a rhinoceros, a thousand beryls in caskets of ebony, and four elephants to carry this wealth, and on the back of each was the skin of a spotted panther, rich and precious. So the messengers went their way, and with them Queen Candace sent a cunning painter, and she prayed him in private to make her a portrait of the king on parchment, noting all his shape and proportion. And it was done as she said, for Alexander received her gifts and well entreated her messengers, and sent them home; and when they came the painter brought his drawing before her, and she rejoiced, for she had longed to see what manner of man the Greek lord was, and now was her wish fulfilled.

It fell on a day that Alexander was in his tent, and one of his clerks was there with him, and as men went out and he chanced to be alone with the king, he fell on his knees before him, and besought grace. Then Alexander comforted him and bade him speak out boldly and fear not. So this clerk told the king how Porus knew that the death of Alexander was near, and that he had gathered together men from all parts to slay him, and he told him how that the men of Gog and Magog were on the march from the frozen lands of the North at the pay of Porus. Then Alexander asked how this
should

should be, and the clerk told him that he had been sent to them in years back by Darius, and that then it had been a full year's journey, but now had they come nearer, so that one month saw the beginning and the end of the way to them, when Porus had sent him. Then the Lord of the Greeks grew wrathful and began to doubt all men, for he remembered that he should die by the hands of a friend whom he trusted, wherefore he sent messengers for Porus, and when he came he said to him : " O Porus, is not the half of my throne sufficient for thee, but thou must adventure to slay me by the hand of the outer barbarians? True knight thou art not, or thou wouldest scorn to do by another what thou durst not attempt thyself." But Porus the king stood silent, and turned red and purple and white in turns, and then he tugged off his glove and threw it at the feet of Alexander on the ground. Then said Alexander : " O Porus, though mayhap it were better to slay thee as a traitor, yet thou hast been my fellow at board and bed, and I will meet thee as thou wishest, that at least thou shalt die as a true knight, if thou couldst not live as one." Then he called for his page and he bade him take up the glove and put it in his helmet against the set day.

On the third day at sunrise all men rose up early and came to the field of war outside the camp, and each man took his place round the field, the Greeks on the south, the Indians on the north, and the

Persians where they would on either side. And as they looked they saw the tent of Alexander hung with green silk and embroideries at the east end of the field, and the tent of Porus hung with cloth of gold at the other. Before the doors stood pages and trumpeters, and from time to time long calls rung out in the air, notes of defiance and of confidence. From end to end of the field ran a partition dividing it into two strips, for the battle was to be fought out with the lance alone, and in the middle was a high seat in which Ptolemy the king's lieutenant was to sit as judge. Beside and below him were places for the heralds, and as time wore on they took their seats. And now the bustle round the tents increased, and men went in and out, and the noise of the hammer on the rivets rose between the calls. Then came a pause, and the squires brought long lances and laid them before the heralds, and they measured them side by side, and returned them to the squires, who bore them back to their tents. A long call was sounded, and a troop of men brought in between them the famous white horse Bucephalus, and at the sight of him all the warriors of Greece shouted, for many times had they followed him in battle, and they deemed him the best horse in the world, though he was now stricken in years; and when this shout died away another was raised by the Indian knights as their lord's great black horse came in to the field, and the

the two horses smelled each other from afar, and neighed out their defiance.

Now sounded the drums and clarions, and from afar the procession of the lord of the lists came into the field, and amid the shouts of the army Ptolemy sat down on the throne, and all men kept silence. Then the heralds rose and saluted him, and he spoke to them, and soon they broke up into two parties, and went one to each tent, and each man's eyes followed a party, this way or that. As they came before the tent doors, the squires drew aside the curtains and the kings stood before the heralds, clad in armour from head to foot. Then the processions re-formed and with lowly reverence the knights were brought before the lord of the lists, where they repeated one by one the solemn oath that they had used no charm or magic against their foe, but that the battle should be fought, man to man and horse to horse, till death: and as they stood side by side the giant Porus showed taller and stronger when compared with the Lord of Macedon.

Then the knights mounted their horses, and saluting each other and the lord of the lists, they turned away and rode to the end of the lists and stood there two images of bright steel, waiting for the sign of battle. A few moments pass, the lord of the field rises, and the trumpet-call rings out, first low and steady and strong, then higher and louder till it seems to carry men's hearts with it to the
176 clouds,

clouds, and in the midst of its last and loudest call the baton is thrown down, and the two knights are spurring towards one another; no man breathes, each stride brings them nearer, their aim seems true, when a shout rises from the Greeks, and next second both knights are on the ground, the air is filled with curses and cries, the lists are peopled with heralds and knights and squires, the black horse is galloping wildly over the field, Alexander is kneeling by the side of his horse Bucephalus, and Porus is lying still on the field, for he had shifted his lance and taken traitor's aim at the good horse and slain him, while Alexander had struck him on the helm and thrown him far on the ground.

So the lord of the lists stood up and bade the heralds bring the knights before him, but they came back and told him how Porus lay deathlike on the field, yet was he unhurt to all seeming, so Ptolemy spake to Alexander and said, "Sir Alexander, thou hast done thy duty as a true knight, thine adversary is at thy mercy to slay or to spare." Then Alexander answered, "Were it not for his traitorous dealing to my good steed I would forgive him yet again, nor may I slay him unarmed, but by to-morrow morn I will meet him again on foot, sword to sword, till one of us die." Then the squires carried Porus away to his tent, and the Indian knights went away from the field shamefast,

but the Persians and the Greeks rejoiced in the fame of their lord, and mourned over the death of the good steed Bucephalus. That day Alexander built a tomb for his horse and laid him there, and bitter were the tears he shed, for it seemed to him that the best days of his life were beginning to leave him, and his evil days had begun.

When the morrow came all men went again to their places, and the heralds and the trumpeters sat down in their seats, and Ptolemy bade silence. Then the two knights were brought before him, on foot, armed with sword and dagger, and he placed them before each other, and bade them fall to when the trumpet sounded. The heralds rose and made proclamation: "Lo ye, all men here present, these knights, Sir Alexander of Macedon and Sir Porus of India, be met for the agreement of certain differences between them; if now any man shall enter this field, or aid them in any way, he shall fall under pain of death, until this difference be voided." Then all men kept silence, till the lord of the field let fall his sceptre and the trumpets rang out one shrill call.

Scarcely had the sound died away before the two knights began circling round each other, like birds watching an opportunity to dart in and seize their prey; but they dared not adventure, for Porus was tall and long of reach, and Alexander was nimble and long-armed and very mighty, and each man

wished to strike a blow that would end the fight at once, and time after time they came near each other and stepped back again, till at the last Porus struck at the left shoulder of Alexander, which was just in his reach, and Alexander caught the blow on his shoulder, and running forward struck with his right arm alone, and drove his sword-edge through helm and cheek-bone and skull, and Porus fell dead on the ground, and the Greeks shouted with joy. Thus was the treason of Porus, his evil thoughts and his unknighly deeds, avenged by Alexander. But when he was dead the Lord of Macedon gave him burial like one of the kings, and he built over him a temple, with walls and towers and priests to pray for him perpetually.

