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THE GIRLS' BOOK OF FAMOUS QUEENS

Lydia Farmer

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Содержание

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DEDICATED

TO

MY DAUGHTER

PREFACE

IN the annals of history, women have played an important part; and among the famous sovereigns of the world, queens, as well as kings, have made their names illustrious by heroic deeds and great enterprises.

The names which we have chosen for this book do not include all the renowned female sovereigns; but their lives present some of the most important epochs in the world's history.

I am indebted to the assistance of my son, in the sketches of Queen Marie Antoinette and the Empress Eugénie.

THE AUTHOR.

SEMIRAMIS.
2069 B.C

"What shall I do to be forever known,
And make the age to come my own?" – Cowley.

THE name of Semiramis is associated with the story of Nineveh's glory, and the building of the mighty city of Babylon. And though historians differ widely regarding the time of her famous reign, and some even express doubts whether she ever really existed, holding that her story was a mythological legend, her name is too illustrious to be passed over in silence, and her deeds too remarkable to be ignored, if she did in truth live; and if the story is a mere legend, it is, moreover, so interwoven with historical records as to deserve mention.

The date we have chosen from among many, covering more than a thousand years, is the date of the founding of Nineveh by Ninus, who was said to be the son of the mighty Nimrod, whom some say founded this great city; his son only embellishing it. Rollin states that Nimrod was probably the famous Belus of the Babylonians, afterwards deified by the people and worshipped under the name of Baal.

The birth of Semiramis, the celebrated queen of Assyria, is

shrouded in mystery. Legends say that she was born at Ascalon, a city of Syria, and that she was the daughter of the goddess Derceto, and that her father was an Assyrian youth of striking beauty. Being deserted by her mother, she was fed by doves in the desert; and when she was about a year old, a shepherd named Simmas found the infant in a rocky place, and he adopted the foundling as his child, calling her Semiramis.

When she had grown to maidenhood, she was remarkable for her great beauty, and was also possessed of an unusual intelligence. Menones, the governor of Nineveh, having on one occasion been sent by King Ninus to inspect his Syrian flocks, beheld this beautiful maiden at the shepherd's dwelling, and being intensely pleased by her marvellous beauty, made her his wife. So great a power did Semiramis obtain over her husband Menones, that he was soon completely subject to her wishes, and so much did he respect her judgment that he sought her advice upon every project. King Ninus previously to this time had subjugated in seventeen years all the nations of Asia, with the exception of the Indians and the Bactrians. He had conquered Babylonia, Armenia, Media, Egypt, Phœnicia, Cœle Syria, Cilicia, Lycia, Lydia, Mysia, Phrygia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and reduced the nations on the Pontus as far as the Tanais. Then he made himself master of the land of the Cadusians and Tapyrians, of the Hyrcanians, Drangians, Derbiccians, Carmanians, Chorasmians, Barcians, and Parthians. He also conquered Persia, Susiana, and Caspiana. Ninus then determined

to build a mighty city, and so he founded Nineveh, or finished the work which his father had begun.

This city was built on the bank of the river Tigris. The circumference of the city was sixty miles, and it was surrounded by walls one hundred feet high, and so broad that three chariots might ride abreast upon the top. The walls were fortified with fifteen hundred towers, each two hundred feet high. When this great city was completed, King Ninus determined to march against the Bactrians, who yet withstood his power. According to the accounts of Ctesias and Diodorus, his army numbered 1,700,000 foot-soldiers, 210,000 cavalry, and about 10,600 chariots of war. The narrowness of the passes which protect the entrance to Bactria forced Ninus to divide his forces. The king of the Bactrians met him with 400,000 men. The Assyrians were successful in forcing their way into the country, but they suffered great loss. At length all of the cities were captured except Bactria, the chief city, where was the palace of the king. Ninus now besieged this city, and Menones, who was one of the chief counsellors of the king, sent for his wife Semiramis to come to the camp. Semiramis seized this favorable opportunity to display her power. She clothed herself in peculiar garments, so that it could not be ascertained whether she was a man or a woman; and this style of robe at a later day became the costume of the Medes and Persians. When she arrived in the camp, she perceived that the attack was directed chiefly against that part of the city lying in the plain, and not against the citadel; and she also perceived

that this caused the Bactrians to guard their fortifications with less vigilance. She thereupon made selection of a body of troops who were accustomed to climbing, and led them in person to the attack of the citadel. This she captured, and then signalled to the army below in the plains. The Bactrians, perceiving that their citadel was taken, made weak resistance, and the city was conquered. King Ninus so admired the daring courage of this beautiful woman who had gained for him such a victory, that he determined to make her his wife, and offered his own daughter to Menones, in exchange for his wife Semiramis. But Menones was too much attached to his wife to relinquish her to another, and then Ninus threatened to put out the eyes of Menones unless he would consent to this arrangement. The unhappy Menones, overcome with jealous love and fear, hung himself in despair, and King Ninus then married Semiramis. Accounts differ regarding the death of Ninus, which placed Semiramis upon this powerful throne. According to some, Ninus died after reigning fifty-two years, and bequeathed to her the sovereign power, their young son, Ninyas, being too young to reign. Others state that Ninus, at the request of Semiramis, granted to his young and beautiful wife the absolute sovereignty of his empire for five days. The young queen of twenty was seated upon the royal throne, the signet ring was placed upon her finger, and all the provinces of the realm were commanded to do her reverence, and obey implicitly her decrees.

Semiramis, having thus secured supreme authority, made

most ungrateful and wicked use of her power. She thereupon commanded her husband to be imprisoned, and afterwards put to death; and then declared herself his successor, and reigned alone during the remainder of her life. Whether she killed her husband or not, she is said to have erected for him a magnificent tomb adjoining the famous Tower of Belus, and adorned it with statues of massive gold.

She now resolved to immortalize her name by the erection of marvellous monuments, and undertaking mighty and difficult enterprises. She determined to surpass the fame of Ninus; and accordingly undertook the founding, or embellishment, of the great city of Babylon, in which work she is said to have employed two millions of men.

The foundation of Babylon had already been commenced by the builders of the famous Tower of Babel. Among the works in Babylon attributed to Semiramis, are the walls and towers and citadels; the bridge over the Euphrates, the temple of Belus, and the excavation of the lake to draw off the waters of the Euphrates. She is said to have founded other cities on the Euphrates and Tigris. She built huge aqueducts, connected various cities by roads and highways, in the construction of which she was forced to level mountains and fill up valleys. She is said to have marched with a large army to Media, and planted the garden near Mount Bagistanon. This mountain is more than ten thousand feet high, and she caused its steep face to be smoothed, and on it her picture was cut, surrounded by one hundred guards. She afterwards

made another large garden near the city of Chauon, in Media, and in the midst of it, upon a high rock, she erected a splendid palace, in which she remained for a long time. In Ecbatana she also built a magnificent palace; and in order to provide the city with water, she caused a tunnel to be cut through the base of the lofty mountain Orontes, to a lake lying upon its further side. The following is one of the many inscriptions she caused to be carved upon the monuments of her power and surprising greatness.

"Nature bestowed on me the form of a woman; my actions have surpassed those of the most valiant of men. I ruled the empire of Ninus, which stretched eastward as far as the river Hyhanam, southward to the land of incense and of myrrh, and northward to the country of the Scythians and Sogdians. Before me, no Assyrian had seen the great sea. I beheld with my own eyes four seas, and their shores acknowledged my power. I constrained the mighty rivers to flow according to my will, and I led their waters to fertilize lands that had been before barren and without inhabitants. I raised impregnable towers; I constructed paved roads in ways hitherto untrodden but by the beast of the forests; and in the midst of these mighty works I found time for pleasure and for friendship."

Semiramis was very vigilant and daring in the administration of her government. It is related that one morning, when she was making her toilet, it was reported to her that a revolt had broken out among a portion of the citizens. She immediately rushed forth, half-attired, with hair floating in disorder, and

bravely faced the tumultuous crowd of rioters. Her presence and eloquence quickly appeased their fury, and then she returned and calmly finished her toilet.

At length she determined to subjugate India. For two years she made preparations for this expedition. Her army consisted of 3,000,000 foot-soldiers, 500,000 horsemen, and 100,000 chariots. As the Indians were famous for their vast numbers of elephants which they used in battle, which were considered almost invincible, Semiramis determined to endeavor to overcome this obstacle by stratagem. She accordingly ordered 100,000 camels to be covered with the sewn skins of black oxen, in imitation of elephants; and each animal was mounted by a warrior. For crossing the Indus, 2,000 ships were built, and then taken to pieces and strapped on the backs of camels, while travelling on land. Stabrobates, the king of the Indians, had raised a mighty force to meet her. As Semiramis approached his realm, he sent messengers to her to inquire why she was making war upon him, and demanding to know who she was who thus dared to invade his kingdom. The haughty Assyrian queen replied, "Go to your king, and tell him I will myself inform him who I am and why I am come hither."

In the first contest Semiramis was victorious, and she took 100,000 prisoners; a thousand ships of the Indians were sunk in the Indus. But the Indian king, pretending flight, led the army of Semiramis after him. Having caused a large bridge to be built over the Indus, Semiramis landed her entire army on the other

side, and with her mock elephants in front of her forces, she pursued the retreating Indians. At first the Indians were alarmed by these false elephants; but finding out the stratagem, the king of India turned, and attacking Semiramis with his real elephants, her troops were put to flight, and she herself was wounded by an arrow and javelin thrown by the Indian king, who was mounted on his largest elephant. Semiramis and the remnant of her army hastened across the Indus; and as Stabrobates had been warned by seers not to cross the river, they came to terms of capitulation, and exchanged prisoners. Then Semiramis returned to Assyria with only one-third of her army left.

When she arrived again within the borders of her own kingdom, she was informed that her son Ninyas had conspired against her. As the oracle in the temple of Jupiter Ammon had previously declared that when her son should conspire against her, she would disappear from the sight of mortals and be received among the immortals, this news occasioned no resentment against Ninyas; but she immediately abdicated the throne and transferred the kingdom to him, and is said to have put herself to death, as though according to the oracle she had raised herself to the gods. Others relate that she was reported to have been changed into a dove, and thereupon flew out of the palace with a flock of doves. Wherefore, the Assyrians regard Semiramis as an immortal, and the dove as sacred to divinity. She was sixty-two years of age, having reigned forty-two years.

The following is one of the inscriptions in which she gives

her own genealogy, claiming celestial origin. She is said to have inscribed her name and praises of her own greatness upon many of the monuments she erected to immortalize herself.

“MY FATHER WAS JUPITER BELUS;

MY GRANDFATHER, BABYLONIAN SATURN;

**MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER,
ETHIOPIAN SATURN;**

**MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER’S
FATHER, EGYPTIAN SATURN;**

**AND MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER’S
GRANDFATHER, PHŒNIX**

CŒLUS OGYGES.”

This amusing catalogue of high-sounding ancestors may not seem so very ridiculous in view of the supposition that she never did exist as a mortal, but that her name and exploits

have come down through the legends of poetry. For it is stated by some authorities that the story of Semiramis, as related by Ctesias, from which source Diodorus takes his account, was founded upon Medo-Persian poems sung by the minstrels of Media and Persia, and that these poems represent the Assyrians as worshipping a female deity, who was called Istar-Bilit, the war-goddess, and also goddess of love. Istar of Arbela was the goddess of battle, and Istar of Nineveh was the goddess of love. Doves were sacred to her, and in the temples of Syria there were statues of this goddess with a golden dove on her head. She was invoked there under the name of Semiramis, a word meaning "high name." Thus the Medo-Persian minstrels have changed the legend of an Assyrian goddess into a heroine, and made her the founder of the Assyrian empire, just as Greek poets represent their heroes as children of the Immortals of Olympus.

Whether the story of Semiramis is a fabulous legend, or whether she is really a historical character, is rather difficult to determine; but her supposed exploits are so interwoven with Assyrian and Babylonian history that most authorities give her a prominent historical place; and if half of her marvellous deeds are true, she must without doubt hold an illustrious place amongst the famous queens of ancient history.

DIDO.
937 B.C

"As on the banks of Eurotas, or on Mount Cynthus' top, Diana leads her train of mountain nymphs, bearing her quiver on her shoulder, and moving majestic, she towers above the other goddesses; such Dido was, and such, with cheerful grace, she passed amid her train, urging forward the labor of founding and enlarging her mighty kingdom." – Virgil.

THERE are two accounts given of the famous Queen Dido. According to the historian Justin, Dido, called also Elissa, was the daughter of Belus II., king of Tyre. Ithobal, king of Tyre, and father of the famous Jezebel, called in Scripture Ethbaal, was said to have been her great-grandfather. Upon the death of Dido's father, her brother Pygmalion came to the throne. Dido married her maternal uncle, Acerbas, who is also called Sichæus by Virgil. Acerbas was the priest of Hercules, an office next in rank to that of king.

This priest possessed immense treasures which King Pygmalion desired to secure, and thereupon he assassinated Acerbas whilst the priest was officiating at the altar. Dido, who was greatly attached to her husband, was horrified at her brother's atrocious wickedness, and inconsolable in her great loss. She immediately determined to flee from Tyre, and take with her

the treasures of her husband, that they might not fall into the hands of the avaricious murderer. Having secretly collected quite a number of followers, Dido embarked in a fleet, and sailed from Tyre. Pygmalion, fearing that he would lose the coveted treasures, sent messengers to his sister begging her to return. The ships of Pygmalion's ambassadors having overtaken Dido, they delivered to her the request of the king. Dido apparently assented, but took the precaution when embarking to place in her ship, in the presence of Pygmalion's messengers, several bales filled with sand, which she informed them contained the treasures. When they were out at sea, Dido commanded her attendants to throw these bales into the sea; and then representing to those who had come from the monarch that only death awaited them, should they return to Pygmalion without the treasure, which they now supposed was buried in the ocean, she induced them to become her companions in her flight. Thereupon large numbers of the chief men joined her party. Dido, with her fleet, sailed first to Cyprus, which island had belonged to the dominions of her father, who had conquered it. Here she was met by the priest of Jupiter, and together with his entire family, he joined her expedition, in obedience to the supposed will of the gods. Dido also took on board her fleet eighty maidens of Cyprus, who afterwards married her Tyrian subjects.

Having been driven by a storm on to the coast of Africa, Dido bargained with the inhabitants for the purchase of some land upon which to make a settlement. The natives, fearful of the

power of these new neighbors, would only consent to sell such a portion of land as could be covered by a bull's hide. But the wily Dido was not to be thus baffled; and conceding to their terms with apparent willingness, she cut the hide of the bull into long and slender thongs, thus being able to enclose with them a large portion of ground. The space thus purchased was hence called *Byrsa*, from the Greek word, meaning "a hide," though some writers contend that the name of Byrsa, the citadel of Carthage, was derived from the Punic term *Basra*, "a fortification." Around this first settlement the city of Carthage arose, and Byrsa became the citadel of the place.

It is said, that when the foundations were dug, a horse's head was found, which was thought to be a good omen, and a presage of the future warlike genius of the people. After this Tyrian colony had become established, the fame of their queen, Dido, gained for her many suitors. But she refused all their offers, having made a vow that she would remain faithful to the memory of her husband, Acerbas. At length, Iarbas, king of Mauritania, sought her hand in marriage, and threatened war if his offers were rejected. Justin thus tells the story: —

Iarbas, sending for ten of the principal Carthaginians, demanded Dido in marriage, threatening to declare war against her in case of refusal. The ambassadors, being afraid to deliver the message of Iarbas to their queen, told her with Punic honesty, that he wanted to have some person sent him who was capable of civilizing and polishing himself and his Africans, but that there

was no possibility of finding any Carthaginian who would be willing to leave his place and kindred, for the conversation of barbarians, who were as savage as the wildest beasts. Here the queen, with indignation interrupting them, and asking if they were not ashamed to refuse living in any manner which might be beneficial to their country, to which they owed even their lives, they then delivered the king's message, and bade her set them a pattern, and sacrifice herself to her country's welfare. Dido being thus ensnared, called on Sichæus with tears and lamentations, and answered that she would go where the fate of her city called her. She demanded three months for consideration. During this interval she caused a large funeral pile to be erected, as if for the purpose of offering a propitiatory sacrifice to the manes of Acerbas. At the expiration of the time allotted she ascended the fatal pile, and with her last breath told the spectators that she was going to her husband, as they had ordered her. She then plunged a dagger into her heart, before they realized her fatal intention.

This action procured for her the name of *Dido*, a "heroine" or "valiant woman," her previous name having been Elissa; though some authorities declare that *Dido* neither denotes the "heroine," as Servius maintains; nor the "man-slayer," as Eustathius pretends; nor the "wanderer," as other writers claim; but the name *Dido* means nothing more than "the beloved," whether the reference be to Baal or to her husband. The other appellation, Elissa, is said to mean "the exulting," or "joyous one," though Bochart claims that it signifies "the divine maiden."

Her subjects after her death paid her divine honors.

Thus authorities differ as much over Dido's name as accounts differ regarding her life. Virgil's poetical version of the story deviates quite materially from the historical narrative of Justin; but as Virgil's famous poem of the Æneid has obtained such world-wide fame, and gained a lasting place in classic literature, his story of Dido is too important to pass by unnoticed, and may be thus briefly narrated. According to Virgil's account, Dido flourished about the time of the Trojan War, whereas historians place her 247 years later in history, or about 937 B.C.

Dunlop, in his History of Roman Literature, says: "Virgil wrote at such a distance of time from the events which formed the groundwork of his poem, and the events themselves were so obscure, that he could depart from history without violating probability. Thus it appears from chronology that Dido lived nearly three hundred years after the Trojan War; but the point was one of obscure antiquity, known perhaps to few readers, and not very precisely ascertained. Hence, so far was the violence offered to chronology from revolting his countrymen, that Ovid, who was so knowing in ancient histories and fables, wrote an heroic epistle as addressed by Dido to Æneas."

The reason of Dido's death is also differently stated by Virgil. But, notwithstanding these great and unreconcilable discrepancies, no one can fail to enjoy the charming story of Dido as related by the gifted poet.

After the fall of Troy, as narrated by the Greek poet Homer

in the Iliad, the city was taken by the stratagem of the wooden horse. Priam, the old king of Troy, was slain by Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles; Paris, the son of Priam, having previously killed the great Achilles by the shot of an arrow in his heel, as Hector had prophesied at his death. After the death of Paris, Helen married Deiphobus, his brother, and at the taking of Troy betrayed him, in order to reconcile herself to Menelaüs, her first husband, who received her again into favor. Homer continues the story of Ulysses in the Odyssey, while Virgil, the Latin poet, takes up the history of Æneas after the fall of Troy, and gives account of his many adventures by land and sea. As our sketch has only to do with his visit to Carthage and his meeting with Queen Dido there, we must confine our narration to that part of the Æneid.

While the battle was still raging in the city of Troy, and the old King Priam was slain in his palace by the son of the great Achilles, Æneas, finding the fate of Troy was sealed, hastened to his own home, and taking his old father Anchises upon his shoulders, and leading his little son Ascanius by the hand, followed by his wife Creüsa, they fled from the city to the temple of Ceres, where they were to meet others, who should accompany them upon their wanderings. But as Æneas hastened to go, Creüsa, his wife, was severed from him. Leaving Anchises and his son with his comrades who had assembled at the temple of Ceres, Æneas fled back into the city, searching for his wife. But nowhere could he find her, and as he sought her, sorrowing, lo! as he called her name, her image seemed to stand before him;

and thus her spirit addressed him: —

"Why art thou vainly troubled? The ruler of Olympus willeth not that Creüsa should bear thee company in thy journey. Weep not, then, for Creüsa, whom thou lovest, nor think that I shall be carried away to be a bond-slave to some Grecian woman. Such fate befits not a daughter of Dardanus, and daughter-in-law of Venus. The mighty Mother of the Gods keepeth me in this land to serve her. And now, farewell, and love the young Ascanius, even thy son and mine." So saying, the spirit vanished from his sight, and Æneas, weeping, returned to his father and son and his comrades, now gathered at the temple of Ceres.

Then Æneas and his companions builded themselves ships, that they might sail over the seas, in obedience to the command of the gods, that they should seek another land; and when a year was wellnigh passed, the work was finished. Whereupon they sailed, taking their gods with them. We have not space to recount their experiences in Thrace, Delos, or Crete; or to tell the story of the dreadful Cyclopés; nor of the death and burial of old Anchises in Sicily. But scarcely had they sailed from the land of Sicily, when Juno beheld them. Most wrathful was her countenance as she looked down upon these hated Trojans; and she said to herself: "Shall these men of Troy always baffle my august will? Shall I, though wife to mighty Jupiter, avail nothing against these people? Behold, none shall pay me honor and sacrifice if mortals thus withstand the wishes of the Goddess of Olympus." Thus musing in her heart, she betook herself to the

land of Æolia, where King Æolus holdeth the winds within the mountains; and though they roar within the earth with furious mutterings, their king restraineth them according to his will. To him fair Juno spoke: "O Æolus, whom great Jupiter maketh king of the powerful winds, listen to my words. A nation whom I hold in no favor now saileth over the Tuscan seas. Loose now thy storms against them, so that their ships be buried in the deep; and behold, I will reward thee with the fairest maiden of all those lovely nymphs who around me wait my bidding."

Then King Æolus answered: —

"O Queen of dread Olympus! 'tis thine to order what thou wilt, and mine to obey thine august commands. It was thy gracious gift which bestowed upon me this sovereignty, and by thy favor am I permitted a place at the table of the gods."

Whereupon he unbarred the doors of the prison of the winds, which straightway rushed forth together in a mighty host, and rolled mountain high the waves of the sea. And thunders muttered, and lightnings flashed across the heavens. Then were Æneas and his companions in great fear, and they called upon the gods in terror. Some of their ships were sunk in the sea, others shattered by the winds. Then was King Neptune roused by the wild commotions which waged in his dominions, and being aware of the wiles of his sister-goddess, he called to the winds with commanding voice: —

"What is this, ye winds, that ye dare to trouble my dominions without my august summons? Begone, and tell your king that the

sea is mine to rule, and bid him confine his power to his allotted rocks and caves."

Then did King Neptune cross the sea in his chariot; and the rebellious waves sank back affrighted at the bidding of their mighty sovereign; and behold, the sea was calm and placid as the summer's smile. And the gods of the sea drew the ships from the rocks, King Neptune lifting them with his ponderous trident. So Æneas and his companions, being sore wearied with the storm, made for the nearest land in haste, and thus they found a haven in a land, even Africa. Hither came Æneas with seven ships.

Glad indeed were the men of Troy to stand once more upon dry land. Meanwhile, Æneas climbed a cliff to look upon the land whither they had come, and see if haply he might behold his comrades' ships, which, though he saw not, his labor was not in vain, for on the shore he noted three majestic stags, and, following, a goodly herd. Then did he let his arrows fly till seven of the animals were killed, which furnished ample food for the men upon his seven ships; which event greatly cheered their hearts; and thereupon they made a feast upon the shore, Æneas encouraging them with hopeful words of future peace and happiness.

Meanwhile upon these things great Jupiter looked down. And as he gazed, fair Venus, mother of Æneas, approached the mighty Jove with shining eyes bedimmed with tears. And thus she spoke: "O great Father, Ruler of all things! Didst thou not promise that my son Æneas and the men of Troy should rule o'er land and sea?

Why art thou, then, turned back from thy purpose?" To whom Jove answered, whilst at the same moment he bent his awful head and kissed her brow, and his stern features calmed themselves like sunshine breaking through tempestuous clouds: "Fear not, my daughter! the fate of thy children changeth not. Thou shalt see this longed-for city which the Trojan race shall build, and thou shalt receive thy great-hearted Æneas safe on Mount Olympus.

"Æneas shall subdue the people of Italy, and build a city there, and shall reign three years; and after thirty years shall the boy Ascanius, who shall hereafter be called Iülus, change his throne from Lavinium to Alba, and for three hundred years shall Hector's kindred rule therein. Then shall twin sons be born, whom a she-wolf shall suckle. The one of whom, even Romulus, shall build a mighty city in honor of Mars, and it shall be called Rome. Juno shall then repent her of her wrath, and join with me in favor of the men of Rome, and they shall bear rule even over Argos and Mycenæ."

Having thus spoken, the mighty Jupiter called to his presence swift Mercury, who, donning winged sandals and golden helmet, flew shortly to Carthage, and as Jove commanded, turned the heart of Dido and her people to receive with favor these Trojan strangers thus cast upon their shores.

On the next day, Æneas, taking only Achates with him, went forth to view this new land whither they had come. And lo! Venus, his mother, met him in the midst of a thick wood. But the goddess veiled her heavenly features so that he knew her not,

for she appeared habited as a Spartan maiden, after the fashion of a huntress.

Then first she spoke: "Have ye seen one of my sisters hereabouts? She is clothed in the skin of a spotted lynx, and girded with a quiver; or perchance she hunts a wild boar with horn and hound." To whom Æneas answered, wondering at her imperial bearing which her disguise could not entirely conceal: "O Virgin! for what shall I indeed call thee; for surely neither thy mien nor voice betokens mortal woman. Methinks thou art in truth some goddess, – perchance sister of Phœbus, or haply some heavenly nymph. I have not seen thy sister; but I pray, forsooth, that thou wouldst tell us whither we have been driven, and who are the people amongst whom we find ourselves."

And Venus replied: "It is indeed a Tyrian city that is near by, though the land be Libya. Dido is queen of this great city, having come hither from Tyre, flying from a wicked brother who had killed her husband in avaricious greed.

"This Dido was married to one Sichæus, richest among all the men of Phœnicia, and greatly beloved by his wife, whose brother Pygmalion held the throne of Tyre and thirsted for possession of the vast treasures of his brother-in-law, the priest of Hercules. And even at the altar he slew him, but hid the matter from Dido, hoping to get the coveted gold. But behold, the shade of Sichæus appeared to faithful Dido, showing his wounds by which he had been deprived of mortal life, and told her where he had hidden his treasures in the earth, bidding her secure them straightway

and prepare for instant flight from Tyre and Pygmalion's greed and cruelties.

"Then did Dido gather together many of the Tyrian nobles and men of skill, and with them she fled across the sea, and landed on this coast, where she has reared a mighty city, even brave Carthage; but from whence art thou, and whither do ye go?" To whom Æneas answered: "The long story of our wanderings would require many hours to relate. But suffice it, we are men of Troy, driven by storms to this Libyan shore. Men call me Prince Æneas, and my race is from Jupiter himself. We seek the land of Italy, for thither the gods have bidden us repair. With twenty ships did I set sail, but now scarce seven are left."

Then Venus said with tender voice and mien of sympathy: "Surely thou art beloved of the gods, whoever thou art, brave stranger! Go show thyself to the queen, even fair Dido; and as for thy ships and thy companions, fear not. Behold yon flock of twenty snow-white swans flying through air. See, e'en though an eagle swoops down from the sky and puts them to confusion for a time, again they move in order and settle safely on the ground. If I have not learned augury in vain, thus shall thy ships come safely in the harbor."

Then Venus turning, Æneas beheld a rosy light illumine her neck, and from her hair there came an odor sweet of heavenly ambrosia, and her garments grew into goddess-like vestments around her feet, ere she had vanished from the eyes of mortals. Then Æneas cried aloud: "O heavenly mother! why dost thou

mock me with vain glimpses of thy much-loved form, nor suffer me to touch thy hand, nor grant me sight of thine immortal face?"

Then went Æneas and Achates towards the walls of the city, and Venus covered them with a thick mist, that thus no man should gaze on them, even though they might themselves behold all men and objects. And having mounted a hill o'erlooking the city, they marvelled much to behold its size and greatness. Some built the walls, rolling therefor great stones, while others reared the citadel, or marked the spot for houses. Others digged harbors or raised the walls of spacious theatres. Now in the midst of the city was a thickly wooded spot where Dido was erecting a noble temple in honor of Juno. Of bronze were gates and door-posts, and stately threshold with many steps thereunto.

And here Æneas wondered much to see painted upon the lofty walls the famous story of the fall of Troy. In order were the battles portrayed, and all the valiant Greeks and valorous Trojans were also there depicted; and Æneas knew himself, fighting amongst the Grecian chiefs.

Much was he moved thereat, and said with tears to Achates, his companion: "Is there any land which the story of our sorrows has not reached? Surely this fame shall profit us!" And lo! while Æneas marvelled at these things, Dido, most beautiful of women, fair as Diana, appeared amidst a throng of lovely maidens and bands of comely youths. Right nobly did she bear herself amongst her subjects, until she sat herself down on gorgeous throne in the gate of the temple, having armed heroes around her. There she

dispensed justice, and apportioned to each his task in the building of her grand and stately city. Then suddenly Æneas beheld a company of men arrive with haste where Dido held her court, and quickly he perceived amongst them Antheus, and Cloanthus, and other men of Troy, from whom he had been parted by the storm. Then leave being given Ilioneus, one of them, to address Queen Dido regarding their presence there, he thus began: "O Queen! whom Jupiter permits to rear this spacious city, we are men of Troy whom storms have driven to your midst; we pray thee spare our ships from flames, and save a people serving the gods. There is a land called Italy, whither we journey, as the gods commanded. We had a king, Æneas, but we know not whether he be alive or buried in the sea."

Then Dido answered: "Fear not, ye men of Troy! Know that I will give you help and protect you. If you will settle in this land, Trojans and Tyrians shall be equal in my sight. Would that your king were here! But I will send messengers throughout this land to seek him, lest haply he be cast upon the shore."

Then were Æneas and Achates glad to hear this welcome of the fair Queen Dido; and they would fain have shown themselves, but the mist restrained them. But lo! the cloud parted forthwith, and Æneas stood before the queen, with face and breast as of a god; for so his mother had clothed him, and cast about him a purple light, through which he shone with all the beauties of youth. Then spake he to Queen Dido: —

"Lo! I am he you ask for, even Æneas of Troy. So long as the

rivers run to the seas, and the shadows fall on the hollows of the hills, so long shall thy name and glory last for this thy kindness to poor strangers cast upon thy shores."

Then Dido, after a time of silent meditation, graciously replied: "I too have wandered far, even as you, and having suffered much, have learnt to succor them that suffer. Even from the day my father Belus conquered Cyprus have I known the wondrous tale of Troy. Come ye, therefore, to my palace."

So saying, she led Æneas to her stately palace, sending meanwhile most bountiful provision to his companions in the ships, – even twenty oxen, a hundred swine, and a hundred sheep and lambs. Then in her royal palace a sumptuous feast was spread. The tables were weighted with gold and silver vessels and cups of marvellous workmanship, whereon were engraved great deeds of valor. The rooms were adorned with luxurious couches draped with costly purple, embroidered with cunning skill; while fair Dido was herself most radiant in resplendent robes of shining tissues sparkling with priceless gems.

Then did Æneas send Achates in haste to the ships, that he might bring the young Ascanius to the feast. Also Æneas ordered that the boy should be laden with rare and costly gifts, of such things as they had saved from the ruins of Troy, that they might be presented to fair Dido as a grateful offering for her most courteous reception of himself and followers.

Among these gifts there was a mantle of golden tissue and a veil bordered with yellow acanthus: this had fair Helen brought

from her Grecian home, and which her mother Leda had lovingly bestowed. There was a sceptre likewise, having belonged to Ilione, eldest daughter of King Priam; also a necklace of pearls, and a double crown of gold encrusted with dazzling jewels. But ere the boy Ascanius departed from the ships bearing these gifts, Venus contrived a cunning scheme to guard her son Æneas from any coming treachery from the men of Tyre; for Venus pondered well on Juno's hatred of her son and many wiles. So fair Venus called to her aid her bright son Cupid, even the lovely wingéd boy known as the god of Love. To him she thus unfolded her well-laid plan: —

"Most beautiful and powerful Cupid! my best-beloved son, who laughest at the dreadful thunders of the mighty Jupiter, and canst even defy the wiles of wrathful Juno, thy aid I seek in guarding Æneas from her treacherous devices. To-day Queen Dido entertains thy brother Æneas in her palace, and showeth him courteous favor; but evil may betide unless her heart is fixed in continued liking for him. List thou, and do my bidding! His son Ascanius even now cometh from the ships, laden with rich gifts for the Carthaginian queen. I would that thou shouldst assume his dress and features and mode of speech and gait; bear thyself these presents to fair Dido, while I, meanwhile, will snatch the boy Ascanius away in a cloud, and bear him to Cythera or Idalium, and hide him there in heavy slumbers, resting on bed of sleep-producing flowers and fanned with gentle zephyrs. Do thou, meanwhile, go to the palace as Ascanius, and when Dido

welcomes thee with kiss and fond embrace, breathe into her heart a fire of love, so that she shall forget the grave of Sichæus, and turn her thoughts and glances upon the handsome countenance of Æneas."

Thus did it come to pass. Ascanius slept in the cool and shady woods of Idalium, lulled by sweet-smelling flowers, and Cupid in the guise of Æneas's son did bear the costly gifts to the fair queen, which graciously she received with tender welcome and loving embraces of the beautiful boy, who, after greeting Æneas as his father, betook himself to the side of the gentle Dido; and as she toyed with his shining locks of golden hair or pressed fond kiss upon his brow, the wily Cupid did forthwith ensnare her heart; and though he had left wings and darts behind when he put off his godlike mien, his bright eyes sent arrows of fire to her heart, and his childish clasp around her neck did thrill her being. But 'twas of the brave Æneas that she thought, and petted the pretty boy for his supposed father's sake. Much the Tyrians marvelled at the costly gifts of Prince Æneas, and more they wondered at his beautiful boy, the false Ascanius; and Dido could not satisfy her eyes with looking on this lovely vision of youthful beauty; and little wot she of the trouble that same winning child was preparing for her in the days to come.

Most sumptuous was the feast. Then the queen called for a huge cup of gold, encrusted with gems, from which King Belus, her illustrious father, often drank in his days of power; and having filled it with the sparkling wine, she cried: "Great Jupiter, thou

god of feasts and mightiest of all the immortals at the table of the gods, grant joy this day to men of Troy and men of Tyre, and may our friendship endure to future generations." And having touched the foaming goblet to her lips, she handed it to the highest princes of the realm, and each in order drank. Then did the minstrel Iopas, famed for striking wondrous music from the harp, give charming entertainment to the guests, singing of sun and moon and stars; of Arcturus and Hyades, and why the winter sun hastens to dip his shining head in ocean, and why the winter nights are long and dreary; and also of men and beasts he sang; of valiant deeds and adventures of the chase. Then Queen Dido asked Æneas much of Troy and the wondrous story of its direful fall; nor was she satisfied until he had recounted all things that had befallen him, both during that famous contest and since, even till he landed on her shores. And many days were spent in telling this most fascinating tale; for still again each day the queen begged he would renew the marvellous account of heroes slain or battles won. Much was Queen Dido moved in spirit by this story, and still with greater favor did she esteem the teller of this wondrous tale, and scarce could sleep for thinking of him.

Then thus she spake to her sister Anna: "O my sister, I have been greatly troubled this night with evil dreams. Who can be this wondrous stranger who hath come to our coasts? Surely his noble mien and brave valor betokens that he is one of the sons of the gods! Were I not steadfastly purposed that I would not yoke myself again in marriage, to this man only might I yield."

Then Anna answered: “Why wilt thou waste thy youth in useless sorrow for the dead? Think also of the dangers which surround thy throne, and to what greatness may the strength of Carthage grow through such alliance. Seek counsel of the gods, who, methinks, direct thy heart.”

Thus did her sister offer comforting advice, the which, forsooth, fair Dido was not loath to take.

Then was a royal hunt prepared. The princes of Carthage waited for their queen at the palace door, where her proud steed stood champing his golden bit, caparisoned with royal trappings of gold and purple. Beauteous indeed was fair Dido, as she appeared adorned with Sidonian mantle with embroideries of divers colors. Her quiver was of gold, and of the same the rich clasp of her mantle, while her hair was caught in knot of gold. Æneas came to meet her, beautiful as Apollo himself; and forth the hunters went with goodly escort, and coming to the hills, found many goats and stags, which they chased; Ascanius scorning such easy hunting, wishing for wild boar or lion for his prey.

Then did a terrible storm arise; and seeking shelter, the guests were separated from one another, and the Tyrian princes also lost sight of their queen. By order of the gods, fair Dido and brave Æneas fled both to the same sheltering cave. Here was their troth plighted; and when the nuptial knot was tied by Hymen, god of marriage, straightway the goddess Rumor reported this event throughout all Libya, how that fair Dido was wedded to Æneas of

Troy. Then was Iarbas, her former suitor, very wroth, and vowed swift vengeance, and made haste to the temple of Jupiter and spread his grief before the great ruler of Olympus. Whereupon great Jove despatched swift-footed Mercury to Æneas with this message: —

"Thus saith the king of gods and men: Is this what thy mother promised of thee, twice saving thee from the spear of the Greeks? Art thou he that shall rule Italy, and its mighty men of war, and spread thy dominions to the end of the world? What doest thou here? Why lookest thou not to Italy? Depart, and tarry not."