At this time it fell that Candoyl, the eldest son of Candace the queen, came before his mother and said to her, "Fair mother and queen, grant me that I may leave thy lands and journey out into the world;" and she said, "Go, my son, with my blessing and leave, and tarry not till thou return." So he got together much wealth and departed, with his wife and his servants, and came to a certain strong city called Bebrik, and harboured there, and when the morrow was come and he departed, the king of Bebrik came round and met him on a certain bent, and slew many of his men, and one of the king's knights took the lady and bore her off to the town, shrieking and lamenting so as to pierce the
heart

heart of any true knight: for it is to be said that the king of Bebrik had loved her for many years. Then was Candoyl sore troubled, and he went on his way to the army of Alexander to seek his grace, if by any means he would help him to recover his lady and love. Soon he came near the camp and entered it, and the watchmen took him and brought him before Ptolemy, the most noble of the Greeks after Alexander, and he asked him, "What manner of man art thou, and what dost thou here? What is the cause of thy coming? Let us know thy name?" "Sire," said he, "I am Candoyl, the son of Candace the conqueress," and he told him of his coming, and of what befell him in the way. Then Ptolemy hurried from the tent, leaving Candoyl in ward of a knight, and went into the cabin where the King was lying, and found him asleep. So he waked him gently and told him the tidings, how a knight, the son of Candace the queen, had come to crave his help against the king of Bebrik, who had reft his wife from him.

Then said Alexander, "Go back again to thy tent, put on thy head the richest diadem I have, a crown of red gold, and a king's mantle, and seat thee in the king's seat as though thou wert myself, let my knights come about thee and call thee by my name with all due reverence, and then send messengers for me, and call me Antiochus, and I shall obey thy bidding as I were thy liegeman. And

180 when

when I come to thy call, and kneel before thee, declare to me all the case of Candoyl's adventure openly before him, and be not abashed when I bow, nor bid me not to rise, but let thy countenance be solemn when thou art speaking, and say then, 'Antiochus, my noble, let us see thy wisdom in this matter, do thou wisely advise me.'" So Ptolemy hurried away and clothed him in the dress of an emperor, and sent for Alexander in the name of Antiochus, and when he was come, he told him the tale before Candoyl, and asked his advice. Then answered Antiochus, "Were it your will, noble Emperor, I would fare with this knight to recover his wife, and would bid the king of Bebrik on pain of his eyes restore her, and if not, we should grind his city and him to dust." Then Candoyl bowed before the king, and said, "Sir Antiochus, of all men be thou happy, thy wisdom is worthy of a king clad in gold with crown and sceptre." So Alexander and Candoyl rode forth that same night, and when it was dawn they came before the walls of Bebrik. Then the watch on the gate saw them, and cried out, "Who are ye, O knights; whence and what is your errand?" And Alexander answered, "It is Sir Candoyl, that has come for his spouse, and I am the messenger of the Lord of Macedon, and I bid you, if you will save your city from destruction, to yield his bride to him without delay." Then the burghers of the city were filled with fear,
181 though

though they were a stiff-necked folk, and they went in a body to the palace of their king, and burst open the gates and brought forth the dame, and led her to her husband in all honour. So Candoyl thanked him heartily, and said, "I pray thee, dear prince, pass with me to my mother, that thou mayst have the honour and reward thou hast merited for thy deeds." Then was the King rejoiced at these words, and he said, "Go we to Alexander to ask his leave, and gladly will I follow thee and do thy will;" for he would not have him to think him other than Antiochus; so they went to Ptolemy and he gave him full leave to depart.

Now drew they near the city of Candace the queen, and she heard of the coming of Candoyl her son and his wife, and how she had been taken prisoner by the king of Bebrik, and released by a knight of Macedon, who was with them, and she was glad in her heart, and greatly rejoiced. Into a chamber she went and changed all her weeds, and put on a robe of red gold and a rich mantle over it, a crown and a kerchief clustered with gems, and came down from her palace gate surrounded by her knights, and found them before it. So she clasped her son in her arms and kissed him, and said, "Welcome be thou, my loved son, and thou, my dearest daughter, and I am glad of your guest, as the gods give me joy:" and Alexander looked on her, and his heart rejoiced, for he thought her likest

182 of

of all women to Olympias his mother ; fair and fresh was she as a falcon, or as some spirit from another world. So they came into her castle-hall, full of precious stones and adorned with gems, its pillars of porphyry, and its floor of bright crystal, clear as a river, and there they sat at meat—Alexander and Candace and Candoyl, served together at the high table.

On the morrow at first light Candace the queen came with her ladies and took the Greek knight Antiochus through the palace and showed him how richly it was built, and all the wonders in it, great and small. And when he had seen all these things she asked him of the palace of Alexander, and he told her how it was not so rich as hers, but was a home for fighting men to rest in, and to prepare for new wars, while the palaces of the Kings of the East were fitter to make men long for ease than to give them heart for the toil and danger of battle. Then said the Queen, "Other wonders still shall I show thee, O Antiochus, wonders that no king hath the like of," and she bade her servants go forth, and giving her hand to the Greek led him into a room, covered with cypress and with cedar from floor to roof, where they sat down on two thrones in the room. Soon a mighty sound was heard, and as the Greek looked out he saw the trees and the fields and the town moving round him, and he knew that he was in a chamber that turned round by some hidden power.

power. It is to be said that this room was turned round by the strength of twenty tame elephants that the queen kept for this end, and every day she came and sat in the chamber and looked from the window while it was turned for a space. So as the false Antiochus looked he wondered and said, "Verily, O Queen, were such a wonder as this in our land of Macedon, proud would our lord the king be of it above all his treasures"; and Candace looked on him and said, "Alexander, this is but little to the wonders that the men of this land can show the Greeks."

Then Alexander sprang up from his seat at the calling of his name, for well he knew the danger he was in, and all his face turned pale, since any of the kings of India would give his weight in gold to have him in their power, and he said, "Nay, lady, my name is Antiochus," but she rose and took him by the hand with a kindly laugh, and going to the recess drew back the tapestry hanging and shewed him a picture in parchment whereon he was painted dressed in his royal robes. "See for thyself," said she, "that I have made no mistake." Then as the king looked on the picture his face turned yellow, and his flesh trembled. "Why fades thy fair hue?" said the lady, "thou warrior of all the world, the conqueror of Persia and of India, the Medes and the Parthians! Lo, now, thou art here in a woman's ward, in spite of all thy worthy deeds. Where is
184 now

now thy praise that reaches up to heaven? It is gone at once, at the turning of the breath of a woman." Then she waited for a space, but the lord of Macedon answered her naught, for his heart waxed hot within him, and he ground his teeth with rage as he looked hither and thither, so she said, "Why dost thou vex thy soul, Sir Conqueror, what may thy manhood avail thee, or all thy rage?" Then the King answered her and said, "For one thing only I grieve, that I have not my sword, nor may I see any weapon." "And, my fair knight, what bold brave deed would thy sword help thee to, if thou hadst one?" "Since I am taken unawares," quoth he, "surely I would slay thee where thou sittest, and myself after." Then Candace the Queen laughed out, "That were the deed of a true knight," said she, "but not yet are we to do and suffer such things; hast thou not rescued my son's wife from the hands of the king of Bebrik? Surely I shall save thee unharmed from my folk. Yet were it known that thou wert here, not all my power could save thee, since thou hast slain the Lord of India, good Porus, whose daughter my youngest son Caratros has taken to wife. But no man has seen thy picture from the day I had it till now." Then the Lord of Macedon came near her, and she took him by the hand and led him into the hall of the palace.