This message swift Mercury brought to Æneas, where he stood, with yellow jasper in his sword-hilt, and wrapped in cloak of purple, gold embroidered – Queen Dido's gifts. Having delivered the commands of mighty Jupiter to the trembling Trojan hero, the god Mercury vanished, and Æneas was left with troubled thoughts to ponder on these weighty words. At last he joined his companions, having resolved to fly from alluring Carthage; and he bid them secretly prepare their fleet for sailing. Meanwhile he sought some fitting opportunity to take a last farewell of the beautiful queen, who by her loving devotion made his going grievous.

But Dido, with jealous love, which is most keen of sight, divined his purpose ere he had revealed it to her; and quickly seeking Æneas, she exclaimed in mingled love and anger: "Thoughtest thou to hide thy purpose and to depart in silence

from this land? Carest thou not for her whom thou leavest to die? And hast thou no fear of winter storms upon the sea? Repent thee of this cruel resolve."

But Æneas, fearing the words of Jupiter, stood with averted eyes and looks which relented not. At last he spake: —

"I deny not, O Queen, the benefits thou hast done to me, nor while I live shall I forget Dido. But the gods command that I should seek Italy. Thou hast thy Carthage; why dost thou grudge Italy to us? Nor may I tarry. Even now the messenger of Jupiter came to me and bade me depart."

Then was Queen Dido very wroth; and her eyes blazed with jealous love and anger, which waged within her heart a mighty contest. At last she cried: "As for thee, I keep thee not. Go, seek thy Italy across the seas; only if there is any vengeance in heaven, thou wilt pay the penalty for this wrong. Then wilt thou call on Dido in vain. Ay, and wherever thou shalt go, I will haunt thee, and rejoice in the dwellings below to hear thy doom."

Having said which, the afflicted queen hasted to depart to her palace. But her grief o'ercame her powerful spirit, so that she fell like to one dead, and was laid by her maidens upon her bed.

Though Æneas would fain comfort the sorrowing queen, the word of Jove o'ermastered his inclination, so that he hasted to his ships and speedily prepared for flight. But when the spirit returned to fainting Dido, she cried out in heart, and bade her sister note the treacherous Trojans who thus so poorly repaid her generous treatment. And Dido sought once more to move the

mind of Æneas, even sending Anna to him to beg that if he must depart indeed, he yet would stay his going for a space of time. But stern Æneas relented not; whereupon fair Dido grew weary of her life, and as she offered sacrifice she perceived many ill omens of coming woe. Then she bethought herself of a plan to avenge her heart, though it should cost her life. But she hid the matter from her sister, and said to her that a noted prophetess had declared there was a remedy which should bring her Trojan hero back or free her of him.

Thus she deceived her trusting sister, who little imagined her direful purpose. And Queen Dido bade her sister build a funeral pile – for so the priestess had commanded – and put thereon the sword which Æneas had left behind; also the garments he wore, and the couch on which he lay, even all that was his, that they might perish together. Also an image of Æneas was laid upon the pile, and the priestess, with hair unbound, sprinkled thereon water, said to be drawn from the lake of Avernus, while she scattered evil herbs that had been cut at the full moon with a sickle of bronze. Dido herself, meanwhile, with loosened garments and bare feet, threw meal upon the fire, and called upon the gods for vengeance. Thus did the queen hide her dread purpose 'neath spell of witchery and sacrifice to the gods.

In the meantime, Æneas lay asleep in his ship, and in a dream again Mercury appeared and warned him of Dido, telling him to fly and tarry not.

Æneas, waking in great fear, called his companions, and they

straightway loosed the sails and sped o'er the sea.

And in the morning, lo! Dido, from her watch-tower, perceived the Trojan fleet had fled. Then did she smite upon her breast, and tore her hair in anguish. But still she kept her real intent from all around her; and calling to old Barcé, who had been nurse to Sichæus, she did dissemble her great grief, and bade her call her sister Anna, that she might now prepare the sacrifice; and Dido also bade old Barcé to bind a garland round her head, for she was now minded to finish the sacrifice, and to burn the image of the man of Troy. Then when the old woman hasted to do her bidding, Dido herself ran to the funeral pile, made for the burning, and drew the sword of Æneas from the scabbard, and having mounted the pile, she threw herself upon Æneas's couch, and wept and kissed his image, and cried: "Shall I die unavenged? Nevertheless, let me die. The man of Troy shall see this fire from the sea, whereon he journeys, and carry with him an augury of death."

And when her sister and her maidens, coming in haste, looked upon the pile, lo! she had fallen upon the sword, and the blood was upon her hands. Then a great cry arose throughout the palace, and Anna, rushing through the midst, called upon her name: "O my sister, was this thy purpose? Were the pile and the sword and the fire for this?" Then she climbed upon the pile and took her sister in her arms and sought to stanch the flowing blood. Three times did Dido strive to raise her eyes; three times did her spirit leave her. Then Juno, looking down from heaven

and perceiving that her pain was long, in pity sent down Iris, her messenger, that she might loose the soul that struggled to be free. For, seeing that she died not by nature, nor yet by the hand of man, but before her time and by her own madness. Queen Proserpine had not shred the ringlet from her head which she shreds from them who die. Wherefore, Iris, flying down with dewy wings from heaven, with a thousand colors about her from the light of the sun, stood above her head and said, "I give thee to death, even as I am bidden, and loose thee from thy body." Then she shred the lock, and Queen Dido yielded up her mortal spirit.

Once more Æneas met Queen Dido when he was permitted by the gods to descend into the land of shadows, where dwelt the shades of the dead.

When Æneas and the Sibyl, who conducted him thither, came to the river Styx, then was the Boatman Charon persuaded to ferry them over, for the Sibyl showed him the marvellous bough of gold, a gift intended for the Queen of Hades; and the huge, terrible watch-dog Cerberus, which guards the portals to the Land of Shadows, was tamed by eating of the cake the Sibyl gave, made of honey and poppy-seed, causing sleep.

Thus did they come within the Mourning Fields, where dwell the souls of those who have died of love. Among these shades was Dido, fresh from the wound wherewith she slew herself. And when Æneas saw her darkly through the shadows, he wept and cried: "O Dido! it was truth, then, that they told me, – that thou hadst slain thyself with the sword? Loath was I, O Queen, – I

swear it, – to leave thy land. But the gods constrained me; nor did I think that thou wouldst take such sorrow from my departure. But stay! depart not; for never again may I speak to thee, but this time only."

But Dido cast her eyes upon the ground, and her heart was hard against him, even as a rock. His tears and groans and sighs and friendly words moved not her spirit, nor could appease her wrath. Silent and scornful she departed to the grove that was hard by, where dwelt her first husband, Sichæus, who gave her love, even as he was loved by her.

Thus was the love of Dido, which Æneas had slighted, avenged. And herewith endeth the poet's story of the famous Queen Dido, in which he telleth of her fame and beauty and unhappy love and direful death.

CLEOPATRA.
69-30 B.C

"She moves a goddess and she looks a queen."

Pope's Homer's Iliad.

"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety." – Shakespeare.

THE river shone like burnished silver, resplendent in the rays of the midday sun, as Osiris drove his shining chariot of day across high heaven's arch. The city lay along its banks in calm repose and beauty. Its palaces and villas were shaded with palms and groves of olives and clusters of stately pomegranate-trees, while flowers and fountains adorned its many stately avenues.

In his costly palace the great Roman Triumvir gave public audience to some important tribunal of state.

But now, above the noise of city sounds, arose the strains of distant music. So faint and yet so sweet it was wafted on the air, that all who heard must needs, perforce, be led to seek its source, as though directed by some secret spell which could not be resisted. The notes seemed floating o'er the river's shining

waves; and all the people crowded on its banks, with wistful curiosity, striving to catch the first glimpse of the mysterious cause of such unwonted melody.

Then flashes, with sudden glory, before their eyes a wondrous sight, which holds them spellbound in o'erwhelming admiration. From round a curve in the undulating bank, glides swiftly before their vision a gorgeous barge, the poop of which was beaten gold. The silken sails were royal purple, embroidered with silver lotus-blossoms; and as they swelled in the light breeze, a fragrance floated from their perfumed folds so exquisitely delicious, that the winds seemed love-sick with their odorous sweetness. The silver oars, gleaming in the sunshine, kept stroke with tune of flutes and lyres and cymbals; and the limpid water, parted by their glistening blades, followed each stroke with amorous touch and sweet caressing, as though loath to break away in rainbow-tinted showers of shining drops.

But how describe the matchless vision of womanly and goddess-like perfection which entranced the eyes of all beholders, as the gorgeous barge drew nearer to the city, moving with stately gliding motion, harmonious with the ear-enchanting melodies played by seeming sirens, nymphs, and mermaids, on silver lutes and jewelled flutes and shining cymbals.

Under a pavilion of cloth of gold and priceless tissues, upon a couch, gorgeous with costliest draperies, in picturesque repose, yet studied attitude of queenliest grace and goddess-like abandon, appeared a form and face most radiantly fair and

bountifully beautiful; though orientally voluptuous yet exquisitely attractive; seemingly divine, like some heavenly goddess; and yet, in truth, so like a human woman, with warm, soft flesh and tender eyes, and deep, rich heart's blood thrilling through every vein, e'en to the end of her fair, tapering finger-tips. This radiant being was attired as Venus, Goddess of Beauty; and around her stood young pretty boys, decked out as Cupids, rosy-tinted, and with soft white wings expanded; and they gently fanned her glowing cheeks with feathers, odorous with most intoxicating perfumes; while lovely maidens, costumed as mermaids, plied the silver oars in unison with the notes struck from the lyres of gayly decorated nymphs; while charming muses and bewitching graces with rosy lips caressed the silver flutes, or clasped with jewelled fingers the golden cymbals.

It was indeed a vision of enchantment. Whence came these radiant beings? Had the great goddess, in truth, descended from high Olympus, attended by her heavenly train? or did fair Isis, the queen of Egypt, – worshipped both as deity and nature, – thus clothe herself with mortal likeness, and deign to become visible to mortal eyes?

Thus questioned the people, and pondered of the meaning of this o'erwhelming scene of gorgeous majesty and irresistible loveliness, according as their beliefs partook of Grecian mythology or Egyptian lore.

Such was the scene of Cleopatra's sail in her magnificent barge, up the river Cydnus to the city of Tarsus. That we may

understand more clearly the life of this famous queen, we must turn back the pages of Egyptian history. Nor can we stop there. To clearly define her origin, the fair land of Greece must also be visited; and the gorgeous pageants of Rome, at the time of her greatest glory, have a place in the story of this illustrious Queen of Egypt, Daughter of Greece, Magic Sorceress of the Nile.

Would that we could think of the fascinating Cleopatra only as this vision of perfect loveliness which she presents in this enchanting scene upon the river Cydnus; but there are dark and bloody deeds and savage barbarities and revolting vices, which loom up in the background of this fair picture, with huge and horrid forms, and make the telling of Cleopatra's story, fascinating as it is in some respects, often an unpleasant recital of vice and crime, even though we endeavor to touch these dark shadows ever so lightly. For as we write of history, not of fiction, we cannot always avoid these hideous facts.

Why is Cleopatra so fair of skin, though an Egyptian by birth? Her attendant maidens on this fairy-like barge stand round her like dusky figures cut from bronze; but her fair face and limbs gleam with pale ivory-tints, and the sunshine even glimmers in her dark tresses, now coiled in the Grecian knot behind her shell-like ears.

Though Egypt was her birthplace, Grecian blood flows through her veins, and whitens her skin, and lightens the dusky shadows in her hair, and gives the brown shadings to her lustrous eyes; and Grecian culture gives her voice its oft-

narrated magic charm of melting sweetness; and a spark of Grecian genius quickens her powers of mind, and gives her the enchanting fascination of brilliant wit, and a native aptitude of acquiring knowledge, and all the polite arts and sciences; and her Grecian free-born grace lends to her form its perfect pose of queenly stateliness, together with an irresistible charm in every easy motion of rounded limb, and unstudied naturalness of action. The agile litheness of the Greek is combined with the oriental voluptuous indolence of the Egyptian; which combination explains the otherwise unaccountable, weird, and subtle allurements of face and form which history, romance, and poetry have acceded to her. Shakespeare calls her "the serpent of old Nile," "this great fairy," "great Egypt"; and Horace gives to her the name of "fatal prodigy." Leigh Hunt describes her as

> ".. That southern beam,
> The laughing queen that caught the world's great hands."

Another writer says of her: "She was born a princess, reigned a queen, won an emperor, swayed a hero, and defeated a conqueror. We think of her as the queen of enslavers more than as queen of Egypt. Cleopatra is enthroned enchantress of the world. She, of all her sex, in her person, gave to the unworthy art of coquetry a something magnificent and lustrous in its so potent exercise. Hers was the poetry of coquetry."

Even the scene of Cleopatra in her gorgeous barge upon the

river Cydnus does not give a complete picture of this wonderful story. In the background we must paint the Mediterranean Sea, which she has crossed in her journey thither; and then beyond looms up the city of Alexandria, on the further side; and by it flows the marvellous river Nile, through the fertile valley irrigated yearly by its overflowing waters; and high in the background, towering over all else in the picture, stand the majestic pyramids, like huge sentinels, guarding the unknown secrets of Egypt's wondrous history.

Yes, to rightly comprehend the significance of the life of the famous Cleopatra, a panorama of changing scenes, covering centuries of time, would be needed. But we can only take a bird's-eye view of those old lands of weird and endless enchantment.

"Cleopatra was by birth an Egyptian; by ancestry and descent she was a Greek. Thus, while Alexandria and the delta of the Nile formed the scene of the most important events and incidents of her history, it was the blood of Macedon which flowed in her veins. Her character and action are marked by the genius, the courage, the originality, and the impulsiveness pertaining to the stock from which she sprang. The events of her history, on the other hand, and the peculiar character of her adventures, her sufferings, and her sins, were determined by the circumstances by which she was surrounded, and the influences which were brought to bear upon her, in the soft and voluptuous clime where the scenes of her early life were laid."

Let us look for one moment at Egypt as a country, and then

take a passing glance at the peculiar characteristics and customs of that ancient people.

Egypt is situated in the midst of the most extensive and remarkable rainless district in the world. The Red Sea divides this tract, and the eastern portion forms the Arabian desert, while the western African tract has received the name of Sahara. Through the African desert flows the Nile; rising in the region of the Mountains of the Moon, and flowing northward, it empties into the Mediterranean Sea. These mountains, being near the equator, are subject to vast and continued torrents of rain in certain seasons of the year. The river created by these streams is the Nile, which at times expands over the entire valley, forming an immense lake, five to ten miles wide and a thousand miles long. The rains in the mountains gradually cease, but it requires months for the water to subside and leave the valley dry. As soon as the water disappears, a rank and luxurious vegetation springs up from the entire surface of the earth which has been submerged. This most extraordinary valley seems specially preserved by nature for man. The yearly inundation prevents impassable forests, and also the presence of wild beasts. Egypt being thus wholly shut in by deserts on every side, by land, and shoals, and sandbars, making the approach difficult by sea, remained for many ages under the rule of its ancient kings. The people were peaceful and industrious, and its scholars were famed throughout the world for their learning, science, and philosophy.

It was during this period of isolation that the famous pyramids

were built, and the huge monoliths were carved, and the silent Sphinx was reared, and those vast temples constructed whose ruined columns are now the wonder of mankind.

As Egypt was always fertile, when famine existed elsewhere, corn would be plentiful there. Thus neighboring tribes from Arabia, Palestine, and Syria, when driven by want and starvation, crossed the barren deserts on the eastern side, and found this fertile and marvellous country, already old in learning and the arts, and a certain kind of civilization far superior to their neighbors.

At length the Persian monarchs conquered the country. About two hundred and seventy years before the time of Cleopatra, Alexander the Great, in his wars with Darius, had taken possession of Egypt; and at his death, in the division of his empire amongst his generals, Egypt fell to the share of one of them named Ptolemy. This was the commencement of the dynasty of the Ptolemies, who were Greek princes, reigning over this Egyptian empire, formerly governed by a long line of native kings, reaching back in history to the year 3000 B.C., and including the famous lines of Cheops, Thotmosis, Rameses, and others, known under the general name of the Pharaohs.

We cannot give any particulars of these reigns in this sketch, and will only mention some of the customs of the ancient Egyptians previous to the time of Cleopatra.

Egypt contained about five millions of people, who were divided into various castes. Plato tells us that in Egypt not only

were the priests, the soldiers, and artisans habitually separated, but that every particular trade and manufacture was carried on by its own craftsmen, who handed down the trade from father to son.

The entire cultivated land of Egypt was about twelve millions of acres. The clothing of the Egyptians consisted mostly of linen, made from the flax which grew abundantly in the delta of the Nile. Wool was but little employed, as the soil was not fitted for grazing sheep. Cotton was first mentioned in the reign of Amasis, about 566 B.C. It was also this Amasis who allowed his wife, the Egyptian queen, to receive the large income from the royal fishery at the flood-gates to the lake of Moeris, to meet the expenses of her toilet; and a century later the reigning monarch added the taxes of the city of Anthylla to the former income to keep his queen in sandal-strings; the sum obtained from the fisheries being a talent a day, or upwards of 70,700 pounds a year: and when this formed only a portion of the pin-money of the Egyptian queens, to whom the revenues of the city of Anthylla, famous for its wines, were also given, it will be seen that the Egyptian kings were at least very generous to their wives in this respect, even though they were not very particular about cutting off their heads or giving them a cup of poison if they failed to please their royal lords.

Although wool and cotton were sometimes employed as articles of clothing, the preference was given to linen. Herodotus mentions some Egyptian dresses of linen, bordered with a fringe,

over which was worn a cloak of white wool, similar to the *bornouse* worn at the present day in Egypt and Barbary.

The dresses of the priests and persons of rank consisted of an under-garment in the form of an apron, and a loose upper-robe with full sleeves, secured by a girdle around the waist; or of an apron, and a shirt with short, tight sleeves, over which was thrown a loose robe, leaving the right arm exposed. Princes wore a dress very like that of the priests; but their distinguishing mark was a peculiar badge, at the side of the head, descending to the shoulder, and frequently adorned with golden fringe.

This ornament contained the lock of hair indicative of youth; for though the Egyptians shaved their heads and wore wigs, certain locks of hair were left upon the heads of children.

Therefore this badge was always attached to the head-dress worn by princes as an emblem of their rank, as they were not supposed to have arrived at *kinghood* during the life of their father, on the same principle that a Spanish prince is styled an *infant*.

The robes of a sovereign varied according to his present occupation. As all the kings were also priests, when they were engaged in the office of high-priest their garments resembled those worn by the sacerdotal order, with the exception of the apron and head-dress, which were of peculiar form, and belonged exclusively to the rank of king. This apron was richly ornamented in front with lions' heads and other devices, and bordered with rows of asps, which were the emblems of royalty. After the union

of Lower and Upper Egypt the sovereign wore a double crown. Egyptian men always shaved the entire head, and wore wigs, both within the house and out of doors. The women, however, wore their own hair, and were not shaved even in times of mourning or after death. Ladies wore their hair long and plaited in a great number of braids. The hair was plaited in the triple plait, the ends being left loose. Around the head was bound an ornamental fillet, with a lotus-bud falling over the forehead. The ear-rings worn by Egyptian ladies were large, round, single hoops of gold, sometimes over two inches in diameter, or made of six rings soldered together. Often an asp, whose body was of gold set with precious stones, was worn by persons of rank. Some few were of silver. Women wore many rings, sometimes three and four upon the same finger, and even the thumb was decorated with a single ring. Rings were ornamented with the scarabæus, or sacred beetle, or an engraved stone. They were occasionally in the form of a knot, or snail, or snake. Two cats, with an emblem of the goddess Athor between them, seems to have been a favorite device for rings. Egyptians also wore large gold anklets, or bangles, armlets, and bracelets, frequently inlaid with precious stones. Richly ornamented necklaces were a principal part of the dress of both men and women.

Great attention was paid by ladies and men of rank to the beauty of their sandals, which were sometimes richly ornamented. Shoes were also common in Egypt, many of them having been found at Thebes. But they are supposed to have

been of late date, and belonged to the Greeks. The dresses of the women consisted of a loose robe or shirt, reaching to the ankles, fastened round the neck with a string, over which they wore a petticoat, secured at the waist by a girdle. This petticoat or gown, among ladies of rank, was made of richly colored stuff in a great variety of patterns. The most elegant of these figured materials were reserved for the robes of the deities and queens. Slaves and servants were not allowed to wear the same costumes as ladies, and their mode of dressing the hair was also different.

Egyptian ladies seem to have been given to the little tricks and arts of the toilet as well as more modern beauties. Of the various articles of the toilet found among the ancient remains, the principal are bottles, or vases, for holding ointment, and the *kohl*, or paint for the eyes; also mirrors, combs, and small boxes, spoons, and saucers. The custom of anointing the body is usual in hot climates, and contributes greatly to comfort. Their chief care was bestowed upon the anointing of the hair. The Egyptian combs were usually of wood, and double, and frequently carved and ornamented. The custom of staining the eyelids and brows with a moistened powder of a black color was of the most ancient date. It was thought to increase the beauty of the appearance of the eye, by making it seem larger by this external black ring around it. Many of these *kohl*-bottles have been found in the tombs, together with the bodkin employed in applying the black cosmetic.

Some of these bottles are ornamented with the figure of an

ape, or monster, supposed to assist in holding the bottle between his arms while the fair beauty dipped her dainty bodkin into the much-prized beautifier. Pins and needles have also been found among the articles of the toilet. Some of these pins are of gold, and similar in size to those now employed by ladies as hat-pins and fancy hair-pins. Metal mirrors are also found richly ornamented and highly polished. It will be remembered that the brazen laver made by Moses for the tabernacle was formed of the "looking-glasses of the women," who doubtless brought them from Egypt at the time of the exodus of the Israelites. The Egyptian dandies were also not without the highly prized canes. Many of these have been found at Thebes; some having a carved lotus-blossom for the head. It was customary, on entering a house, to leave their canes or sticks in the hall or at the door; and poor men were often employed to hold the canes of guests during a party, by the master of the house, who rewarded them with money or food. We have little knowledge of the nature of their baths; but as they were forbidden in deep mourning to indulge in them, they were probably considered a luxury as well as a necessity. The priests were remarkable for their love of cleanliness, shaving the whole body every three days, and bathing twice every day and twice during the night. So great an abhorrence did an Egyptian feel for an unshaven person, that Herodotus says, "No Egyptian of either sex would on any account kiss the lips of a Greek, make use of his knife, his spit and cauldron, or taste the meat of an animal which had been

slaughtered by his hand."

This shaving of the head among the Egyptians is given as a reason by Herodotus for the remarkable hardness of the Egyptian sculls, as compared with those of other people. The most singular custom of the Egyptians was that of tying a false beard upon the chin, which was plaited and shaped according to the rank of the person. The beards on the figures of the gods were distinguished by the turning up of the ends. No man ventured to assume the beard of a deity. But after death, kings were accorded the honor of having their statues thus distinguished.

The art of painting common boards to imitate costly varieties, now so often employed, was practised by the ancient Egyptians. Boxes, chairs, tables, sofas, and other pieces of furniture were frequently made of ebony inlaid with ivory, and articles of sycamore and acacia were ornamented with rare woods.

The Egyptians displayed much taste in their gold, silver, porcelain, and glass vases. Glass was known from the earliest times, and glass-blowing was employed by them twenty-five hundred years ago. It is also stated that their dead were sometimes enclosed in glass coffins, or a crystal sarcophagus was made by covering the granite with a coating of vitrified matter, usually of a deep green color, which by its transparency allowed the hieroglyphics engraved upon the stone beneath to be plainly visible.

Emeralds, rubies, amethysts, and other expensive gems were most successfully imitated by the jewellers of Thebes. Pliny

states that glass-cutting was known to the ancients, and that the diamond was employed for that purpose, as at present, even if they were ignorant of the art of cutting the diamond itself with its own dust. “Diamonds,” says Pliny, “are eagerly sought by lapidaries who set them in iron handles, for they have the power of penetrating anything, however hard it may be.”

The art of embroidery was commonly practised in Egypt, and gold and silver threads were used for this purpose. The loom was also employed by them, both in weaving linen, cotton, and wool, and also for the production of very rich stuffs, in which various colors were worked in innumerable patterns by the loom.

The Egyptians were also famed for their manufacture of paper, which was in the form of parchments made from the plant papyrus, which grew in the marshy regions of the Nile in great profusion. Leather was also prepared by them with great skill for various purposes, and the knife employed by them in the process, between three and four thousand years ago, is precisely similar to that used by modern curriers. Fullers, potters, carpenters, and cabinet-makers formed a large class of Egyptian workmen. The Egyptians were skilled in the working of metals; and gold, silver, brass, tin, iron, and lead were known in those days.

The art of embalming the dead was practised by the Egyptians with a perfection never since equalled.

Egyptian paintings were very primitive, and their sculptures were more remarkable for huge grotesqueness than any perfection of art, as their artists were limited to such a

conventional mode of drawing. After the accession of the Ptolemies, Greek art became well known in Egypt, but their artists still continued to adhere to the Egyptian models prescribed.

The Egyptians appear to have possessed some secret for hardening or tempering bronze, with which we are totally ignorant; for the wonderful skill with which they engraved their granite obelisks with hieroglyphics, for which purpose they used implements of bronze, cannot be equalled by any process in modern times.

The walls and ceilings of the houses of the Egyptians of high rank were richly painted, as well as their tombs. The ceilings were laid out in compartments, each having peculiar pattern and border. The favorite forms were the lotus, the square, the diamond, and the succession of scrolls.

The mode of laying out the house and grounds varied according to the means of the owner. Some villas were of considerable extent, with large gardens surrounding them. Some of the large mansions were ornamented with obelisks, like the temples. About the centre of the outer wall was the main entrance leading to an open walk shaded by rows of trees. Here were large tanks of water, and between them a wide avenue led to the centre of the mansion. Their gardens were well tended, particularly their vineyards.

Monkeys were trained to assist in gathering the fruit of the sycamore and other trees.

Many animals were tamed in Egypt for various purposes, as the lion, leopard, gazelle, baboon, crocodile, and others.

Among the fruit-trees cultivated by the Egyptians were the palm, date, dôm-nut tree, sycamore, fig, pomegranate, olive, peach, almond, persea, locust tree, and others. The Egyptians were exceedingly fond of flowers, and they were profusely employed on all festive occasions. The lotus was the favorite flower, and was more often preferred for house decoration and personal adornment. Among other flowers cultivated by them were the chrysanthemum, acinon, acacia, anemone, convolvulus, olive, amaricus, and others.

The deity whom they believed presided over the garden, was Khem, corresponding to the Grecian Pan. Ranno, a goddess sometimes represented in the form of an asp, or with a human body and the head of a serpent, was considered the protecting genius of a vineyard, and also of a young prince.

This goddess Ranno, or the sacred asp, appears in many remarkable connections with royalty, and the name Uræus, which was applied to that snake, has been derived by Champollion, from *ouro*, the Coptic word signifying "king," as its appellation of basilisk originated in the *basiliscos* of the Greeks.

Ancient Egypt was a religious community in which the palace was a temple, the people worshippers at the gate, and the monarch the chief priest. "The equal treatment which the women received in Egypt was shown in other circumstances beside their being allowed to sit on the throne. In their mythology, the

goddess Isis held rank above her husband. We see also on the mummy-cases that the priestly and noble families traced their pedigree as often through the female line as through the male, and records were sometimes dated by the names of priestesses."

The Egyptians worshipped many gods. Among them were *Ra*, the "sun-god," sailing in a golden boat across the heavens; *Shu*, meaning "air"; *Tafnut*, the "dew"; *Seb*, the "earth"; and *Nut*, the "heaven." *Osiris* was the "sun," and *Isis*, his wife and sister, the "dawn"; *Horus*, the "rising sun"; *Set*, the destroyer of Osiris, was the "darkness"; and the resurrection of Osiris was the rising of the sun after the darkness of the night had been overcome and dispelled. *Nepthys* was the "sunset"; *Anubis*, the "twilight" or "dusk." *Neith* corresponded to the Greek Athênê, and was supposed to be a personification of the wisdom or intellect of God, – which is a significant thought, Neith being a *goddess*, not a god. She was the Egyptian goddess of Saïs. Originally the worship of Ammon was distinct from that of Ra, god of the sun; but after the eighteenth dynasty a union took place, and he was worshipped as Ammon-Ra. Thoth, the god of letters, had various characters, according to the functions he was supposed to fulfil. In one of his characters he corresponded to the moon; in the other, to Mercury. "In the former, he was the beneficent property of that luminary, the regulator and dispenser of time, who presided over the fate of man and the events of his life; in the latter, the god of letters and the patron of learning and the means of communication between the gods and mankind."

The Egyptians related many allegories concerning their various deities, but we have space only to narrate the story regarding Osiris and Isis, god of the sun and the goddess of dawn. As their gods were supposed to assume many different characters and attributes, this story represents Osiris as the river Nile, Isis as the land of Egypt, and Typho as the sea.

The allegory is thus given: —

"Osiris, having become king of Egypt, applied himself towards civilizing his countrymen by turning them from their former barbarous course of life, teaching them, moreover, to cultivate and improve the fruits of the earth. With the same good disposition he afterwards travelled over the rest of the world, inducing the people everywhere to submit to his discipline, by the mildest persuasion. During his absence from his kingdom, Typho had no opportunity of making any innovations in the state, Isis being extremely vigilant in the government and always on her guard. After the return of Osiris, however, Typho, having persuaded seventy-two other persons to join him in the conspiracy, together with a certain queen of Æthiopia, named Aso, who chanced to be in Egypt at the time, contrived a proper stratagem to execute his base designs. For, having privately taken a measure of Osiris's body, he caused a chest to be made exactly of that size, as beautiful as possible, and set off with all the ornaments of art. This chest he brought into the banqueting-room, where, after it had been much admired by all present, Typho, as if in jest, promised to give it to any one of them whose

body upon trial it might be found to fit. Upon this the whole company, one after the other, got into it; but as it did not fit any of them, last of all Osiris laid himself down in it, upon which the conspirators immediately ran together, clapped on the cover, and then, fastening it on the outside with nails, poured melted lead over it.

"After this, having carried it away to the riverside, they conveyed it to the sea by the Tanaïtic mouth of the Nile, which for this reason is still held in the utmost abhorrence by the Egyptians, and never named by them but with proper marks of detestation.

"These things happened on the 17th day of the month Athor, when the sun was in Scorpio, in the 28th year of Osiris's reign, though others say he was no more than twenty-eight years old at the time.

"The first who knew the accident that had befallen their king were the Pans and Satyrs, who lived about Chemmis; and they, immediately acquainting the people with the news, gave the first occasion to the name of *Panic terrors*… Isis, as soon as the report reached her, cut off one of the locks of her hair and put on mourning.

"At length she received more particular news of the chest. It had been carried by the waves of the sea to the coast of Byblos, and there gently lodged in the branches of a tamarisk bush, which in a short time had shot up into a large tree, growing round the chest and enclosing it on every side, so that it could not be seen;

and the king of the country, having cut down the tree, had made the part of the trunk wherein the chest was concealed a pillar to support the roof of his house. Isis, having gone to Byblos, obtained possession of this pillar, and then set sail with the chest for Egypt. But intending a visit to her son Horus, who was brought up at Butus, she deposited the chest in the meantime in a remote and unfrequented place. Typho, however, as he was one night hunting by the light of the moon, accidentally met with it; and knowing the body enclosed in it, tore it into fourteen pieces, disposing them up and down in different parts of the country.

"Being acquainted with this event, Isis set out once more in search of the scattered members of her husband's body, using a boat made of the papyrus rush in order the more easily to pass through the lower and fenny parts of the country. And one reason assigned for the many different sepulchres of Osiris shown in Egypt is, that wherever any one of his scattered limbs was discovered, she buried it in that spot; though others suppose that it was owing to an artifice of the queen, who presented each of those cities with an image of her husband, in order that, if Typho should overcome Horus in the approaching conquest, he might be unable to find the real sepulchre. Isis succeeded in recovering all the different members, with the exception of one, which had been devoured by the lepidotus, the phagrus, and the oxyrhinchus; for which reason these fish are held in abhorrence by the Egyptians. To make amends, therefore, for this loss, she consecrated the phallus, and instituted a solemn festival to its

memory.

"A battle at length took place between Horus and Typho, in which the latter was taken prisoner. Isis, however, to whose custody he was committed, so far from putting him to death, set him at liberty; which so incensed Horus that he tore off the royal diadem she wore; but Hermes substituted in its stead a helmet made in the shape of an ox's head. At length two other battles were fought, in which Typho was defeated."

This allegory is thus explained: —

"Osiris means the inundation of the Nile.

"Isis, the irrigated portion of the land of Egypt.

"Horus, their offspring, the vapors and exhalations reproducing rain.

"Butus, the marshy lands of Lower Egypt, where those vapors were nourished.

"Typho, the sea which swallowed up the Nile water.

"The conspirators, the drought overcoming the moisture, from which the increase of the Nile proceeds.

"The chest in which Osiris's body was confined, the banks of the river, within which it retired after the inundation.

"The Tanaïtic mouth, the lake and barren lands about it, which were held in abhorrence from their being overflowed by the river without producing any benefit to the country.

"The twenty-eight years of his life, the twenty-eight cubits to which the Nile rises at Elephantina, its greatest height.

"The 17th of Athor, the period when the river retires within

its banks.

"The queen of Æthiopia, the southern winds preventing the clouds being carried southward.

"The different members of Osiris's body, the main channels and canals by which the inundation passed into the interior of the country, where each was said to be afterwards buried. That one which could not be recovered was the generative power of the Nile, which still continued in the stream itself.

"The victory of Horus, the power possessed by the clouds in causing the successive inundations of the Nile."

Many animals, insects, and plants were considered sacred by the Egyptians: among them were the cynocephalus ape, sacred to Thoth; shrew-mouse, sacred to Mant; dog, sacred to Anubis; cat, sacred to Pashtor Bubastis; lion, sacred to Gom, or Hercules; hippopotamus, sacred to Mars; pig and ass, emblems of Typho; goat, sacred to Mendes; cow, sacred to Athor.

The sacred oxen were Apis, Mnevis, and Basis, sacred to Osiris, Apollo, and Onuphis.

The sacred birds of Egypt were the vulture, eagle, hawk, white and saffron-colored cocks, little egret, sacred to Osiris; ibis, sacred to Thoth; goose, emblem of Seb. Fabulous and unknown sacred birds were the phœnix, sacred to Osiris; the "pure soul" of the king (a bird with man's head and arms), emblem of the soul; vulture with a snake's head; hawk with man's and ram's head.

The sacred reptiles were the tortoise, crocodile, asp, and frog. The fabulous serpents were snakes with human heads, with

hawk's head, and with lion's head.

The sacred fishes of Egypt were the oxyrhinchus, the eel, the lepidotus, satus, and mæotes. The scorpion was the emblem of the goddess Selk. Different species of beetles were held sacred to the sun, and adopted as an emblem of the world.

Foremost amongst the sacred plants of the East, being not merely a symbol, but frequently the object of worship in itself, was the undying lotus, which, from the throne of Osiris, Isis, and Nepthys, rises in the midst of the waters, bearing on the margin of its blossom the four genii.

"The Persians represent the sun as 'rob'd with light, with lotus crown'd.' Among the Chinese it symbolized Buddha, and is the emblem of female beauty. The Japanese deem it the emblem of purity, since it is not sullied by the muddy waters in which it often grows. With the flowers of the motherwort, it is borne before the body in their funeral processions. The Hindoo deities are often represented seated upon a lotus flower. Kamadeva, or Cupid, is depicted as floating down the blue Ganges —

> 'Upon a rosy lotus wreath,
> Catching new lustre from the tide
> That with his image shone beneath.'"

The consort of Vishnu, Laksmi, was also called the "Lotus-born," because she was said to have ascended from the ocean on its blossom.

Brahma was believed to have sprung from Narayana, – that

is, "the Spirit of God moving on the waters," – and he is thus described in a Hindoo poem: —

> "A form cerulean fluttered o'er the deep;
> Brightest of beings, greatest of the great,
> Who, not as mortals steep
> Their eyes in dewy sleep,
> But heavenly pensive on the lotus lay,
> That blossom'd at his touch, and shed a golden ray."

An ancient prayer, common to the inhabitants of Tibet and the slopes of the Himalayas, consists of unceasing repetitions of the words, *Om mane padne haun*, meaning, "Oh, the jewel in the lotus! Amen."

"The Grecian god of silence, Harpocrates, who was the Egyptian Aurora, or Dayspring, and was the son of Isis, was often represented on the lotus. The god Nofre Atmoo also bore the lotus on his head."

The lotus is regarded in Egyptian delineations as signifying the creation of the world. In the gallery of Egyptian antiquities in the British Museum there are several statues bearing sceptres formed of the lotus; and also a mummy holding in each hand of his crossed arms a lotus flower. There was also brought to England, some years ago, a bust of Isis emerging from a lotus flower, which has frequently been mistaken for one of Clytie changing into a sunflower.