Now when Candace the Queen left Alexander
185 in

in the hall she came on her two sons Candoyl and Caratros, and they were in sore strife. For after the Queen had borne away with her the Greek, Caratros said to his brother Candoyl, "Now has this Greek Lord slain my father-in-law, Porus the Good, and needs must I have revenge or my wife will go mad. I will slay this lord Antiochus, his friend and messenger, and when he comes to revenge his servant, I will go out and slay him in combat." But Candoyl answered him, "My brother, the Lord of Macedon has helped me, and this knight, Sir Antiochus, has recovered for me my wife: I brought him hither, and I shall lead him in safety to his lord's tents." Then Candace the Queen said, "Caratros, my son, what honour will come to thee for slaying a guest and a friend? Shall anything come of it but sorrow?" But Caratros grew angry and said, "What ails thee brother, that we should strive with each other in this matter, leave me to do my will." Then Candace the Queen went quickly and took Alexander into council and told him how her son wished to slay him, and how Candoyl would fight for him. "Lord Alexander," said she, "I pray thee, make peace between my children." Then Alexander rose up, and came to the room of the brethren, and the clash of swords was heard, so he caught up a weapon and ran between them and beat down their swords, saying, "Fair lords, this must not be, ye must not fight alone." And
186 after

after he had quieted them, he spake to Caratros in fair words, saying, " My good lord, if you end my life, you can win no praise for it, since I am in thy hands. Alexander has seven hundred knights as good as I am, if I were precious to him, would he have let me come in a strange land without ward or retinue? Not so, my lord, but if in truth you desire to look on Alexander, you need but give me the goods I crave for and I will immediately put that prince into your hands." Then Caratros rejoiced, and kissed his brother in his joy; and Candace the Queen called to her Alexander and said, " Happy should I be, if you were ever with me, then should all my foes be destroyed." So she gave him a crown of amethysts and diamonds, and a noble mantle, and dearly she kissed him, and bade him farewell. And the Lord of Macedon departed and with him Candoyl went as his guide, for he thought that Caratros his brother might again change his mind and work him evil, if the Greek knight returned alone to the camp; and he purposed to lead him through the mountains and to shew him the place where Candace his mother worshipped the great gods, and heard oracles of things to come, and learned the mysteries of the gods.



CHAPTER XIX. TELLS HOW ALEXANDER DEFEATED GOG AND MAGOG, HOW HE WENT UP INTO THE AIR, AND DOWN INTO THE SEA.



CANDOYL and Alexander rode from the city out into the open country, and all day passed through it, till as the sun went down they came near the hills, and they found there a cave, great beyond measure, hidden between two hills, and there they harboured all night. And when evening was come Candoyl spoke to Alexander and said, "Sir, in this cave men say that the gods appear, and tell men what shall come to pass." Then was Alexander rejoiced and gave thanks to the gods, and went in to the darkest part of the cave, but Candoyl abode at the mouth. And as Alexander drew near he saw a great cloud and from it a light glimmering like stars, and as he gazed him thought
he

he saw in the midst of it a throne, and on it was a great grisly god whose eyes shone out fierce like lanterns. Then was Alexander sore dismayed, and fell to the ground. "Hail, Alexander!" quoth that high god. "Sire, what is thy name, and how shall I call thee?" said the king. "Thinthusus is my name, and all the world is under my hand. Yet hast thou built a city in thy name, and thou hast set me there no temple." "Sire, if I return to Macedon, I will build thee a temple as master of the gods: none shall be like it in any land." "Nay, nay, long not thereafter; thou shalt never look on that land. Go further, and behold." Then the king looked and he saw another cloud not far off, so he went thither, and lo! another grim god seated before him. Kneeling on the earth he asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" and the god answered him, "I am Serapis, the god of thy father, the father of gods." Then said Alexander, "Tell me, I pray thee, the name of the man that shall slay me:" but the god answered him, "O king, in time past I told thee that should any man know the cause of his death beforehand, he would suffer greatly; be of good heart, thou hast conquered many nations, thou shalt yet do great deeds; thou hast built a mighty city which shall endure for ever; many men shall resort there, and many races of kings shall rule it; thou shalt die and be buried in a noble city far from thine own land." Alexander bowed himself down

before the god and returned to the mouth of the cave, and found Candoyl waiting for him in the morning dawn, and the plain lay before him covered with his armies, and he bade farewell to the son of Candace, each departing to his own.

It fell as Alexander rode on towards his camp that he began to doubt in his mind that something was wrong, for all things looked to be untended, and no guards were set round the army, and as he drew nearer he heard shouts and cries, so he spurred up his steed and rode into the camp, and no man stopped him, for all were drawn to one place. But when he had come thither he found that the Greeks were drawn up in array, and that the Indians and Persians were running hither and thither, shouting and crying; so that every now and then a band of them would turn against the Greeks and make as if to force their way among them, and when they were driven back they would again begin to cry and shout. So the Lord of Macedon rode up among them, and no man of the Indians knew him, for his helmet was closed, and he came to his own men and they knew him, and shouted for joy and opened a way for him. Then he sent for Ptolemy, and when he was come he asked him what was the cause of this trouble and why the Indians were so sore afraid. But it is to be said that at the sound of Alexander's voice all men had returned to their tents and the guard had
190
gone

gone out round the camp. Then Ptolemy told the king how that men had come to the camp three days ago telling of a new and strange folk coming from the north, frightful beyond bearing, and how they destroyed all things they came across and spared nothing that was good, but what they consumed not they wasted, and whom they kept not for slaves they killed in their wanton sport. And they were short, shorter than any men, and no man might look on them without fear. So these men had fled from before them, and they had come to King Alexander to preserve them from their enemies, and Ptolemy charged them to tell their tale to no man. But when they had been in the camp two days and had not seen the Lord of Macedon, their fear broke out again, and they told their tale to whoever would hear them, and the story spread, and a saying arose among the Indians that this foe was right at hand, and they clamoured for Alexander to come out and lead them, and they threatened to tear the camp to pieces if he came not.

Then were these ambassadors of fear brought before Alexander, and he questioned them of this people and of its coming, and they told him how that they were scarce ten days' journey from them, and that they were settled in that land and had sown a crop, for it was ever their custom to come into a land at sowing time and to make the men of that land their slaves, so that they reaped the
191 harvest

harvest for them, and then to slay them or drive them out to starve. And the ambassadors told how this race of dwarfs raged horribly at the name of Alexander, and said they had come to destroy him and the Greeks from the face of the earth, and they told last how these men were enemies of the Gods themselves above all things, so that evil was their good and good their evil. Then Alexander asked which of them had seen this folk, but no man had seen them, save one who had been far off them. So he sent for the clerk who had told him of the double-dealing of Porus and straitly questioned him, and he told the king how these folk were scarce two cubits high, but stronger than mortal men. "For in winter they wear no clothing, but they are covered with hair from their waist downward; their mouths are huge and set with fangs like a wild boar, their hands are like lion's claws, no man may look on their eyes when they are set on him, and their ears are so great that in sleep they serve as coverlets. Two princes have they, whose names are Gog and Magog." Moreover the clerk said mayhap the saying of the ambassadors was true, that they would wait where they were till next spring time, yet mayhap they might move before winter came on. Then Alexander decided that he would attack these dwarfs in the land where they were and drive them back to their own land.

The tale tells that the march of the army lay
192 through

through a strange land and many wonders there befell them, for they passed through the valley of serpents and fought the griffins; they came to the shores of the sea and saw there wondrous beasts, and many things of which it were long to speak. On the third day of their march they came into a dark valley smelling sweetly of all spices, there cloves and ginger, and the pepper plant grew. But among these shrubs were many serpents and adders, who lived on the plants and had none other food, and these snakes had on their heads an emerald crown, as it were of goldsmith's beaten work. Now the people of that land, when they wish to gather the pepper, set fire to this wood, and the flame drives away the snakes, but blackens and rivels the pepper. In the hills of this place were many precious stones called smaragds, and Alexander set his heart on gathering them, and sent men to climb the hills, but when they came near the place where the stones were, beasts came out and fell on them, in shape like lions but with cleft claws a yard across, and among them were griffins, with birds' wings and beak and claws but otherwise like to a lion, and each of them so strong that it might bear away a knight full armed on his horse. Then came up Alexander and encouraged his dukes, and bade them shoot with a will, and the archers and arbalasters shot altogether, and the knights struck down and killed many of the beasts with their lances and

their battleaxes, but the griffins tore the knights from their saddles and with their tails blinded them so that they could not see where to strike, and at last the Greeks were driven down, and over two hundred of those who wore golden spurs were slain in that fierce fight. Yet were a few of the griffins beaten down, and four of them were bound in strong chains and borne away by Alexander.

On the morrow after the host had come clear away from these hills, it came to a great and mighty river running straight down to the shores of ocean, and its banks were covered with huge reeds, longer than the highest tree, and so heavy that twenty men could scarce lift them. Of these reeds Alexander bade them make barges and ferry over his host, for the river was twenty furlongs broad, and two days were spent in the crossing over of the army. And when Alexander and his men were on the further side of the river the people of the land came to him, and they were a simple folk, clothed in the skins of great fish and of beasts. Nor were they inhospitable, for they brought sponges, white and purple, mussels so great that six men might make a meal of one, eels from the river thicker than a man's leg, and lampreys weighing twenty pounds each. Then Alexander thanked them for their gifts, and gave them great rewards, and asked them of their land and its wonders, and they told him of the sirens who lived in that river, women with long hair

hair for clothing who lived in the water like fishes. Yet when these creatures saw any man they drew him into the water, if he knew not their craft, and kept him there till he died, and sometimes they bound him to the great reeds and forced him to make sport for them till at the last they killed him, for they had neither love nor hate nor any care or thought, naught of mankind save its outward semblance. Then Alexander bade his men to search for these beasts and offered great rewards, and at the last two of them were taken and brought before him, and they were white as snow, their hair came down to their feet round their body, and they were taller than men have custom to be, yet they could not live without water, and in few hours' time both were dead.

And Alexander the king spoke with their wise men of the combat with the dwarfs from the desert of the north, since the men of that land were exceeding wise, and they told him of the way by which he could fall on them at unawares; and when they knew that he had with him in the host the griffins they rejoiced and told him of a marvellous thing. Then the Lord of Macedon caused his smiths to make him a chair of black iron, and on the top of it at each corner was a large smaragd stone, and they brought the chair to the top of an exceeding high mountain in that land, and when they had come thither they bound the griffins to each corner

of the chair at the bottom with great and very strong chains, for Alexander was minded to be carried up into the air by the griffins that he might see all lands. So when he was set in his chair and covered round with great bars of iron, he bade them uncover the eyes of the griffins, and they saw the smaragd stones fixed high above them and all at once they flew up towards the stones, for the sight of that stone is meat and drink to these animals, and they hunger to gather it together and to bear it off to their dens, neither care they for any hurt they receive in the getting of it. So they flew and soon Alexander was borne out of sight of men, high above the clouds, and he saw the earth below him like a basin, and the lands, and the way to the dwarfs, the men of Gog and Magog, and still they flew higher and the earth grew small like a mill-stone and the ocean and the rivers seemed like a writhing adder, and then the gods struck the griffins with fear, and they shut their eyes and stretched out their wings, and sunk lower and lower till they lay at the last on the ground in a green field in a strange land, and Alexander looked round and saw far off the towers of Jerusalem. But the griffins arose, and flew away till they came to their nest in the mountains, and when they came thither the Lord of Macedon left his seat and made his way through the hills till he came to the river, when he crossed it and came to his army again.

Then marched the host on its way and at the last it came near the country of the ambassadors where the abominable dwarfs were, and when they came there the ambassadors went forward to bring the news of the coming of the Greeks. It chanced that the third day after the coming of the ambassadors was a feast of the dwarf-folk, and all the men of that country kept the news of the coming of the Greeks from them so that they met in all their number in one place. It was of custom among them that every feast some one should be slain in torment that the chief men of the dwarf-folk might give a presage of what should befall the folk, and that feast one of them was to be slain for he had given food to a man that was starving in a prison cell. So the ambassadors returned and told Alexander what was to be done; and he deemed it well to fall on them when they were all in one place. And this he did, and the fight was long and sore between him and the dwarfs, for the dwarfs were so small that they escaped the lance point, and they ran under the horses and houghed them, and their skins were so tough that the arrows glanced off them, if they did not hit straight, and the sword edges slipped, but the claws of the dwarfs and their teeth and their arrows availed them little against the armour of the Macedonians.

In the night after the battle of the first day the guards cried out for that lights were moving on the
field

field of battle, and soon three dwarfs came near holding in their hands peeled white wands; and when the guards saw them they brought them to the tent of Alexander. Then the eldest of them said, "O leader of the Greeks from Macedon, truly ye be braver than the Persians or the men of India, give us now an ounce of gold and a sword for each man and we will return whence we came." Then Alexander said, "O leader of the dwarfs, haters of God and men, meseems I am not come to this land but to free mankind from you. If ye abide my face till day I will slay you all, and if ye flee I will pursue you till ye return to your own land." Then he bade his men to take them and lead them from the camp.

It was of custom among this folk to travel in great waggons, and to make of these their forts in times of danger, so on the morrow when the Greeks and the Persians drew out in battle array, the dwarf-folk came not forth all to attack them as on the day before, but the more part stayed within the waggons, and when the knights rode up to the waggons their progress was stopped and they could go no further, and the dwarfs stood on the waggons and mocked and jeered at them as they shot their arrows at them, and the knights were sore angered and brought up firebrands but the dwarfs had covered the waggons with hides so that they burnt not. So that day wore on, and when night came

198 the

the Greeks returned to their camp, and they spent the night in plans for the morrow. When it was light the army of Alexander got them ready for another day's fighting, but when they came out on the plain, they found not the hordes of the dwarfs for they had departed, burning all the country round. Then Alexander provided good store of food and drink and began to follow up the abominable dwarfs, for well he knew that he should find neither on the road, for these wretches destroy all the crops and poison and defile all the springs of water they pass. And after many days he came to the land of the dwarfs, and there he found two-and-twenty kings, and fought a great battle with them, and made them give up all the iron and copper in their land, and then he set his men to build a great wall at the entrance to their land.

Now the land of the dwarfs lies behind two very high mountains and there is no way by which men may come in or go out of it but between these mountains, so Alexander built a wall across from one to the other and he strengthened it with the iron and the copper of the dwarfs, and wrought mighty spells on it, so that no dwarf should pass over it, and left them there. And all the world rejoiced and praised the name of Alexander, and this deed of his was counted the greatest of his life. And in after days a tale grew, and men told how every day the dwarf-folk came down to the wall and
199 tore

tore it down bit by bit with their claws, and night by night the spells of Alexander prevailed and the wall was made whole again, because this folk feared not the gods, nor obeyed them. But the tale tells that when the enemy of the gods and the deceiver of men shall come on earth, he will teach them to name their children "Inshallah," which means, if the gods will, and then when they call their children to help them, they will tear down the wall, and come out from their prison, and destroy the cities of Alexander, and the works of men since his time, and bring death on all men, if the gods stay them not.

Furthermore men told of this dwarf-folk, that they have among them sorcerers who work such spells that the might of the dwarfs is increased an hundred-fold, and that when the time shall come, these sorcerers will run through the air between heaven and earth, swifter than the wind, and will slay a child, and will dip the weapons of the dwarf-folk in its blood, and each of the dwarfs shall have with him a hundred warriors on horseback, armed with mace and spear. And when they ride out through the broken wall and through the iron threshold that Alexander built to strengthen the wall, the hooves of their horses shall wear away a span-depth from the lower threshold of iron, and their spear-points shall wear away a span-height from the upper threshold of brass. And these sayings of men show how great was their fear of the

dwarf-folk, and their thanks to the Lord of Macedon, who freed the land from them.

After these things the heart of Alexander was lifted up and he thought within himself that he was even as one of the high gods, for he had travelled through the air, where no man had been before, borne by griffins on an iron throne, and he had saved all men from the foes of mankind, and he had raised himself above all men in power and dignity, nor had any man conquered him or stood before his face. So when his army turned and came to the shores of ocean, a new thought came into his mind how that he would see the wonders of the sea, and the things that live there, and come not up to the surface of the deep.