Three species of nymphæceæ, called lotus, were cultivated in

Egypt. One of these still grows in immense quantities in Lower Egypt. This lotus has fragrant white blossoms, and fruit the size of that of the poppy, filled with small seeds, used as an article of food. It closely resembles our white water-lily. "It was the 'rose of ancient Egypt,' the favorite flower of the country, and was made into wreaths and garlands. With the blue lotus of the Nile (*Nymphæa cærulea*), it formed models for many works of art. But the sacred lotus is the Nelumbo. This is the sacred bean of Egypt, the 'rose lily of the Nile' of Herodotus, the lotus *par excellence*. Its blossoms are larger than those of the white or blue lotus; they are of a brilliant red color sometimes, but rarely white, and hang over broad peltated leaves, resembling, in their magnificent beauty, those —

> 'Eastern flowers large,
> Some dropping low their crimson bells
> Half closed; others studded wide
> With disks and tears, that fed the time
> With odor, in the prime of good
> Haroun Alraschid.'

"The Nelumbo was cultivated as much for its usefulness as an article of food, as for its beauty. Its roots, seeds, and leaf-stalks are all edible. The fruit is formed of many valves, each containing a nut about the size of a filbert, with a taste more delicate than that of almonds. The use of the seeds in making bread, and the mode of sowing them, – by enclosing each seed in a ball of clay,

and throwing it into the water, – may probably be alluded to in the text, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.' The Nelumbo is a native of the north of Africa, of India, China, Japan, Persia, and Asiatic Russia, and in all these countries maintains its sacred character. The fable of the nymph Lotis, who was transformed into a tree bearing her name, is supposed to be of Eastern origin. It was under the lote-tree, beyond which there is no passing, that Mohammed was said to have met the angel Gabriel. This lotis or lotus tree must not be confounded with the sacred bean, or lotus flower, which is a totally distinct plant. The lotus-tree is a moderate-sized thorny tree, with broad leaves, fruit as large as an olive, of a reddish color, containing the nut, the taste of which is sweetish, resembling that of a fig or date. It was this lotus-tree which Homer refers to, when he describes the charm of certain fruit which Ulysses dreaded would lure his companions to give up home and friends forever, as the fable was, that whosoever ate of its fruit would never leave the enchanted land."

On account of these numerous stories connected with the far-famed lotus of the East, it has become one of the most illustrious flowers of romance and poetry. Its praises have been sung in all the languages of Eastern climes, until its very name has become the synonyme for oriental splendor and goddess-like attractions.

The asp appeared to be one of the favorite emblems of deity, and also of royalty, and many strange stories are told of different species of asps. The following is related to show the extreme

veneration paid to sacred animals.

"A sacred serpent of Melite had priests and ministers, a table, and a bowl. It was kept in a tower, and fed by the priests with cakes made of flour and of honey, which they placed there in the bowl. Having done this, they retired. The next day, on returning to the apartment, the food was found to be eaten, and the same quantity was again put into the bowl, for it was not lawful for any one to see the sacred reptile. On one occasion, one of the priests being anxious to behold it, went in alone, and having deposited the cake, withdrew, until the moment when he supposed the serpent had come forth to its repast. He then entered, throwing open the door with great violence, upon which the serpent withdrew in evident indignation, and the priest shortly after became frantic, and having confessed his crime, expired."

The Egyptian asp is a species of cobra de capello, and is still very common in Egypt. As our story of Cleopatra is connected with the asp, the following facts will be interesting. It is called Nashir, a word signifying "spreading," from its dilating its breast when angry. The snake-players of modern days use this same serpent in their juggling tricks, taking care first to extract its fangs, or to burn out the poison-bag with a hot iron. The asp is generally about three or four feet long; they are easily tamed; their food consists of mice, frogs, and other reptiles. They are accustomed to live in gardens during the warm weather, where they are of great use. It is supposed that the asp employed by Cleopatra was a kind of poisonous snake much smaller than the

common variety; and the name, like that of viper, may have been applied to venomous serpents of different species. Mummies of the asp have been discovered in Thebes.

We have not space to describe the marvellous monuments and pyramids of ancient Egypt, and will only give one statement of Herodotus in connection with them. Herodotus says, that each of the two great pyramids near Memphis required twenty years in building; and that one hundred thousand men were unceasingly employed on the work, who were relieved every three months; and that only sixteen hundred talents of silver were spent on the radishes, onions, and garlic for the workmen, which was probably their only pay, making about eighteen pence a year of our money, for each man.

A slight sketch of an Egyptian house and dinner party will aid us in obtaining a more definite idea of the manners and customs of those times. The apartments appropriated to the reception of guests in Egyptian houses were sometimes on the ground floor, sometimes in the first story; though from the size, beauty, and arrangement of their gardens it is supposed that they often entertained their friends in the cool and shady retreats there. These reception rooms were provided with handsome chairs, fauteuils, stools, and low seats. While conversing, they did not recline on divans or couches, though ottomans and richly covered couches formed part of the furniture in Egyptian apartments of state. Egyptian tables were round, square, or oblong; the common people sat cross-legged or crouched on the ground. Little is

known of the furniture of their bedrooms, but numerous wooden pillows have been found with grooved places for the head. Those for the rich were made of alabaster. In their entertainments they made lavish display and provided various amusements. Songs, music, dancing, buffoonery, feats of agility, and games of chance were introduced. The guests arrived in chariots or in palanquins borne by their servants on foot. Sometimes their attendants held over them parasols to protect them from the sun, and one slave carried a stool to enable his master to alight with ease, while another bore his writing-tablet, or whatever article of apparel he might need. To those who arrived from a journey, water was brought in a golden ewer to wash their feet before entering the reception-room. It was also customary for each guest to be anointed with ointment by a servant, as he seated himself; then a lotus flower was presented to each visitor, who held it in his hand during the entertainment. Servants also brought necklaces of the same or other flowers, and hung them around the neck of each person, and placed garlands of flowers on their heads with a single lotus bud so arranged that it would fall over the forehead. Wreaths and other devices of flowers were laid around the room on stands, while servants constantly brought fresh blossoms from the gardens to replace those which had faded. After the floral decorations, wine was offered to the guests. While the dinner was being prepared, the company were entertained by music by a band of musicians, who performed upon the harp, lyre, guitar, tambourine, double and single pipe, flute, and other instruments.

The Egyptians paid great attention to the study of music. The father of Cleopatra received the name of Auletes from his skill in playing on the flute. Long before the lyre was known in Greece the Egyptians had attained great perfection in the form of their stringed instruments, and Greek sages visited Egypt to study music among the other sciences for which it was renowned. Harps of fourteen, and lyres of seventeen, strings are found to have been used by ordinary Egyptian musicians 1570 B.C. The strings of the Egyptian harp were of catgut, and some discovered at Thebes in 1823 were so well preserved that they emitted a sound on being touched. Apollodorus relates the following story of the supposed invention of the lyre: —

"The Nile having overflowed the whole country of Egypt, when it returned within its natural bounds, left on the shore a great number of animals of various kinds, and among the rest a tortoise, the flesh of which being dried and wasted by the sun, nothing remained within the shell but nerves and cartilages, and these being braced and contracted by the drying heat became sonorous. Mercury, walking along the banks of the river, happened to strike his foot against this shell, and was so pleased with the sound produced that the idea of a lyre presented itself to his imagination. He therefore constructed the instrument in the form of a tortoise and strung it with the dried sinews of dead animals."

It was not customary for the upper classes of the Egyptians to indulge in dancing, and hired dancers were employed on all

festive occasions. Grace in posture and movement was the chief object of those skilled in the dance. Many of their postures and steps resembled those of the modern ballet; and the *pirouette* enlivened an Egyptian party more than thirty-five hundred years ago.

Having given this outline of the manners and customs of ancient Egypt, we will take up the more immediate history of Cleopatra. It will be remembered that Alexander the Great, after his conquest of Egypt, founded the magnificent city of Alexandria situated at the mouth of the river Nile. One of the most expensive and famous of all edifices erected by the Ptolemies was the light-house on the island of Pharos, opposite to the city, and at some distance from it a pier was subsequently built connecting the island with the mainland. This light-house was a lofty tower constructed of white marble. This great edifice was erected by Ptolemy Philadelphus, the second monarch in that line. It was regarded as one of the seven wonders of the world. The architect of this light-house was a man named Sostratus. Ptolemy ordered that a marble tablet should be placed in the wall of the tower, bearing his name as the builder of this wonder. Sostratus seemingly obeyed, but he outwitted the haughty monarch. Sostratus secretly engraved his own name upon the marble tablet, and then covered it with an artificial cement similar in appearance to the marble. On this outer surface he cut the name of the king, and the tablet was placed in the wall without detection. In process of time the cement mouldered

away as the architect had calculated upon, and the king's name disappeared, while that of Sostratus remained as long as the building endured.

The city of Alexandria was also world-renowned for its immense library and museum established by the Ptolemies. The museum was not a collection of curiosities, but an institution of learning where sages congregated to devote their time to the study of philosophy and science. The institution was richly endowed, and very magnificent buildings were erected for its use. The most valuable books from all parts of the world were collected here, the king buying, borrowing, or even stealing, these rare treasures, when they could not be otherwise obtained from neighboring nations; and scribes were kept constantly employed in copying these works on parchment by handwriting, as printing was then unknown, so far as can be discovered; though it is hardly safe to assert that any thing was unknown to those ancient Egyptians, for new discoveries amongst the remains of their ruined cities are continually revealing some hitherto unimagined fact regarding the knowledge and civilization of that strange and powerful nation. After copies were made of all these valuable volumes, or scrolls, the original was always kept in the Alexandrine museum and library, while the copy was graciously returned to the owners, whether individuals or nations. At length the library collected in the museum increased to four hundred thousand volumes. No more could be stored in the museum, and so a wonderful temple, called the Serapion, situated in another

part of the city, was used as a depository for additional volumes. Three hundred thousand volumes were afterwards accumulated in this temple. The strange history of this Serapion must not be omitted. One of the ancient gods of the Egyptians was a deity named Serapis. He was the particular divinity of seamen. A statue of this god existed in the town of Sinope, in Asia Minor. The Ptolemy kings of Egypt were desirous of making Alexandria the most important seaport and naval station in the world, and they thought this could not be accomplished without the presence of this sacred statue of the god Serapis, as his worship would bring to their city all the seamen who made pilgrimages to the shrine of their god. The king of Sinope was unwilling to part with the statue, and refused all offers of the Egyptian king to purchase this venerated image of the deity. At length, however, a famine fell upon the land of Sinope, and the people in their distress were forced to part with their sacred idol in order to obtain corn from the Egyptians, who would furnish none without this condition. The statue of the god Serapis was accordingly brought to Alexandria, where a magnificent temple was erected to contain the idol. This temple was called the Serapion.

It was owing to the desire of the Ptolemies to make the Alexandrine library the wonder of the world, that the Old Testament of the Scriptures came to be translated into Greek, which had previously been written only in the Hebrew language, and was known only to the Jews. This King Ptolemy having learned that the Jews at Jerusalem possessed sacred writings

which were guarded in their synagogue there, was very anxious to obtain a copy of them. As the Egyptians then held many of the Jews in slavery, who had been taken prisoners in war, Ptolemy rightly imagined that it would be difficult to accomplish his purpose. He accordingly first bought all the Jewish captives from their masters, at a cost of six hundred thousand dollars, and sent the liberated Jews home to Jerusalem. Deeming that he could now make his request of the Jewish authorities with some hopes of success after this generous treatment of their countrymen, Ptolemy sent a splendid embassage to Jerusalem, with respectful letters to the high-priest, and very magnificent presents. The request of Ptolemy was granted. The Jewish priests made very fine copies of their sacred writings, illuminating them with letters of gold. These were presented to Ptolemy, and seventy-two learned Jews were chosen from the twelve tribes and sent to Alexandria; and there they translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. This translation is called the Septuagint, from the Latin words, *septuaginta duo*, meaning "seventy-two." A copy of the Septuagint Bible may now be obtained for two days' wages of a common laborer; but to secure the original translation the Egyptian king expended, it is said, over a million of dollars. Thus an Egyptian king gave to the world the first Greek translation of the Old Testament.

Having given this glimpse of Egyptian history as a background to our picture, we will confine the remainder of this sketch to the immediate history of Cleopatra and her family. Having

shown the bright side of the picture of the reign of the Ptolemies, we are forced to look for a moment upon dark and bloody scenes. The early sovereigns in the line of the Ptolemies were distinguished for wise government and the advancement of their people in arts, sciences, and literature. The first Ptolemy was Ptolemy Soter, who, together with his son and successor, Ptolemy Philadelphus, were the most illustrious of the line. So greatly was Ptolemy Soter, the founder of the dynasty, venerated by his subjects, that divine honors were paid to his memory after his death. But the succeeding Ptolemies grew more and more vicious, weak, and sensuous, until the great-grandfather of Cleopatra stands forth in history merely as a horrid monster of all vice and crime. He was Ptolemy Physcon, the seventh in the line. The name Physcon was given him in derision, on account of his grotesque appearance. Being very small of stature, his gluttony and dissipation had increased his rotundity of figure to enormous proportions, making him more of a monster than man in appearance. His brother, who was king before him, dying, left a wife, who was also his sister, named Cleopatra, this name being common in the family of the Ptolemies. Queen Cleopatra had a little son, and a daughter, also called Cleopatra, a beautiful girl of about fifteen years of age. The son of this queen was really heir to the throne; but the friends of Physcon succeeded in persuading Queen Cleopatra to marry him, under the conditions that he should be king, but that Cleopatra's son, the child of Physcon's brother, should be heir to the throne. Physcon agreed

to this; but no sooner had he married the queen, who was also his sister, when he brutally killed her son, while in her own arms, and upon the very bridal day. This inhuman monster then fell in love with the young Cleopatra, his niece, and soon divorced the queen and married her daughter. But so great were his cruelties and crimes that the people rose against him, and he was forced to flee for his life. He took with him a beautiful boy, who was his own son, and also the child of the Queen Cleopatra whom he had divorced. The people then reinstated Queen Cleopatra upon the throne. When the queen's birthday arrived, it was celebrated with great magnificence, and many guests were assembled at the palace; at which time a large box was brought in as a present to the queen. It was opened in the presence of the guests, as all supposed that some neighboring monarch had sent some costly gift. As the cover was lifted, what was the horror of the queen and her friends to behold the head and hands of her beautiful boy, whom Physcon had taken with him! These bloody relics were placed amid a heap of the fragments of the body in such manner that the mother might recognize her son, and the fiend-like monster, in sending this ghastly gift, had commanded that it should be presented to his former wife as a birthday token, and that it should only be opened in the presence of her guests. Such were some of the shocking deeds performed by members of the family of the famous Cleopatra. No wonder that her nature, inherited from such inhuman monsters, was not free from barbarous instincts.

The father of the illustrious Cleopatra was little better than his revolting predecessors. Blood, murder, and intrigue, and all crimes and vices formed his inheritance, handed down by his grandfather, the fiendish Physcon. The younger Cleopatra, whom Physcon married for his second wife, became such an inhuman being of atrocity and crime that she was put to death by one of her sons, whose destruction she had planned in order to seize the throne. The mother of Auletes, the father of the great Cleopatra, was merciless and wicked, like the rest of the line, disregarding every virtuous principle and family tie. Her daughters were worthy followers of her atrocious example, and at length one murdered the other in jealous hate. Such was the bloody and shocking family record which the world-renowned Cleopatra inherited, together with the throne of one of the most powerful and remarkable nations of the earth. Her father followed in the same bloody footsteps. Having been dethroned by his subjects, who hated him on account of his atrocious vices, – for this Ptolemy Auletes was one of the most dissipated and corrupt of all the sovereigns of that dynasty, – he fled to Rome to obtain aid to recover his throne. The Egyptian people, meanwhile, had made his eldest daughter, Berenice, queen. Auletes, having at length raised an army with the help of Pompey, the Roman general, who espoused his cause, returned to Alexandria, defeated the Egyptians, and recovered his throne; and immediately thereupon put his eldest daughter, Berenice, to death. When Cleopatra was about eighteen years of age, her

father died, having left a will by which the throne of Egypt was to be held by Cleopatra and her younger brother Ptolemy, who were to marry each other and reign conjointly.

This terrible deed, which is regarded with just abhorrence as a dreadful and revolting crime in our days, was a customary practice among Egyptian monarchs; and in their mythology their gods and goddesses were also represented as marrying brothers and sisters. As both Cleopatra and her brother were too young to govern Egypt, they only reigned in name, while the government was administered by two ministers, named Pothinus and Achillas. As these statesmen, one of whom was also general-in-chief of the army, desired to obtain complete control of the empire, they espoused the cause of Ptolemy, Cleopatra's brother and so-called husband, who was so young that they imagined they could manage him as they wished. They accordingly deposed Cleopatra, placing Ptolemy alone on the throne; though in reality they were the sovereigns themselves.

Cleopatra, who early displayed a dauntless courage and a resistless self-reliance, fled to Syria to raise troops, that she might secure by force her rightful inheritance. Cleopatra obtained an army, and commenced her march back into Egypt. Pothinus and Achillas went forth to meet her, accompanied by a large body of troops, taking the young Ptolemy with them as the nominal sovereign. The two armies encamped near Pelusium. But no battle was fought, owing to unexpected circumstances.

It was at this time that the conflict was waging in Rome

between Julius Cæsar and Pompey. As Pompey had given aid to Ptolemy Auletes, the father of Cleopatra, in recovering his throne, Pompey fled to Egypt, hoping to find succor there. But he was treacherously invited to land by the Egyptian ministers, Pothinus and Achillas, and then barbarously murdered while stepping on shore. Julius Cæsar soon after arrived at Alexandria; and when this news reached the camps of the Egyptian armies, the two ministers, with the young king, Ptolemy, hastily returned to Alexandria; and, hoping to propitiate Cæsar, they sent to him the head of the murdered Pompey. Cæsar, far from being pleased, was greatly shocked, and ordered the head of his late enemy to be buried with imposing ceremonies.

Cæsar had landed at Alexandria with only a few troops, and had established himself in the royal palace. He demanded the six thousand talents which Ptolemy Auletes had promised for securing the alliance of Rome, which had never been entirely paid. Cæsar also claimed that, by the will of Auletes, the Roman people had been made his executors; and he declared that, as consul of the Roman people, it was for him to decide the dispute between Cleopatra and her brother Ptolemy.

While matters were in this state, Cleopatra determined to use stratagem in gaining her own cause.

She therefore sent a message to Cæsar, asking permission to appear before him. Cæsar thereupon urged her to come.