So he ordered, and his cunning men began to make for him great sheets of green glittering glass, and to shape it into a box, and bind it with great girths of iron, that he might sit in it and see all things that were without it, while he himself was untouched. Then he bade them take it to the borders of ocean, and bind great chains to it, and take it in a boat, and when he was entered into it to let it sink to the bottom of the sea for a set space of time. And as all things were ready, and he had given in charge to Roboas, son of Antipater, whom he loved, to draw him up after the set time, there came to him a clerk who had been sent to him by Roxana the Queen on a special errand. So the

201 clerk

clerk drew near, and said, "O Alexander, thus saith Roxana thy Queen and thy love: Many nights have I been troubled concerning thee, for a man with two horns on his head has stood by me, and has warned me of evil that may hap to thee. Now, therefore, I send thee a ring, one of the treasures of Darius, my father; slay and offer a sacrifice to the gods, rub the ring with the blood, and wear it, and no evil shall happen thee on the sea or under it." Then Alexander did as the messenger bade him, and offered the sacrifice to the gods, and put the ring on his finger, but none of those who stood by understood the matter, for the message was a secret one.

The tale tells that Alexander entered into the vessel of glass, and quickly shut the wicket; and his princes pointed it with pitch so that no water might come in at the joints, and in a moment he entered the deep with a heavy plunge. There saw he fish whose figures he had never dreamed of, with forms diverse and horrible, and creeping things and four-footed things crawling on the sea bottom, and feeding on strange fruits of corals and sea weeds and trees growing on the sand and sea ooze, and great monsters came sailing up to the side of the cage and looked in and turned away affrighted, and other sights he saw such that he would never tell to any man till the day of his death, for they were so horrible that tongue could

Alexander sees the wonders of the sea





not tell or man hear them told, and Alexander fell down on the floor of his vessel of glass and lay there for a time without life.

Now when the set time was come that Alexander was to be drawn up, it fell that Roboas, the son of Antipater, was struck by some god with blindness, for he loosened the chain from the ship and let it fall so that it ran into the sea and sunk. And as he saw what he had done, and how he had destroyed the life of his lord, he plunged into the sea straightway, if so be he might die with him, for his comrades were like to tear him in pieces. But the great iron chains falling into the sea broke the vessel of glass, and the gods saved Alexander again, for the chains crushed him not, and the glass wounded him not, and he was borne to the surface of the sea whether by the rush of the water or by the virtue of the ring of Roxana, and his princes saw him come to the surface and they took him up, for they thought it was Roboas, and when they found it was Alexander great was their joy, and Roboas also they brought up, and Alexander forgave him, for much did he love him.



CHAPTER XX. HOW ALEXANDER CAME TO HIS LIFE'S END AND WAS BURIED, AND WHAT THEREON BEFELL.



FURTHERMORE AFTER THE descent of Alexander into the sea, messengers came from Susa with the word that the king of Babylon, Nabuzardan, had refused the tribute that he ought to pay, and had declared war against the Lord of Macedon, for he deemed that Alexander would not return from the far lands to which he had departed, and he thought that the city Babylon could not be taken of man, for it was exceeding great and strong, and needed help of no man when it was closed up. Then Alexander the king grew very wroth, and bade all men prepare to go to Babylon, for he would gather all the armies of the empire against it, and he turned his face towards the land of Babylon and marched towards it, and they went
 204 through

through mighty deserts and strange lands, and many strange things they saw and wild beasts of strange shapes, and some that breathed out fire, and had teeth and claws like iron, and were covered with scales like brass. But above all wonders of the land men brought him a certain bird called Caladrius. Now this bird is white of colour and hath no part of blackness, and its nature is such that when a man suffers from great sickness, and this bird turneth away its face from him that is sick, then without doubt the man shall die. And if the sick man shall escape, the bird setteth its sight on him and beholdeth him as it were fawning and playing. And Alexander made proof of its wondrous gifts.

Now the land of Babylon is the best land to bear all manner of bread-corn and fruit and wine; full of sweet spices, herbs, and trees; and most rich of precious stones and of divers metals, with great plenty of camels, horses, oxen, asses, mules and other beasts. And the greatness of the city may scarcely be told, for the walls were fifty cubits thick, and as much in height, and the city was four hundred and fourscore furlongs about. The walls were of burnt tiles and brick, and without was a broad ditch and deep. Into that ditch ran the river Euphrates all about the city. And in the front of the walls were an hundred gates, and about the walls were dwelling places for them that should defend

defend the city, and those places of defence were wondrous huge and strong.

On the day that Alexander came into the land of Babylon, there met him messengers from his mother Olympias and from Aristotle the wise, whom he had left to govern the land of Macedon. And Olympias wrote telling of troubles in the kingdom, how Antipater the father of Cassander and Roboas had stirred up the people against her, and how he sought to be king of Macedon, for he had heard that Alexander should return no more to Greece. But Aristotle wrote praising the wondrous works he had wrought, and the sights he had seen.

Soon the Lord of Macedon pitched his tents before the walls of Babylon, and called on Nabuzardan its king to yield himself up. Now it was the custom of Alexander when he besieged a town that for three days a white flag hung over his tent, and after that a black one flew, and if the town yielded while the white flag was flying, then Alexander received it into the number of his friends, but if they yielded not then were they treated as enemies and slain or sold for slaves. And three days did the heralds come to the walls of Babylon, and sound their trumpets and call on them to yield, but they did not, and on the fourth day, Alexander brought up great catapults and sent huge stones into the city, and the people feared and sent out the dead body of Nabuzardan their king, and yielded
206 them

them to the mercy of Alexander. Then the Lord of Macedon entered into the city with all his men, and they came into it and abode there many months.

So Alexander reigned in Babylon, and of the gold of India and of Persia he bade men make him a throne, and they brought the gold on horses, and on camels, and on elephants, and cast it into a heap twelve cubits high, and this was the fashion of the throne they made. It was at the top of twelve steps, and was surrounded by twelve images, the shapes of his twelve tried princes, and each of these held up the heavy work of the canopy of the throne. The seat of the throne was of smaragd stone, green and clear, and above all, in the canopy, was a lovely carbuncle which shone in the darkest of the night like a sun, and on the steps of the throne were engraved the names of all the countries of the world, for they were subject to his rule. Then made he a crown adorned with noble and precious stones, rich beyond all telling, and on it was a name telling of his power and might. And his heart swelled within him and he forgot the warnings of the gods who had told him of his death.

Then wondrous things began to happen in the land, signs and marvels, for on one day an ass fell upon a noble lion and kicked it to death, nor did the lion resist, and on another day a child was born in shape like a lion from the waist up, and the child

spoke a word and died. So Alexander asked his wise men and the priests of Babylon, and they told him that it showed evil that should happen to him. And this is how the evil came. There was a certain great lord in Macedon, Antipater by name, and he sent to gather poison from the rock of Nonacris, and so strong was this poison that no cup or vessel might contain it, save only it were made from the hoof of a horse. So when he had gathered it he sent messengers to his son Cassander with the poison, and he bade him fear not to use it. Now Cassander and Roboas his brother had determined evil towards Alexander in their hearts since the day when Roboas had let Alexander loose in the sea, and since the day when Cassander had come into the camp to Alexander. For when Cassander had done his homage to his lord, one of the Indian kings came up and fell on the ground before him, and kissed the ground at his feet, and Cassander laughed out at the Indian king, wherefore Alexander was offended, and struck him a blow so that he reeled against the wall. So when the poison came Cassander rejoiced, and he told his brother, and they set a day to kill the Lord of Macedon, the noble Alexander.