Cleopatra then took a single boat, and with but few attendants left the army secretly; and arriving at Alexandria, she waited

until nightfall, and then advanced with a single servant to the wall of the citadel. This servant, named Apollodorus, at the bidding of Cleopatra, rolled her up in a bundle of carpeting, and, covering the package in such a manner as to resemble a bale of merchandise, he lifted it over his shoulder and carried it into the city, and arrived unmolested at the palace. In answer to the questions of the guards stationed at the gates of the palace, he replied that he carried a present to Cæsar. Whereupon he obtained access to Cæsar's apartments; and when his mysterious bundle was unrolled, even the stern Roman general was fascinated by the vision of loveliness which met his wondering gaze. Cleopatra was at this time about twenty-one years of age. She was of slender and graceful form, and renowned, not so much for her regularity of features, as for an indescribable charm and witchery of manner and expression. As she pleaded her cause before the great conqueror, with lively intelligence and quick wit and winning sweetness, the conqueror became the conquered; and Julius Cæsar's heart became a toy in the hands of this fair young girl, and her wishes became his law. He who had conquered the known world was led captive by the charms of this wilful, fascinating, star-eyed beauty of the Nile.

Cæsar immediately espoused Cleopatra's cause with great fervor. He sent for the young king, Ptolemy, and urged upon him the expediency of restoring Cleopatra to her rights as joint sovereign with himself. But the young Ptolemy had now arrived at the age of wilfulness, and refused to give his sister her place as

queen. He was, moreover, very much vexed that Cleopatra had delivered herself into the power of Cæsar. He left the palace in a rage, tearing the diadem from his head, in his indignation, and declaring to the people that he was betrayed.

Ptolemy and his officers did not have a large body of troops in the city of Alexandria; for the main army was still stationed at Pelusium, where Cleopatra's army was also encamped.

The populace were so inflamed by the representations of Ptolemy and his ministers, who declared that Cæsar had seized and imprisoned Cleopatra, that the excited people rushed to make an attack upon the palace. Cæsar had but a small force to guard the palace; but he boldly sent out a detachment of his soldiers, with orders to seize Ptolemy, and bring him as a prisoner. This was accomplished, to the great astonishment of the people at such unheard-of daring. Then Cæsar mounted to a high window in the tower, and made signs to the mob below that he wished to speak with them. Quiet being restored, Cæsar told the people that, as he was a representative of the Roman nation, whom Auletes had made the executors of his will, he would endeavor to decide justly the questions concerning Cleopatra and Ptolemy; and he recommended them to retire without further riot. Accordingly the mob dispersed, and Ptolemy and Cleopatra remained under Cæsar's guardianship.

The next day an assembly of the chief men of Alexandria was convened by Cæsar; and the will of Auletes having been publicly read in their hearing, the decision announced by Cæsar,

that Cleopatra was entitled to reign with Ptolemy, was not openly opposed. Thereupon Cleopatra was reinstated by Cæsar; and he proposed that her younger sister, Arsinoë, with a still younger brother, also named Ptolemy, should receive the island of Cyprus as a joint realm. Cyprus being at this time a Roman possession, this provision would be a royal gift, which Cæsar thought would help to appease the Egyptian people.

A grand festival was held to celebrate this reconciliation; and during the feast one of the servants of Cæsar overheard some remarks, which led to the discovery of a plot which had been formed against Cæsar by the Egyptian ministers, Pothinus and Achillas. Cæsar being informed of the plan, set a guard at the door where the feast was held, and Pothinus was killed. Achillas fled to the Egyptian army, and assuming command, he marched against Cæsar.

The war which now ensued is known as the Alexandrine war. Achillas had at first the advantage in this contest, as his army was large, while Cæsar had brought but few soldiers with him to Alexandria, and his reinforcements had not arrived. Cæsar, knowing the importance of holding control of all the approaches to the city by sea, sent out an expedition to burn all the shipping in the harbor, and to take possession of a fort upon the island of Pharos, which commanded the entrance to the port. This undertaking was successful; but in its accomplishment an irretrievable loss was sustained, not only by the city of Alexandria, but by the entire world. This was the burning of the

famous library already described.

After various minor conflicts, a great battle was fought, in which the Egyptians were defeated. Ptolemy, who had previously joined the Egyptian army, was afterwards drowned in the Nile.

The younger sister of Cleopatra, Arsinoë, who had escaped from the palace with her guardian, called Ganymedes, and had taken refuge with the Egyptian army, was captured by Cæsar's soldiers, and brought to him as a prisoner. The war being ended by the victory of Cæsar, Cleopatra was placed upon the throne of Egypt, in conjunction with her youngest brother, Ptolemy, as the elder was dead; and after two years Cæsar returned to Rome, taking Arsinoë with him as his prisoner. In his grand triumphal celebrations this Egyptian princess was forced to walk before the chariot of Cæsar, bound with golden chains. Cæsar had become so infatuated with Cleopatra that he had taken her as his wife, while in Egypt, although he was already married to a Roman lady. And after Cæsar's return to Rome, Cleopatra followed him with their infant son, named Cæsario, and her younger brother, Ptolemy, who reigned with her as king of Egypt.

Upon the death of Cæsar, which occurred about four years after, Cleopatra endeavored to get her child acknowledged by the Roman senate as her colleague on the throne of Egypt. She was living in Rome in Cæsar's villa when he met his death at the hands of the conspirators. She thereupon applied to Cicero to use his influence in behalf of her son Cæsario, and offered him some rare books and works of art. But Cicero was offended

at her haughtiness, and refused to espouse her cause. Cleopatra, fearing that her own life was in danger, – for the Roman people were much incensed against her on account of her influence over Cæsar, – then fled secretly to Egypt with her son Cæsario. As Ptolemy, her youngest brother, had now arrived at the age of fifteen years, at which time he was allowed to assume all the royal prerogatives of a sovereign, Cleopatra contrived to have him poisoned, that she might reign sole monarch. She had then reigned four years with her elder brother and four with the younger Ptolemy, and from that time she reigned alone.

This shocking murder of her own brother reveals the savage instincts which she had inherited from her ancestors, who were guilty of the most atrocious crimes. She had seen her own father murder her eldest sister out of cruel revenge, and her childhood had been passed amidst scenes of profligacy and vice. For a time her nobler impulses had obtained the ascendancy over her; but from this time forward all the marvellous fascinations of mind and manner, which enslaved all who came within their magic spell, were debased by evil motives, and became the instruments of accomplishing the ruin of all who were so unfortunate as to become infatuated with her alluring beauty, melodious voice, and brilliant mind.

After the famous battle of Philippi and the death of Brutus and Cassius, Octavius Cæsar and Mark Antony and a Roman general named Lepidus formed the celebrated *triumvirate*, which continued for some time afterwards to wield the supreme power

over the Roman world. The battle of Philippi established the ascendancy of Antony, and made him the most conspicuous man, as Cleopatra was the most conspicuous woman, in the world.

After the murder of Cæsar, Cleopatra did not openly declare herself a partisan of either his friends or enemies. But as some suspicious circumstances occurred, Antony afterwards summoned her to appear before him on a charge of aiding Cassius. Antony was then at Tarsus, and the famous sail of Cleopatra up the river Cydnus took place at that time. The description of this gorgeous scene we have already narrated. The name of the messenger sent by Antony to summon Cleopatra to his presence was Dellius. This officer had proceeded to Egypt on this errand, but having beheld the far-famed Egyptian queen, he was so astonished at her beauty and captivated by her fascinations of voice and manner, that he told her she need have no fears of Antony, for he was sure her matchless charms would speedily overwhelm him. He advised her to proceed to Tarsus with as much pomp and magnificence as possible, arrayed in her best attire, and displaying all the gorgeous luxury of her court.

Cleopatra was not slow to follow this advice, but she took her own time in obeying Antony's summons; thus already making him submit to her own sweet will. "The great secret of Cleopatra's power of winning was the instinctive insight she possessed into men's dispositions, and her exquisite tact in discovering their vulnerable points. She won Julius Cæsar by throwing herself into his power, and won Mark Antony by

exercising her power over him. She flattered Julius Cæsar's love of dominion by submitting herself to it; she swayed Mark Antony's heart by assuming rule there. She caused herself to be carried to Julius Cæsar; she bade Mark Antony come to her. She behaved with humility and deference to Julius; she treated Antony with gay despotism and wayward playfulness. She derived her fortune and held her crown from Julius Cæsar's bestowal; she outvied Antony in costly display and sumptuous entertainment. Her irresistible allurement lay in her faculty of adapting herself to men's peculiar tastes and predilections. She followed Julius to Rome; she shared Antony's wildest frolics. Antony's passion for Cleopatra was a luxurious intoxication."

When the magnificent barge of Cleopatra landed at the city of Tarsus, all the populace ran to the river-banks to behold the gorgeous sight. Antony, who was then engaged at some tribunal, found himself completely deserted, as every one had fled in haste to the river. When Cleopatra landed, she ordered her tents to be immediately pitched upon the shore.

Antony sent a polite invitation to the Egyptian queen to dine with him; but she courteously replied that it would be more pleasing to her to receive him and his generals as her guests. And when Antony and his officers entered her superb tents, the gorgeous magnificence everywhere displayed with most lavish abundance astonished and bewildered them. The dinner service was of gold set with precious stones, and the twelve seats arranged for the guests were ornamented with purple and gold.

When Antony praised the splendor of the sight before him, Cleopatra disdainfully replied that these were but trifles; but if the service and ornaments pleased him, she begged him to accept them all as a slight gift from her. The next day Cleopatra was invited to dine with Antony; and although he endeavored in every manner possible to equal the richness and splendor of her entertainment, he fell so far short, that he acknowledged with chagrin his defeat. Again Antony and his generals were feted in the tents of Cleopatra. This time the tables were spread with a new service of gold and silver, more magnificent than those beheld at the former feast. The rare jewels with which they were adorned, and their unique and elegant workmanship, surprised her guests into still warmer exclamations of wonder and delight. At the end of the entertainment Cleopatra presented to each guest the gorgeous chair in which he had reclined, and distributed amongst them all the splendid service of gold and silver dishes, which were richly encrusted with costly jewels.

Not only were the entertainments furnished by Cleopatra in honor of Antony so very gorgeous, but her costumes were each day more bewitching, and even her attendants were attired in rich and expensive robes; while the tents and surrounding gardens and pavilions were illuminated with innumerable lights, which were so ingeniously disposed, some in squares, and some in circles, that the spectacle was surprising in beauty. Antony was not only enchanted by the brilliancy of these fairy-like scenes, but Cleopatra herself was irresistible. She was not so

remarkable for actual beauty, but her chief fascination was the charming combination of face, form, and winning conversation, which rendered her bewitching. Her voice has been compared to an instrument of many strings, so melodious was it; and she spoke readily to every ambassador in his own language, and was said to have been the only sovereign of Egypt who understood the languages of all her subjects, which included the Greek, Egyptian, Ethiopic, Troglodytic, Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac.

She was now twenty-five years of age. Her oriental beauty was at its height of splendor. Her mind was mature, and her wit was unequalled. These costly entertainments continued every day; and on one occasion, when Antony playfully reproached her for her extravagance, and said that it would not be possible to fare in a more costly manner, Cleopatra laughingly declared that the dinner of the next day should cost ten thousand sestertia, equal to three hundred thousand dollars.

Antony would not believe this surprising statement, and made a wager with her that she could not fulfil her promise. When he arrived with his generals the next day, he did not perceive any seeming added magnificence; and when Antony laughingly told her, that according to his reckoning of the cost of the viands and service, she had lost her wager, she replied, that she should herself soon eat and drink the ten thousand sestertia.

She wore in her ears two pearls, the largest known in the world, which she had inherited with her crown and kingdom. These two pearls were valued at two hundred and twenty-two

thousand dollars apiece. Dryden, alluding to these jewels of Cleopatra, wrote, "Each pendant in her ear shall be a province."

When the next course was served, a servant set before her a glass of vinegar. She thereupon took one of the ear-rings from her ear, and dropped it into the vinegar, and when the pearl was dissolved, she drank the liquid.

As she was about to sacrifice also the other magnificent jewel, one of the guests snatched it from her hand, exclaiming that she had won the wager. This rescued pearl was afterwards taken to Rome, and there cut in two and made into a pair of ear-rings for the statue of Venus in the Pantheon at Rome. And the fame of the wager made the two half-pearls as valuable as the two whole ones had been.

Cleopatra was also a beautiful singer, and she now employed all the arts of her beauty and mind to the task of completely subduing the will and the heart of the great Roman general, who was soon so entirely ensnared by this enchanting sorceress, that he forgot all about his wife, whom he had left in Rome, and also his duties of country, and even his glories of war; and thus this old warrior became a willing captive to the spell of Cleopatra, who persuaded him to follow her to Alexandria, and there he gave himself up to every kind of idle amusement and the most profligate dissipation.

Antony and Cleopatra had each a magnificent palace in Alexandria, and they feted each other by turns. Philotas, a young physician who was at that time pursuing his studies at

Alexandria, related to Plutarch's grandfather some incidents of these extravagant feasts. At one time Philotas entered Antony's kitchen when eight wild boars were being roasted whole. Upon expressing astonishment at the large number of guests who must be expected, to require such a dinner, the cook informed him that there would be none others but Antony's usual party of twelve; but as each dish must be served in perfection, and as Antony and Cleopatra often became engaged in some new diversion just as dinner was ready, and would thereupon give orders to have it wait their pleasure, it was necessary to cook eight entire dinners, that whichever one should suit their time to eat, it might be served without the slightest signs of neglect in its preparation.

But the most costly of the luxuries then used in Egypt were the scents and ointments. Many of these perfumes, such as the attar of roses, were sold for four hundred denarii the pound.

Cleopatra endeavored by every art possible to so fascinate Antony that he would not think of returning to Rome. Perceiving that Antony was partial to gross and sensuous pleasures, and more given to feasting than the polite arts and sciences, in which Cleopatra herself was remarkably accomplished, she therefore cultivated only the coarser side of her nature, and gave herself up to the most riotous amusements. She played at dice with him, hunted by his side, was present at all his military parades, and even joined him in his night revels in the street, when Antony, disguising himself as a servant, and Cleopatra dressed as a maid, accompanied by half-drunken companions, they went through

the streets of Alexandria, attended with boisterous musicians and singers, and perpetrated all kinds of wild pranks.

Thus the elegant Cleopatra, who could charm Julius Cæsar with the marvellous intelligence and keen wit of her conversation and the graceful allurements of her refined beauty, when with the mad Antony, who was more of a wild boar than statesman, laid aside her bewitching loveliness of mind and manner, and condescended to join in a wild revelry, as boisterous and undignified as his coarser nature could enjoy. Yet even the witchery of her youth, beauty, wealth, and gracefulness could not cloak the enormities of vice and crime. Her first request of Antony was the death of her sister Arsinoë, who had been living in exile in Asia since the time when she had been taken to Rome as a prisoner by Julius Cæsar. Either from jealousy or ambition, Cleopatra desired her to be put out of her way, and Antony caused her to be killed in the temple of Diana, at Miletus, whither Arsinoë had fled for refuge. Thus did Cleopatra continue her bloody work even in the midst of her most gorgeous revels.

From henceforth in her history we can no longer think of her as the lovely lotus of the Nile, the very flower of womanly loveliness, as she appeared upon her enchanting barge, sailing in the glowing sunshine, over the shining waters of the Cydnus; but she becomes more like a beautiful tiger, or, as Shakespeare calls her, "that old serpent of the Nile," charming the unwary victims by her glistening eyes and alluring wiles, only to crush them at last within the encircling coils of her irresistible spell. Antony

had sent for her as her master, but he was now her slave.

One day the queen of Egypt accompanied him on a fishing excursion. Antony, having caught nothing, was much chagrined; and to appear successful in the eyes of Cleopatra, he ordered a fisherman to dive beneath the water and fasten to his line one of the large fish which the fisherman had just caught. This having been done, Antony drew in his line with much satisfaction, and displayed the fine trophy he had so skilfully ensnared. Cleopatra, however, was not ignorant of this artifice, but she affected much admiration for Antony's successful angling, and she arranged for another fishing party the next day. Accordingly, when they once again set sail in the fishing-boats, she ordered one of her servants to dive below the water when Antony should throw his line, and fasten to his hook a large salt fish which had been brought from the province of Pontus. Again Antony drew in his line in triumph, which was quickly changed to intense mortification as he beheld the salt fish dangling from his hook. Amidst the uproarious laughter which this amusing incident occasioned, Cleopatra exclaimed, "Leave the line, good general, to us, the kings and queens of Pharos and Canopus; your business is to fish for cities, kingdoms, and kings."

While Antony thus amused himself with such sports, and much more condemnatory pleasures, news reached him of trouble at Rome. His wife Fulvia and his brother had been banished, and Octavius Cæsar declared himself an open foe. Fulvia soon after died, and Antony returning to Rome, was

reconciled to young Cæsar by marrying his sister Octavia, although Cleopatra already pretended to be his lawful wife; and in order to appease her, Antony was obliged to make magnificent presents to Cleopatra, consisting of the provinces of Phoenicia, the Lower Syria, the Isle of Cyprus, with a great part of Cilicia. Cleopatra also begged him to put to death Herod, king of Judea, and Malichus, king of Arabia, who were her enemies. But Antony did not yield to these bloody demands, and only gave her the balsam country around Jericho, and a rent-charge of thirty thousand pounds a year on the revenues of Judea. It is related that at a feast, when Cleopatra perceived Antony to be under the influence of wine, she even presumed to ask him to give her the Roman Empire, which he was not ashamed to promise her. On receiving these large additions to her kingdom, Cleopatra, in honor of Antony, dated the years of her reign anew, calling what was in reality the sixteenth year of her reign over Egypt, the first, and thus she reckoned them until her death. Antony also presented to her the large library of Pergamus, which had fallen to his share in the spoils of war. This library Eumenes and Attalus had hoped to make as famous as the museum of Alexandria, which had perished in the flames of the Alexandrine war. Cleopatra placed the two hundred thousand volumes thus acquired, in the temple of Serapis, and once again Alexandria held the largest library in the world, notwithstanding the destruction of the far-famed museum. These royal gifts caused the Romans to entertain bitter hatred against Antony,

and especially against Cleopatra, whom they blamed for her evil influence over their once illustrious general.

After Antony's marriage to Octavia, he made several expeditions against surrounding nations, and Octavia accompanied him into Greece. But open hostilities having broken out between Octavius and Antony, Octavia was sent to Rome to effect a reconciliation between her husband and brother. This she partially accomplished; but Antony, again ensnared by the enchantments of Cleopatra, forgot all his duties of state and country, and again was lured to Alexandria, leaving Octavia in Rome. This illustrious Roman lady displayed the most loyal devotion to her husband and their children, and endeavored in every way to dissuade her brother from taking up arms against Antony, whose cruel neglect of his wife inflamed her brother, Octavius Cæsar, to the most intense hatred, and a determination to avenge her wrongs, as well as assert his own ambitious power.