The tale tells how Alexander held high feast in his palace at Babylon, seated on his golden throne with his crown on his head, and Roxana the queen by his side, and with him the twelve princes of
208 Greece,

Greece, who had been his companions and his friends from the days of his youth up. And they rejoiced and were glad, for all nations were put under their feet, and the burden of warfare was over, and now they had to rule the folk and to lead happy days, and they trusted that they should be great kings under Alexander the emperor. And now men passed the wine, and full draughts were drunk, and Nearchus told a tale of the wonders that he had seen in the great sea of ocean when he had sailed there at the orders of Alexander, and another great lord reached for a lyre and sung a song of old days. Then men told tales of their deeds in battle, and each man boasted how near he had been to Alexander in the days of the great battles, and at the last men fell to talk of that good steed Bucephalus, and how he bore the king in battle, and served him faithfully, and fought with him, and Cassander said to Roboas his brother "What thou hast to do, that do," and Roboas rose and brought a cup to Alexander, and said "Dear Lord, this cup is made from the hoof of thy brave steed, Bucephalus the white; drink we a cup in memory of this horse, the best in the world." And Alexander rose and said "O Bucephalus, my fair horse, thou failedst me never; were this cup my bane, I would refuse it not from thee," and he drank it down. Then he sat down for a space, and then he fell forward from his seat, and his sword fell from

its sheath, and pierced his side, and he called but twice "Help! Help!" Yet when his lords ran to him and raised him, he said "Nay, my good lords of Macedon, it is nought; drink ye and rejoice for the good days to come," but he turned to Cassander and said "My faithful liegeman, go and fetch me somewhat to ease me of this pain," for he trusted in Cassander as he did in his nearest friend. But Cassander brought him that which only increased his pain.

That night Alexander the king lay alone in his palace at Babylon, for he would have no man near him to watch by him or to guard him, and as he lay the cold poison weighed on his heart. Then his brain grew dizzy and faint, and the room seemed measurelessly great, and all men seemed far away. The beginning of the night seemed to be long time past, the dawn of day was still too far away to hope for, the pain became over great to bear, the poison ran through the veins and seemed to eat his throat with a cold fire, and in the midst of his trouble and fear the light went out and the darkness came on him like a net round him. Then he feared indeed, for he knew that he could not stay there with the terror that was on him, and he tried to stand and walk, but he could not for his wound and the poison that he had drunk, he thought of the great cold river flowing near and the water seemed to call him, so he crawled out of the room

on hands and knees painfully, step by step, till the morning broke and he found himself in the garden of the palace close on the bank of the river, and said, "The gods have left me, and I know not why; but one more effort, and I shall be free of this burning and wound." Then he heard a great cry "My lord, my life!" and Roxana the Queen came running down the garden to him, and after her the women, and the lords of Greece. So one of them snatched a shield from the guard that came up and laid it on the ground for the King, and Roxana sat him on the shield and rested his head on her bosom, while Ptolemy held up his golden shield over him to guard his eyes from the rays of the morning sun, and a cry of confused voices went up round him. Then Roxana the Queen said, for in truth she knew not what to say, "See, my lord, a canopy of gold for my Emperor." "Aye, fair lady love," said Alexander, "a sky of gold, and a soil of iron; now are the fates accomplished and my time is surely come; bear me back to my bed that I may die there." Then at the word all men there burst into tears and lamentation, for the end of all things seemed at hand now their lord was to die so young, and what words can tell the grief of Roxana the Queen.

So his lords bore him gently to his bed in the palace, and stood round it, and listened to the words that he spoke, and Alexander sent for his scribes

and bade them bring parchment and an inkhorn for his will. So it was done and he shared out all the lands that he had conquered amongst his war-dukes, to every man of them a kingdom. And he left to the priests of Egypt a thousand talents of gold and his body that they should keep it for ever, and for his wife Roxana, if she should have a son he should be Emperor after him, if a daughter she should be married to the best of the Macedonians and he should be Emperor. Then Alexander put his seal to the parchment, and all the dukes put their seals on it as witnesses, and the will was folded up and laid in a precious casket before them all.

Now drew on the time that this noble Prince was to die, and all the world suffered with the pain of losing him. The thunders rolled and crashed, the lightnings flashed wide over the land, and there was a darkness of thick clouds, and the earth was rent hither and thither, and huge towers toppled and fell, so that all that was strong and well-founded became weak and unstable as water, and the foundations of all things were shaken. Then men in far-off lands feared and wondered what these things should mean, and when they hurried to the temples of the gods to enquire, the oracles answered "The earth is poorer to-day by the loss of its most noble knight and king," and all men knew that Alexander was dying. Then the seamen heard voices over the sea of weeping and wailing, and they knew that all

212 people

people mourned for the death of the Lord of Macedon, the bravest, the most courteous, and most generous of knights.

But the army of the Macedonians came round the dwelling of their chief, as it ever was their wont in time of danger, though they knew that they could not help him, nor he them, in this his day of passing away from them. Their hearts longed to see him once more, to look on the face that had led them smiling into danger and out of it again, and it may be, to touch the hand that had struck such blows in their aid, or had given such gifts to them as he had. So Alexander the king was brought on his bed into the great hall of his palace, and the Macedonians crowded round to see him, and one of them was over-bold and asked him "Whom dost thou leave to be lord of thine army?" and Alexander lifted up his head and said "Perdiccas, I leave my army and my Queen in thy charge, take care of them: as I have loved thee, love and keep them in my memory." Then the Macedonians began to weep and lament and those who were near kissed the cold hand of their king, and they went out, and the sound of their sobs and lamentations was like the dying away of a thunder storm far off.

There stood up in the midst of them a lord of Macedon, Solentius by name, and said "Men of Macedon, our land was a small one, and our name was lightly esteemed in Greece, till this man's father

was born, and he ruled us and made us a mighty people among the Greeks, and subdued Athens and made us first among the folk of our land. And when he died, and Alexander our lord came to the throne he went wide into the world, and rode over it, and conquered it, and he made the footmen of his army lords over the people and kings among the barbarian folk, so that no man stands before the Macedonians, and they are the first of folk under heaven. Now is he at point to die, and what shall fall to us, for no man has he left behind him who can take his place. Soon shall the empire of the Macedonians be broken to pieces, and the name of the country be forgotten." And all men said that he had spoken true, and they lamented exceedingly.

And Alexander died : and the sun was eclipsed.

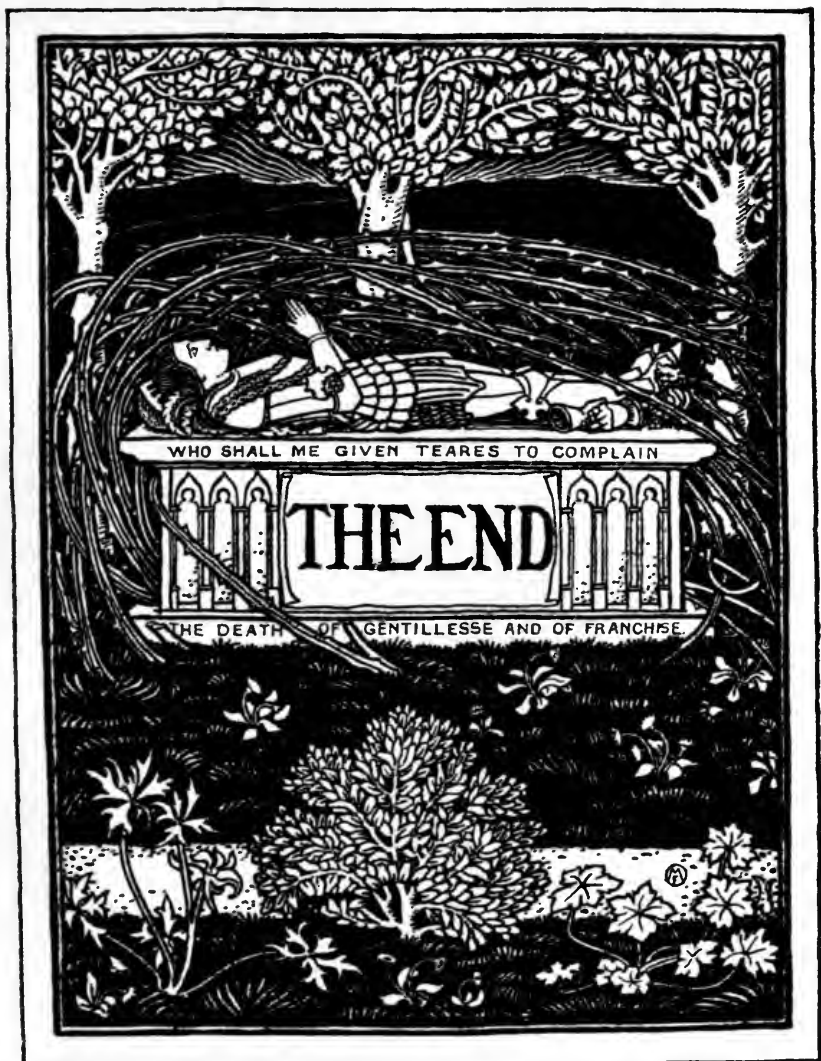
Then Ptolemy sent physicians, and they embalmed the body of Alexander, and dressed it in his imperial robes, and set it in a chariot, and with all the army of Macedon, marched from the land of Babylon to the land of Egypt, to the city of Alexandria which Alexander had built. And when they were come there, Ptolemy built a golden sepulchre for him in a high place looking over the city he had built and the sea, and there he set a chair of state, and in it was the body of Alexander, clothed as the Emperor of the World, with his crown upon his head : his right hand held a golden sceptre, and his left a golden ball, and on his knees lay his sword,

sword, sheathed and swaddled in his girdle, for he should no more draw it in the face of the foe.

The tale tells of Olympias that when men told in Macedon that Alexander was dead, Antipater the traitor sent men, and they seized the lovely queen, and slew her, and cast out her body to the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air; and great wars followed that cruel deed. And other things are told of the son of Alexander and Roxana, but never did he reach the empire of his father, nor attain the fame of Alexander.

On a day there came to the tomb of Alexander wise men from all lands, and one said, "Alexander made his treasure of gold, and the gold endures, but not Alexander." The second said, "Yesterday the whole world did not satisfy him, to-day four ells are enough." The third said, "Yesterday he ruled the people, to-day the people rules him." The fourth said, "Yesterday he could save a multitude from death, to-day he cannot save his own life." The fifth said, "Yesterday he led his army from the city, to-day they led him to his burial." The sixth said, "Yesterday he pressed down the earth, to-day it weighs him down." The seventh said, "Yesterday all men feared him, to-day they hold him in small honour." The last said, "Yesterday he had friends and enemies, to-day all men are alike to him."

Then they went away, and Alexander was alone, sitting in his chair of state, watching his city.



AFTER-WORDS

THE STORY WHICH HAS JUST BEEN TOLD may be looked on as the result of ten centuries of Eastern and Western imagination. The career of the historical Alexander is perhaps one of the most important things, in its way, that have happened on our earth, and could not fail to give rise to a plenteous crop of legend and of marvels. Even in his lifetime the Greek orators allowed their language to run riot in the telling of his deeds, which required no exaggeration to stand out before the world.

The form of the story was fixed much as we have it now, certainly before the third century of our era, and probably much earlier, in the work of which a corrupt text has come down to us, under the name of Callisthenes, one of the companions of Alexander. The Greek text of this work was printed by Muller (Paris, 1877) from three MSS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, which represent three different classes of MS. There are about twenty MSS. of the work known.

*Greek Text
of Pseud-
Callisthenes.*

The origin of this romance is probably Egyptian. In fact, there seems little reason to doubt Favre's guess, that its composition was due to one of the Ptolemies, who were successors of Alexander on the Egyptian throne, and willing to legitimatise their rule by connecting it with that of the last of the ancient kings. The style of the Greek seems to be Alexandrian, and Nicephorus Calistes (X. 36), speaks of the Life of Alexander written by the Alexandrian. Other considerations tend to support the Egyptian origin of the romance. The character of the magic is distinctly Egyptian (see a very interesting discussion of some points in Budge's Syriac Version of the Alexander Story, pp. xxxix. *et seq.*). The way in which magic has been attributed to Anectanabus agrees with Egyptian tradition, which has

*Probable
Alexan-
drian origin
of the
Romance.*

always

always attributed supernatural powers to him. Reuven, in his Third Letter (p. 76), gives an account of a papyrus describing some of his magical powers, and Tertullian, in the "De Anima" (lvii.), names him as one of the masters of magic.

The story was translated into Latin by Julius Valerius early in the fourth century, since the translation is one of the sources of the "Itinerarium Alexandri" (340–345 A.D.). An epitome of Julius Valerius, made in the ninth century, was published by Zacher (Halle, 1867). Our earliest MS. of Julius Valerius is at Turin, and dates from about 800 A.D. He is quoted by Syncellus in the eighth century, and by Malala in the ninth.

The most important translation—the one which is known as the "Historia Alexandri Magni de Proeliis"—is, however, due to the tenth century. Leo the Archpriest seems to have been sent on an embassy to Constantinople to the Emperors Constantine and Romanus (920–944) by John and Marius, Dukes of Campania (941–965), and while there he seems to have collected many books, among which was the Story of Alexander. On his return he was commanded by Duke John to translate the story into Latin.

The Alexander Story came into European literature early in the twelfth century. As far as we know it was introduced by Alberic de Besançon. Of his work there exists now only a fragment of about 105 lines, first printed by Heyse, Berlin, 1856, 8vo. We can, however, judge of it by the decasyllabic poem, of which two portions are printed by Meyer. It was founded on Julius Valerius and the authentic histories of Alexander. Alberic rejects with disdain the story of Anectanabus' parentage of Alexander, judging it a disgrace

disgrace to any true knight to be base-born. The character of the missing parts of the poem may also be gathered from the German version of *Lamprecht the preacher*, who wrote towards the end of the twelfth century, and who seems to have made use of Alberic's poem till it concluded with the episode of Nicholas. The poems printed by Meyer here change their versification, and are henceforth in Alexandrines, the continuator being Simon le Poitevin.

*Lamprecht's
Version.*

The development of the Alexander Story in Europe is due, however, neither to Alberic nor Lamprecht, but to Lambert li Tors and Alexandre de Bernay (or Paris), who in the middle of the century wrote the romance in Alexandrines. The poem was full of the magical wonders which Alberic had rejected; it adopted the Egyptian origin of Alexander and the wondrous stories of Bucephalus, and became instantaneously popular.

*Lambert li
Tors, and
Alexandre
de Paris.*

But medieval listeners were not satisfied with so meagre information as the Romance of Alexander gave. Here was a great king foully murdered, beautiful queens beheaded; is there no justice in the skies? So in quick succession came the "Testament d'Alexandre" of Pierre de Saint Cloor, and in 1190 "La Vengeance Alexandre" of Gui de Cambrai. Another poem on the same subject was written between 1288-1308 by Jean le Nevelois (Nevelaux), and a new cycle of poems was opened by the "Voeux du Paon" of Jacques de Longuyon, 1312, the "Restor du Paon" of Brisebarre de Douay (before 1338). The Alexander cycle finishes by Jean de la Mote's "Parfait du Paon," 1340.