Meanwhile, Antony was spending his time in Egypt. At length he determined to undertake an expedition against the Parthians and Armenians. While in Phœnicia, Cleopatra joined him, bringing him money and clothes and food for his soldiers. Meanwhile Octavia had also left Rome and reached Athens, on her way to Antony's camp, to bring him the supplies and money she had procured in Rome for his suffering troops. Fearing that Octavia might win Antony from her side, Cleopatra affected to die for love of him. She refrained from food, and was often discovered by him in tears; and her attendants constantly

reminded him of her great grief, and declared that if he should leave her, she would surely die. As Antony had married Octavia only for political power in Rome, and as he did love Cleopatra more intensely than he had ever loved any human being before, he sent word to Octavia to return to Rome, and soon after sent deputies to Rome, to declare his divorce from Octavia, and with orders to command her to leave his house, with all her children.

Even this wicked and cruel indignity did not destroy the devoted love of Octavia. She obeyed the outrageous summons, and continued to take the most untiring care, not only of her own children, but of those of Antony and his former wife, Fulvia. She also endeavored to appease the indignation of the Roman people against him; but she could not lessen the resentment of her brother Octavius, who now prepared for open war. While the names of Antony and Cleopatra were held in abhorrence in Rome, in Alexandria new and most gorgeous honors were accorded them.

In the magnificent palace of the Ptolemies a massive throne of gold was erected, the ascent to which was by steps of solid silver. Upon this glistening throne sat Antony and Cleopatra. He was arrayed in a superb robe of purple, embroidered with gold, and buttoned with flashing diamonds. On his side he wore a Persian scimitar, the handle and sheath of which were encrusted with sparkling gems. His diadem glittered with precious stones, and in his right hand he held a sceptre of gold. Thus had he caused himself to be so gorgeously attired, in order, as he said, "that

in such royal equipage he might deserve to be the husband of a queen."

Upon his right side sat Cleopatra, costumed as the goddess Isis, whose name and honors she assumed on public occasions of great pomp and magnificence. She wore a shining robe of the precious linen set apart for the service of that goddess, so fine and sheer that it seemed to encase her graceful form in gleaming folds of shimmering light. Upon her royal brow glistened most priceless jewels, while her fair neck seemed almost weighted with its sparkling gem-encrusted chains. She looked, in truth, a very goddess, this proud Egyptian Queen, this gorgeous Lotus Blossom of the Nile, this most matchless siren, most peerless Peri of the Orient! Never before had she appeared more gloriously beautiful; though even now the black clouds of disappointment and death were gathering thick around, soon to overshadow herself and illustrious kingdom in irretrievable ruin. But unmindful of the coming storm, the eyes of this Egyptian Isis, seated in goddess-like magnificence upon her shining throne, flashed with proud triumph and gratified ambition.

A little lower upon this gorgeous throne sat three children. The eldest was Cæsario, the son of Cleopatra and Julius Cæsar; the two younger were Alexander and Ptolemy, sons of Antony and Cleopatra. Cæsario was dressed as a young Egyptian prince; while the younger boys wore the costumes of the countries over which they were to reign. After the people had assembled in

the palace, by the command of Antony, heralds proclaimed Cleopatra queen of Egypt, Cyprus, Libya, and Cœlosyria, in conjunction with her son Cæsario. The young princes Alexander and Ptolemy were also proclaimed "kings of kings"; and to Alexander, the elder, Antony gave the kingdoms of Armenia and Media, with Parthia, when Antony should have conquered it. To the younger, Ptolemy, the kingdoms of Syria, Phoenicia, and Cilicia were given. After the proclamation the three young princes knelt before Cleopatra and Antony, and made them royal obeisance, kissing their hands. To each of them was afterwards assigned a regiment of guards and a retinue of youths chosen from the principal families in the several countries.

Cæsar now advanced with his army against Antony. Cleopatra, having furnished him with troops and ships, – which, together with his own land forces, formed a large army, – they departed to Ephesus, and thence to Samos, where, notwithstanding their impending peril, they passed many days in feasting and pleasure. The island became such a scene of riot and revelry that the people exclaimed in astonishment, "If Antony celebrates such festivities before going into battle, by what means could he express his joy should he obtain the victory?"

Antony and Cleopatra, with a magnificent retinue, then went to Athens. As Octavia had been formerly received by the Athenians with marked attentions, Cleopatra determined that she would outvie her rival. She accordingly lavished such costly gifts and immense sums of money amongst the Athenians, that they

were amazed, and decreed to her the most exalted honors. They sent an imposing embassy to her, and Antony himself, in the character of an Athenian citizen, was one of the ambassadors.

It was during one of the gorgeous feasts celebrated at Samos that the following incident is supposed to have occurred.

Notwithstanding Cleopatra's professed fondness for Antony, he began at length to fear that in some moment of anger or treachery she might poison him. He therefore ordered that all of the viands served at these banquets should be first tasted by one of his servants before he partook of them. Cleopatra, perceiving this mistrust, determined to teach him how completely he was in her power if she chose to do him harm.

She therefore ordered the stems of the flowers to be poisoned, which formed the wreaths worn by Antony and herself at table according to the Egyptian custom, and in the midst of the feast she proposed that they should pluck the flowers from their crowns and drink them in their wine. Antony readily consented, and breaking off many of the blossoms from his wreath, he threw them in his glass and raised it to his lips to drink.

But Cleopatra quickly seized his uplifted arm and exclaimed: "I am the poisoner against whom you take such mighty precautions. If it were possible for me to live without you, judge now whether I wanted either opportunity or reason for such action." She thereupon immediately ordered that a prisoner, already condemned to die, should be brought into the apartment, and the cup which Antony had been about to taste was given him,

and Cleopatra commanded that he should drink its contents; after taking which, the slave immediately expired.

At length Antony and Cleopatra set forth with their entire fleet to meet their Roman foes. This fleet consisted of five hundred ships of war of great size and peculiar construction; but they were illy manned, as Antony was not able to secure mariners enough, and had been obliged to employ husbandmen, artisans, muleteers, and even boys. On board the fleet were two hundred thousand foot and twelve thousand horse. The kings of many countries had joined their forces in behalf of Cleopatra, and troops had been sent from Libya, Cappadocia, Paphlagonia, Comagena, Thrace, Pontus, Judea, Lycaonia, Galatia, and Media. Though all the ships were imposing, none equalled the magnificence of Cleopatra's galley with its purple sails glittering with gold; while flags and banners floated in the breeze, and trumpets, drums, cymbals, and other instruments filled the air with gay and inspiring strains of martial music. Antony followed her in a galley little less splendid.

Cleopatra was flushed with triumph. Accompanied by one of the most renowned generals of the world, she proudly threatened the powerful Roman capital, and even dared to imagine that she could subdue the world and reign sole mistress of the greatest kingdoms of the earth.

Octavius Cæsar had only two hundred and fifty ships, and eighty thousand foot and twelve thousand horse. But his war-galleys were perfectly manned with experienced seamen, and his

troops were old veterans in many illustrious wars.

By the advice of Cleopatra, Antony determined to risk all in a naval battle rather than a land conflict. Had he chosen the latter, his superior numbers might have turned the tide in his favor.

The important battle was fought upon the 2d of September, in the Gulf of Ambracia, near the city of Actium. While the battle was raging, and Antony's chances of success were equal with those of Cæsar, Cleopatra turned and fled in fright, drawing after her the entire Egyptian squadron.

Antony, perceiving her flight, forgot everything in his wild impulse to follow her; and turning his galley, he ignominiously pursued her, leaving his soldiers to carry on the conflict. So bravely did they fight, even after this shameful desertion of their leader, that Cæsar with great difficulty gained the victory.

When Cleopatra perceived that Antony was following her, she commanded her admiral to stop her galley until Antony reached its side, when Antony was taken on board. But so great was his mortification and remorse that he would neither see her nor speak to her for three days; after which time she regained her old ascendancy, and they returned to Alexandria, where they gave themselves up anew to pleasure and feasting, even though they knew that Cæsar was already pursuing them.

Cleopatra now formed a very extraordinary design. She ordered that her ships, which were in the Mediterranean Sea, should be carried over the isthmus into the Red Sea; and she then determined to take all her treasures, and escape beyond the reach

of Cæsar. But the Arabians having burned several of her ships, she abandoned the plan. She now resolved to be treacherous to Antony, and to gain the favor of Cæsar. Though she loved Antony to madness, her ambition was stronger than her love. She thereupon persuaded Antony to send ambassadors to Cæsar to sue for peace; and with them she sent officers of her own, who were bribed to treat separately with Cæsar on her behalf. Octavius Cæsar gave her reason to hope, if she would sacrifice Antony to him.

Now followed a time of vacillating love and ambition, despair and dissimulation. To dispel Antony's suspicions she increased her caressing attentions, and spent her time in providing the most extravagant banquets and amusements.

Meanwhile, with a presentiment of her impending doom, she made special studies of all sorts of poisons, to discern, if possible, which would occasion the most speedy and painless death. She also experimented regarding the effects of the bites of the most poisonous reptiles and insects, using for her victims animals or condemned prisoners. At length she discovered that the asp was the only one whose bite occasioned neither torture nor convulsions, the victim being speedily stupefied, and dying in a seemingly painless sleep.

Antony and Cleopatra now formed a new compact, called "Synapothanumenon," signifying the order and agreement of those who will die together, in substitution for their former order of existence, called "Amimetobion," meaning "no life

comparable."

News at length reached Alexandria that Cæsar had appeared before Pelusium, and that the city had fallen into his hands. It is said that this capture was obtained through the treachery of Cleopatra, who sent secret word to her governor there to surrender the place. Then, to clear herself from the rumors of this treason, she put the wife and children of the governor into Antony's hands that he might revenge himself by putting them to death. Thus had vice and ambition robbed this Egyptian queen of all the charms of innocence and womanly tenderness, until she had become almost fiend-like in her cruelty and selfishness. Thus can the spirit of selfish ambition become a serpent in the heart, poisoning all its nobler aspirations. The beautiful, fascinating Cleopatra was fast becoming as great a monster of crime as her atrocious ancestors.

Adjoining the temple of Isis, Cleopatra had caused a magnificent tomb to be built for herself, and thither she ordered all her most precious treasures to be brought. She there stored her gold, silver, jewels, ebony, ivory, and a large quantity of costly perfumes and aromatic woods. She also sent to this mausoleum an immense quantity of flax, tow, torches, and other combustibles, which she ordered stored in the lower apartments of the tomb, that they might be in readiness should she determine to destroy herself and treasures by fire rather than allow them to fall into the hands of her enemies.

Cæsar, hearing of these preparations made by the Egyptian

queen, was fearful lest she might escape him, with all her treasures, and constantly sent her messages offering her promises of generous treatment when he should reach Alexandria.

Antony, knowing nothing of this double dealing, prepared for a good defence. Cæsar had now advanced to the city, and encamped near the Hippodrome. Antony made a vigorous sally; and having severely repulsed the enemy, he returned victorious to the city. But this was the last effort of his expiring valor. On the morrow, after spending the night at a magnificent banquet provided by Cleopatra in honor of his recent success, Antony resolved to attack Cæsar by sea and land. Having drawn up his land force, he stood with them on an eminence, watching the advance of his galleys, which were to make the first attack. What was his horror and chagrin, however, to behold Cleopatra's admiral strike his flag, and go over with his entire fleet to the enemy. This treason opened the eyes of Antony to the perfidy of the queen. With one expiring impulse of warlike valor, he sent to challenge Cæsar to single combat. But Cæsar sent answer, that if Antony was weary of life, there were other ways to die. Finding himself thus ridiculed by Cæsar and betrayed by Cleopatra, Antony rushed in wild rage to the palace to avenge himself upon the perfidious woman for whom he had bartered country and honor. Any excuse which we might have made for the actions of Cleopatra heretofore, on the plea that she was impelled by her mad love for Antony, can no longer shield her treachery and crime. It is poor Antony now who, in spite of all

his outrageous conduct, claims our sympathy. He had bartered everything in life for the love of this woman, only to find himself basely deserted by her in his hour of greatest trouble. Her selfish ambition was paramount to her love, and overshadows her last days with infamy.

Cleopatra, foreseeing that Antony would seek her in a rage, upon discovering her treachery, had retired into her tomb, with two women attendants, and caused Antony to be told that she had killed herself. No sooner had Antony heard this news than his hate was again conquered by his love, and lamenting her death with sobs and tears, he shut himself up in his palace, with one slave, named Eros. He thereupon commanded Eros to plunge his dagger into his heart, as he no longer desired to live. But the faithful slave, unwilling to obey this dreadful command, took the dagger, but stabbed himself with it, and fell dead at his master's feet. Antony then exclaimed, "Shall a slave and a woman teach me how to die!" and immediately thrust his sword into his side, and fell bleeding to the floor.

Just then an officer arrived, who had been sent by Cleopatra to inform him that she was not dead, as reported. As soon as Antony heard the beloved name of Cleopatra, he opened his dying eyes and begged to be taken to her, that he might expire in her arms. Bleeding and dying, he was carried to her tomb. Even then Cleopatra's selfish fear overcame her love, and she would not allow the doors to be opened, lest her enemies might surprise her; but she appeared at a high window, from which she let down

ropes to draw him up. Antony was made fast to the ropes by his attendants below, and then Cleopatra and her two women, who were the only persons with her in the tomb, endeavored to draw up the dying Antony. It was a piteous sight. With his eyes even now glazed in death, Antony cast an imploring look upon the face of the woman whom he loved more than life or earthly honors. The handsome face of the Egyptian queen was distorted by her grief and her severe efforts to draw up the bleeding body of the dying Antony. When they had lifted him within the window, Cleopatra laid him on a bed, and bathed the blood from his face, caressing him with fond kisses, and calling him endearing names. While she thus wailed and mourned, she cut off his hair, according to an Egyptian superstition that it afforded relief to the dying. Antony, recovering consciousness for a few moments, sought only to comfort her, telling her he died happy, as he was in her arms.

"And for thee, star-eyed Egyptian!
Glorious sorceress of the Nile,
Light the path to Stygian horrors
With the splendors of thy smile.
Give the Cæsar crowns and arches,
Let his brow the laurel twine;
I can scorn the Senate's triumphs,
Triumphing in love like thine.
Isis and Osiris guard thee!
Cleopatra, Rome, farewell!"

Cæsar allowed Cleopatra to bury Antony with royal honors; and afterwards he went himself to pay her a visit. He found Cleopatra overwhelmed with grief. She had refused food, and endeavored to starve herself to death; but Cæsar had sent her word that he would put her children to death if she should harm herself, and so she had reluctantly allowed herself to be ministered unto by her physician. But she had bruised her face, arms, and breast in her paroxysms of grief, and when Cæsar entered her apartment, he was shocked at her appearance. Her hair was loose and disordered, her countenance wild and haggard, and her arms and breast horribly disfigured with wounds and bruises, while her former lustrous eyes were red and swollen by excessive weeping.

At first, Cleopatra endeavored to vindicate her conduct; but finding that Cæsar was not awed by her hitherto irresistible power, she broke down completely, and with tears and lamentations sought to appeal to his pity. Cæsar assured her that she would be treated with kindness and generosity, and he left her, thinking that she desired to live, and that his coming triumph would be graced by her presence.

"Octavius little knew the subtle intrigues of Cleopatra. She had deluded him; not he, her. The waning charms of Cleopatra, dimmed by grief and sorrow, might not appeal to the sensuous side of Octavius's nature, but he was not proof against the subtle and practised skill of her mental abilities, by which she wielded

the judgments of men according to her will."

Cleopatra now determined to destroy herself, that she might not have to endure the ignominy of serving as an ornament to Cæsar's triumphal celebrations when he returned to Rome. Once before, Cæsar had sent a messenger to speak with her at the door of her tomb, while a second officer placed a ladder against the wall and entered her window, as he had been ordered to search her apartment, lest she had some weapons concealed with which she might harm herself. Whereupon, one of her women cried out, "O unfortunate Cleopatra, you are taken!" Cleopatra, seeing the officers, drew a dagger from her girdle, and was about to stab herself, but the officer caught her arm and took from her the weapon, and afterwards searched the room and shook her robes, lest she should have concealed some other weapon or poison with which she could destroy herself. A guard was then set in her tomb, to watch her constantly. But with all these precautions, Cleopatra outwitted them. She sent to Cæsar, and begged that he would allow her to go and pay the last honors at the tomb of Antony and take her final leave of him.

Cæsar having granted this request, she went with her women, bearing chaplets and wreaths of flowers, which they placed upon the tomb amidst wailings and lamentations. When Cleopatra returned to her apartments after this sad ceremony, she appeared more composed than usual. After taking a bath, she arrayed herself with all her queenly magnificence; and having ordered a sumptuous repast, served with the customary splendor, she

partook of it with seeming calmness.

Afterwards, ordering all attendants to retire from her presence, with the exception of two trusty waiting-women, she wrote a letter to Cæsar, and then asked for a basket of figs which a servant had just brought to her.

When the guards stopped him at the door, he displayed the fruit, and declared that the queen desired them for her dinner; and thus they were allowed to be sent in.

After Cleopatra had examined the figs, she laid down upon her couch, and soon after appeared to have fallen asleep. The poison from the bite of the asp, which had been carefully hidden amongst the figs, and which had stung her upon the arm, which she held to it for that purpose, immediately reached her heart, and killed her almost instantly, and without seeming pain.

When Cæsar received her letter, in which Cleopatra requested that she might be buried by the side of Antony, his suspicions were aroused, lest she contemplated killing herself, and he sent officers quickly to her apartments. But when they opened the doors, they found Cleopatra lying dead upon her bed of gold, arrayed in all her royal robes, and one of her women already lying dead at her feet.

The other attendant, named Charmian, was arranging the diadem upon the brow of her beloved mistress, and decking her form with flowers.

Seeing which, one of the soldiers exclaimed: —

"Is that well done, Charmian?"

"Very well," she replied, "and meet for a princess descended from so many noble kings."

As she spoke these words, she, too, fell dead at her mistress's side. Both of these faithful slaves had probably poisoned themselves, also, that they might die with their much-loved queen.

Cleopatra was buried in royal state by the side of Antony, according to her request.

Cæsar, deprived of her much-desired presence in his triumphal procession, ordered a statue of gold to be made of the famous Egyptian queen, which was carried before his chariot in his after-triumphs. The arm of this statue was adorned with a golden asp, signifying the supposed cause of Cleopatra's death.

Cleopatra died at thirty-nine years of age, having reigned twenty-two years. Cæsar caused all the statues of Antony to be thrown down; but those of Cleopatra were spared, as an officer who had been many years in her service paid one thousand talents that they might not be destroyed.