*The Alexan-
der Cycle.*

Meanwhile the Alexander Story itself had gone on its way. Eustace of Kent had incorporated it in his (still
221 inedited)

inedited) "Roman de Toute Chevalrie" in the middle of the thirteenth century. Four manuscripts of this work still exist, and it seems to be the stock from which many English translations have been made, notably that published by Weber in 1810. About the same time the prose translation of the "De Proeliis" was made, a translation which profoundly influenced the later story-tellers. Soon the Epitome of Julius Valerius, and a letter of Alexander to Aristotle, giving an account of the wonders of India, were translated. Frère Jehan de Vignay wrote a prose romance of Alexander in 1341, unfortunately lost, and the roll is closed in 1445 by "l'Histoire d'Alexandre" of Jean Wauquelin.

Our English versions seem to have been later. Very few of them have been printed, a fact perhaps due to the very insufficient support extended to the Early English Text Society, which has printed the portions to be found of two of them. Our earliest version seems to be that of which some extracts are given in Warton. There was an English version of 48,000 lines or so of the Alexander Story, belonging to the Duke of Roxburghe, but the MS. has disappeared. Weber, in his "Early English Metrical Romances," gives a rhymed poem of 8031 lines. Two fragments are known of an alliterative translation of Lambert li Tors, which must have been of enormous length; and a nearly complete poem, which follows pretty closely the "De Proeliis," is printed under the name of "The Wars of Alexander." The three last are published by the Early English Text Society. Gower, in the "Confessio Amantis," also makes use of episodes of the romance. Cockayne printed an A.S. version of the letter of Alexander.

We have thus run down the line which brought the tale

tale from Egypt to Chaucer's doors, so that he could sing that—

*“Alisaundre's storie is so commune
That everie wight that hath discrecionne
Hath herde somewhat or al of his fortune;”*

but we would not have the reader think that here is an exhaustive list, even along the line of descent we have traced, of the forms of the Alexander Story. Amongst other European versions are the German prose version (printed in 1478, Aug. Vind., fo.), made by John Hartlieb Moller, at the command of Albert, Duke of Bavaria. There are further, early Spanish, Italian, Norse, Swedish, Dutch, and Russian versions. An early rhyme, preserving an incident of the story, is printed by Schiller, “Thesaur. Antiq. Teuton,” t. i., in the Rhythm. de S. Annone, xiv., xv.

It hardly comes within our province to refer to other forms of the Alexander Story in Europe, except in the briefest possible way. A work often mistaken for the “De Proeliis” is the compilation of Radulphus of St. Albans, who compiled from Quintus Curtius and other authors a Life of Alexander. In 1236 William of Spoleto wrote a Life of Alexander in Latin elegiacs, a work quoted by Warton as of Aretinus Quilichinus.

The Pseud-Callisthenes is often spoken of as the work of Simeon Seth, protovestiarius of the palace of Antiochus at Constantinople, and was in the last century considered a translation from the Persian about the year 1070. Other reasons apart, the dissimilarity between the Egyptian and the Persian forms of the story would disprove this theory. Just as the Egyptians represented Alexander as the son of the last of their native kings, so the Persians represented him (in the popular legend) as the son of Darius (Codo-

*Independent
Legends—
Persian,
Arabic.*

mannus of the Kayanian dynasty), and of a daughter of Philip of Macedon, who was brought up by his grandfather, and afterwards overcame his elder brother. An independent tradition seems to have grown up among the Arabs, making him the son of an old woman, and born in obscurity, his name being originally Mazban (Lord of the Marches), son of Marzabah, descended from Yunan, son of Japhet (Burton, "Arabian Nights").

An early Arabic version of the Greek must have been made about the eighth century, from which the Syriac version we have at present was made, but unfortunately this *Syriac Versions.* has not been found. A Syriac version was made in the eighth century, of which parts exist; but our most complete version is that made in the seventh-ninth century, and published with a version by Budge. Eight chapters of this are missing, and it is noticeable that the source of the translation did not contain the interpolations from Palladius (367-431) which the Greek text now does. An Armenian version is attributed to Moses of Chorene (fifth century), who certainly knew the story.

The story early passed into Hebrew. It is found in Jos. ben Gorion (lib. II. p. 94, ed. Oxon. 1704, 4to), and a pseudonymous translation of the work of Ptolemy, son of Lagos, by Samuel ben Judah ben Sibbon of Granada, appeared in the thirteenth century. (See a French translation of a Hebrew version by J. Levi, "Revue des Etudes Juives," III. 241.) It is found in the Arabic of Said ibn *Armenian,* Patrik (939 A.D.), Patriarch of Alexandria (Euty- *Hebrew,* chus., ed. Pocock, Oxon. 1606), and in Gregory *Arabic, Persian,* Abul Farag (1265). Mohl believed that Firdusi *Ethiopian, Coptic.* had an Arab author before him when writing of Alexander. Among the Persian writers may be named Firdusi (1024), Nizami (1203), and Mirkond (1497).

(1497). An Ethiopic version will shortly be published by Budge; and among others existing are versions in Coptic, Malay, and Siamese. Several detached incidents connect themselves with the story. Thus we may mention the "Iter ad Paradisum," twelfth century (of Talmudic origin), printed at Königsberg, 1859; the Gog and Magog story, &c.

The Egyptian king who figures in our story as Anectanabus is known to history as Necht-neb-f (Nakhtenephen). His mutilated statue and two inscriptions are in the British Museum. He was overthrown by Ochus, and retreated into Ethiopia some four years after the birth of Alexander. We have already referred to the reputation for magic that attached to him early in the Christian era. The form Anectanabus is used as being the form (sometimes shortened to Anec) in which the name appears in Gower and the poet of "The Wars of Alexander." His history may be read in Wiedemann, "Aegyptische Geschichte," p. 716, or in Maspero, "Histoire du Peuples de l'Orient," pp. 566-7.

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that Plutarch had before him such a collection of tales as the "Pseud-Callisthenes," and was thinking of them when he wrote his first pages of the Life of Alexander. The tradition of his birth from the visit of a dragon is accounted for by the habits of the Macedonian women, who are accustomed to pet large snakes. Justin XI. 2, 3, and XII. 16, and Solinus, cap. XV., also mention the tradition. Other points where Plutarch is contradicting the legend will readily suggest themselves. However, this is saying nothing more than that many of the stories must have grown up about the time of Alexander, or soon after his death. The filiation of Alexander

Anectanabus.

Plutarch and the Alexander Story.

and Ammon is one of these, the cartouche of Alexander being "Alexander, son of Amen."

There has been no attempt to give a Greek character to the story. Even when the alteration of a letter would have made a good Greek name, as in the case of Pausanius, it has not been altered, and Sir Samson, Sir Balaan, speak for themselves. But, on the other hand, as the tales make him Christian or Pagan by turns, we have not tried to make him consistent. In the same way, it was found impossible to leave out the visit to Jerusalem, which makes such a central point in the medieval stories.

A word as to the illustrations—not those of our book, but those of the veritable medieval illuminators. Among the chief treasures of the British Museum are its *Medieval Illuminated Copies.* notably 19. D. 1 and 20. B. xx. Some others are older, but these are filled with most beautiful paintings of the incidents of the story. I may be allowed to mention one thing here which I have noticed. In each of them, at the beginning, is a sort of frontispiece divided into compartments, and labelled The Castle of Cairo, The Town of Babylon (with Anectanabus shown on the walls or elsewhere), The Garden of Balm, and The Mills of Babylon. Now, these seem to have no connection with the French prose translation in which they are found. Cairo is not mentioned in it, there is no story of a garden of balm, and there is no story of the mills of Babylon, which are large floating water-mills like those at Old London Bridge.

FINISHED THIS THIRTIETH DAY OF MAY
1894 BY ME, ROBERT STEELE, AND PRINTED
BY BALLANTYNE, HANSON & CO., LONDON,
FOR DAVID NUTT IN THE STRAND.







58287

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 675 715 7