After Cleopatra's death Egypt was reduced to a province of the Roman Empire. The reign of the Ptolemies had continued two hundred and ninety-three years.

Cæsario, the son of Cleopatra and Julius Cæsar, was put to death by Octavius Cæsar; but her younger children were taken to Rome and treated with kindness.

Thus perished the famous Cleopatra, whose marvellous attractions and enchanting fascinations of beauty and unequalled

display of pomp and royal magnificence make parts of her story to read like the wonderful tales of the Arabian Nights; but whose selfish ambition, treachery, and sins shrouded her last terrible end in the impenetrable blackness of hopeless despair.

ZENOBIA.
A.D. 260

"She had all the royal makings of a Queen." – Shakespeare.

LIKE an enchanted island rising suddenly before the vision in mid-ocean, so did superb Palmyra of the East burst upon the sight in the midst of an ocean of sands, and cause the tired traveller, who had toiled painfully across the weary wastes of the Syrian desert, to pause spellbound and enraptured before the picture of unrivalled loveliness which suddenly met his gaze, as he looked towards the high land and waving groves of palm-trees which marked the site of the magnificent Palmyra, "the Tadmor in the wilderness," said to have been founded by Solomon as a resting-place for caravans in the midst of the trackless desert.

Over sixteen hundred years ago this famous city flourished, in the zenith of its gorgeous magnificence. Even Rome paid homage to its power and beauty, and Roman emperors thought it not beneath them to seek alliance with the illustrious sovereign of this alluring realm.

Flanked by high hills on the east, the city filled the entire plain below, as far as the eye could reach, both north and south. Studded with groups of lofty palm-trees shooting up among its temples and palaces of glistening white marble, while

magnificent structures of the purest marble adorned the groves which surrounded the city proper for miles in every direction, it appeared at the same time all city and all country; and from a little distance one could not determine the line which divided country from city.

The prospect seemed to the beholder the fair Elysian Fields, for it appeared almost too glorious for the mere earth-born; while from its midst the vast Temple of the Sun stretched upwards its thousand columns of glistening marble towards the heavens, which bent above them its dazzlingly blue vault flooded with the golden effulgence of the mid-day sun, or glowing with the rich tints of an oriental sunset.

This renowned Temple of the Sun was a marvel of man's architectural skill and genius. It was of dazzling white marble, and of Ionic design. Around the central portion of the building rose slender pyramids, – pointed obelisks, – domes of the most graceful proportions, columns, arches, and lofty towers, innumerable in number, and of matchless beauty. The genius of Greece had contributed to the beauty of this Palm City of the desert, for on every side it was adorned with Grecian art and architecture.

Nor was the Temple of the Sun its only marvel. About half a Roman mile from the temple was situated the Long Portico. This building was devoted to pleasure and trade. Amongst its interminable ranges of Corinthian columns the busy multitudes passed in ceaseless processions, pursuing their various avocations

or seeking amusement. Here the merchants assembled, and exhibited their rich stuffs gathered from all parts of the known world. There, also, the mountebanks resorted, and amused the crowds of idle rich with their fantastic tricks. Strangers from all the known countries might have been seen, attired in their varied and picturesque national costumes. A continuous throng of natives from all climes passed to and fro, along the spacious corridors, between the graceful, fluted columns surmounted by the rich entablature whereon were carved the achievements of Alexander.

Nor were these the only points of interest in this fascinating city. The royal palace rose in the midst, so vast, and with so many shining turrets and massive towers, that it seemed a city within a city.

Palmyra was laid out in shady avenues of luxuriant palm-trees, and adorned on either side with magnificent structures of white marble, or of stone equal in dazzling whiteness. Public gardens, groves, and woods stretched beyond the limits of the city, far as the eye could reach; and amidst these cool and green retreats, elegant villas of the rich and luxurious Palmyrenes were scattered so thickly that Palmyra, the Beautiful, the Palm Grove, seemed placed like a gem of matchless charms in the red-gold setting of the desert sands.

Along the roads leading to the city, elephants, camels, and dromedaries laden with merchandise, or gorgeously caparisoned, bearing some noted personage, in strange and brilliant costume,

added picturesque dashes of varied color to the landscape.

Just without the walls of the city were the vast arches of the aqueduct which supplied the inhabitants with a river of purest water.

The streets presented a never-ending scene of varied beauty. The buildings of marble; the clean, paved streets; the frequent fountains of water throwing into the perfumed air hundreds of gleaming jets; temples, palaces, and gardens on every side, entranced the eye with their alluring beauty. Arabian horses with jewelled housings, and riders of noble rank; then anon a troop of royal cavalry, with clashing arms and clanging trumpets; with a motley population of Palmyrenes, Persians, Parthians, Arabians, Egyptians, Jews, and Romans, with their varied costumes of glowing colors; here mounted on a camel; there riding a stately elephant; some seated in chariots drawn by white Arabian steeds of peerless beauty, caparisoned with gold and jewels if their owners belonged to royal families, – all these objects fascinated the gaze of the bewildered stranger and riveted the attention of the lover of artistic effects.

Such was beautiful Palmyra in the time of its famous queen, Zenobia. And not less dazzlingly beautiful is the fair queen herself, as she rides through the streets of her royal city, where her adoring subjects flock to do her homage.

See! she is returning from one of her expeditions to her distant provinces, and is just entering her loved Palmyra. As soon as the near approach of their queen is made known to the people, the

entire populace flock to the walls to welcome her return. Troops of horse, variously caparisoned, lead the queen's procession, followed by a train of elephants and camels with gay trappings and heavily loaded. Then come the body-guard of the queen, clad in complete armor of steel, surrounding the royal chariot, which is drawn by six snowy Arabian steeds with gold-mounted harness and bearing waving plumes upon their high-arched heads. As the mid-day sun shines with effulgent splendor upon the scene, the flashing of spears and corselets and burnished chariots and gilded harness sparkle like diamond points. Seated with stately grace in the royal chariot, behold Zenobia! queen of this resplendent realm and mistress of many kingdoms! while the air resounds with the acclamations of the vast multitudes: "Long live the great Zenobia! The blessing of all the gods on our good queen, the mother of her people!"

Right royal is the bearing of the beautiful Zenobia, well fitted in mien and manner for her regal state. Imperial is her brow, and commanding are her dark, lustrous eyes. But she is more than haughty queen; she is a loving woman and a devoted mother, and she looks upon her subjects with the same tender glance of sympathetic regard that she casts upon the beautiful young princess seated by her side. A helmet-crown rests upon her luxurious black hair, which is partly confined in braided locks and partly floating in the breeze. A rich tunic of golden tissue adorns her form, and a mantle of purple silk, fringed with tassels of sparkling jewels and clasped with a dazzling diamond

whose value would purchase a province, gracefully enshrouds her left shoulder, leaving her right arm bared above the elbow, where the swelling curves were clasped by shining circlets of glittering gems. Her complexion is dark, though not swarthy, for the smooth brunette skin gleams with ivory tints and deepens to crimson in her rounded cheeks, which time has not wrinkled, even though she has been a matron for many years. When she smiles in loving benediction on her adoring subjects, her red lips part over teeth of dazzling whiteness, and her voice thrills the listener with its rare cadences of melodious tones.

The Palmyrenes were Egyptian in their origin and customs, Persian in their luxurious tastes, Grecian in their language, literature, and architecture. Zenobia claimed descent from the Macedonian kings of Egypt. She fully equalled in beauty her famous ancestor, Cleopatra, and far surpassed her in character and valor. Some accounts state that she was the daughter of an Arab chief, Amrou, the son of Dharb, the son of Hassan; though other writers claim that Zenobia was a Jewess.

She was possessed of rare intellectual powers; was well versed in Latin, Greek, Syriac, and the Egyptian languages. The celebrated Longinus was her instructor, and the works of Homer and Plato were familiar to her, and she wrote with ease in Greek. She compiled an oriental history for her own use, and found constant delight in the arts and sciences when not engaged in the severer pursuits of war.

Zenobia married Odenathus, a prince of great valor and

ambition, who was chief of several tribes of the Desert. He rapidly made himself master of the East, and became so powerful that the Romans made him their ally, giving him the title of Augustus and General of the East. He gained several victories, as the ally of Rome, over Sapor, shah of Persia, and twice pursued his armies, even to the gates of Ctesiphon or Ispahan, the Persian capital.

But in the midst of his victories Odenathus was assassinated at Emæsa, while engaged in hunting. His murderer was his nephew, Mæonius. Zenobia revenged the death of her husband by destroying Mæonius, and as her three sons were too young to rule, she first exercised supreme power in their name, but later, declared herself queen of the dominions of her husband, and assumed the royal diadem, with the titles of Augusta and Queen of the East.

Zenobia was remarkable for her courage, prudence, and fortitude, as well as for her intellectual gifts. No danger unnerved her; no fatigue dismayed her.

Her husband, Odenathus, had been a great lover of the chase, and Zenobia always accompanied him upon these expeditions. Disdaining a covered carriage, she rode on horseback in military habit, and pursued with ardor the exercise of hunting, unterrified, though the game might be lions, panthers, and other wild beasts of the desert.

The success of Odenathus in his various wars was in a large measure to be attributed to the marvellous foresight, fortitude,

and prudence of Zenobia.

She did not appear to be possessed of those petty passions and weaknesses which female sovereigns have so often displayed. She governed her realm with the most judicious judgment and consummate policy. If it was expedient to punish, she could calm her woman's heart into manlike stoicism, and silence the promptings of pity. If, on the other hand, it were justice to pardon, she could quell within herself all signs of personal resentment, and display a magnanimous forgiveness.

Though on state occasions she clothed herself and her court with regal magnificence and lavished money with a bountiful hand, apparently regardless of the cost, yet so strict was her economy in all her governmental affairs that she was sometimes accused of avarice. She spent immense sums for the adornment of her beautiful Palmyra, and gathered around her philosophers, poets, artists, and the great and rich from many lands.

As a queen, she was adored by her subjects and admiringly feared by rival sovereigns. As a woman, she was peerless among her cotemporaries, and illustrious among the women of all times. Possessed of striking and alluring beauty, she yet won more admirers for the beauties of her intellect, rather than for her bewitching face and stately form. And her voice, like that of Cleopatra, so charmed the ear by its delicious cadences, that the echo of its melodious tones has been wafted down the ages. As a wife and mother, Zenobia stands far above the dazzling Cleopatra, though she is said to have modelled her warlike

exploits after that renowned Egyptian enchantress of the Nile; but she did not emulate her wicked coquetries, nor copy her weaknesses.

Arabia, Armenia, and Persia solicited her alliance, and she added Egypt to the dominions of Odenathus. The emperor of Rome, Gallienus, refused to acknowledge Zenobia's claim to the sovereignty of her late husband's dominions, and twice sent an army against her, but was twice defeated by the valorous and undaunted Zenobia. Her dominions extended from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, and included Jerusalem, Antioch, Damascus, and other cities famed in history. Zenobia, however, made the beautiful Palmyra her place of residence, making expeditions to her other provinces. Her three sons, Timolaus, Herennianus, and Vaballathus, were educated with care; and they were attired in the Roman purple of the Cæsars and brought up according to Roman manners. The appointments of her palaces were gorgeously magnificent, and her style of living most regal; she affected great splendor in her attire, always appearing in royal state, dazzling with jewels, unless at the head of her army or riding in the chase, when she wore military habits, which, however, sparkled with gems; and though an apparent amazon, she was a woman of dazzling beauty and most fascinating presence, and always appeared before her council of war in regal pomp, which secured her an homage from her subjects and her soldiers which amounted almost to a worship which partook of the veneration and admiration accorded to a

goddess. She was pure in her manners to the utmost refinement of delicacy, and was as much adored for her womanly virtues as she was admired for her warlike valor. At length the fierce Aurelian became emperor of Rome. He was highly indignant that a woman should dare to claim proud Rome as her ally, and defy his power. Having subdued all his competitors in the West, he turned his arms against this powerful queen of the East, who dared to call herself Augusta and clothe her sons in Roman royal purple. Proudly the Roman emperor approached the dominions of the haughty Zenobia. Rumor announced his coming, and the dauntless queen of Palmyra prepared to meet him. Neither Roman legions nor Roman emperors made her brave spirit quail or her woman's heart grow faint.

When the first Roman herald reached Palmyra to announce the coming of the Roman ambassadors who had been sent by Aurelian to demand her submission, Zenobia was related to have been at her hunting-villa just without the city. It was in the forests lying to the north of this summer palace that she pursued the wild boar, tiger, or panther in the daring chase. As the messengers of Aurelian arrived at the palace gates, the queen had just returned from the hunt. Never did she look more regal. She was mounted upon a white Arabian steed of peerless beauty, caparisoned with harness gleaming with jewels. Zenobia was leaning upon her long hunting-spear. She wore upon her head a Parthian hunting-cap adorned with a long white plume, fastened by a glittering diamond worth a king's ransom; her costume was

also Parthian, and was most perfectly adapted to display the exquisite proportions of her graceful form. Her dark eyes were flashing with scarcely less brilliancy than the diamond which adorned her brow, as she sat her horse with regal dignity, and her countenance betokened her dauntless pride and warlike courage as the messengers of her enemy were announced. Not waiting to dismount, she exclaimed with tones of imperial command, "Bid the servants of your emperor draw near, and we will hear them."

Announced by trumpets and followed by their train, the ambassadors of Aurelian advanced to the spot where Zenobia calmly awaited them, surrounded by her royal attendants.

"Speak your errand," said the queen.

"For a long series of years," replied the ambassador, "the wealth of Egypt and the East flowed into the Roman treasury. That stream has been diverted to Palmyra. Egypt, Syria, Bithynia, and Mesopotamia were dependents upon Rome, as Roman provinces. The queen of Palmyra was once but the queen of Palmyra; she is now queen of Egypt and of the East, – Augusta of the Roman Empire, – her sons styled and arrayed as Cæsars. By whatever consent of former emperors these honors have been won or permitted, it is not, we are required to say, with the consent of Aurelian. While he honors the greatness and genius of Zenobia, he holds essential to his honor and the glory of the Roman world, that the Roman Empire should again be restored to the limits which bounded it in the reigns of the Antonines."

"You have spoken," replied Zenobia to the ambassadors, with

a calm voice and steady glance, “with plainness, as it became a Roman to do”; and then her eye flashed with proud disdain as she drew her stately form up to still more lofty proportions, and she continued: “Now hear me, and as you hear, so report to him who sent you. Tell Aurelian that what I am, I have made myself; that the empire which hails me queen has been moulded into what it is by Odenathus and Zenobia; it is no gift, but an inheritance, a conquest, and a possession; it is held, not by favor, but by right of birth and power; and when he will give away possessions or provinces which he claims as his, or Rome’s, for the asking, I will give away Egypt and the Mediterranean coast. Tell him, that as I have lived a queen, so, the gods helping, I will die a queen; that the last moment of my reign and my life shall be the same. If he is ambitious, let him be told that I am ambitious too – ambitious of wider empire, of an unsullied fame, and of my people’s love. Tell him I do not speak of gratitude on the part of Rome; but that posterity will say that the power which stood between Rome and Persia, and saved the empire in the East, which avenged the death of Valerian, and twice pursued the Persian king, even to the gates of his own Ctesiphon, deserved some fairer acknowledgment from an ally whom its arms had thus befriended than the message you now bring from your Roman emperor.”

With proud dignity the ambassadors were then dismissed, and Zenobia prepared to defend her rights and kingdom. Nor did she indolently permit the emperor of the West to approach the gates of her fair Palmyra. With brave rashness she went forth to

meet him, and two great battles were fought, one near Antioch, and the second near Emæsa. In both these contests the brave Zenobia herself led her troops to the onslaught, giving the second place in command to her valiant warrior Zabdas, whose great prowess in arms had hitherto made him a successful general. But in both these battles Zenobia was defeated, and she was forced to fall back within the gates of Palmyra. Here she made a brave and last defence. And again she boldly defied Aurelian from her towers, as she had already defied him on the field of battle. So great was her courage and so valiant her defence, that Aurelian was obliged to admit her claims of being a most powerful and determined foe, and thus wrote of her: "Those who speak with contempt of the war I am waging against a woman, are ignorant of both the character and power of Zenobia. It is impossible to enumerate her warlike preparations of stones, of arrows, and of every species of missile weapons and military engines."

So doubtful was Aurelian of the result of the siege, that he offered terms of an advantageous capitulation to the brave queen of Palmyra; but she indignantly rejected his proposals in a famous Greek epistle, in which she defied his power. Zenobia, expecting reinforcement from her provinces, and thinking that Aurelian, being encamped in a desert, could not long hold out, especially as he was constantly harassed by bands of Arabs attacking his army in the rear, felt confident that the siege would not be prolonged. But Aurelian, incensed by her haughty letter, roused himself to greater vigilance, cut off all her supplies as the several companies

of her allies approached, and found means to subsist his army even in the desert. At length the city could hold out no longer. Zenobia determined to fly, and endeavor to raise succor for her beloved city in her surrounding provinces. Such, indeed, was the reason assigned for this apparent cowardice on her part, which was so contrary to her previous record of undaunted bravery. Mounted on the fleetest of her dromedaries, she succeeded in reaching the banks of the Euphrates, but she was pursued and taken captive, and brought into the presence of the Roman emperor. Aurelian sternly demanded how she dared thus defy the power of Rome. Still every inch a queen, and yet not forgetting a wise policy, she replied, "Because I disdained to acknowledge as my masters such men as Aureolus and Gallienus. To Aurelian I submit, as my conqueror and my sovereign."

While this conference was being held in the tent of the Roman Emperor, the Roman soldiers came rushing in a riotous mass, demanding the instant death of Zenobia. But notwithstanding her previous bravery and fortitude, history records that, in this moment of terrible danger, Zenobia did not display equal courage to the famous Cleopatra, who resolved to die rather than submit to her Roman conqueror. It is stated that Zenobia laid the blame of her obstinate resistance upon the aged Longinus and others of her chief counsellors, in order to save her own life. Whether this were indeed the truth or not, the facts are that the great philosopher Longinus, and other chief men of Palmyra, were put to death by Aurelian, and the life of Zenobia was

saved. But for this seeming betrayal of her most faithful subjects, Zenobia may not have been to blame; for the desire to preserve the haughty Queen of the East, in order that she might grace his coming triumph in Rome, was a sufficient reason to account for Aurelian's conduct in saving her life, and putting to death her chief men, without it being necessary to ascribe to such a brave and noble woman as Zenobia such ignoble and cowardly actions. That she did not take her own life like Cleopatra, but bore her reverses with calm dignity, appears in these more enlightened days to be surely more to her credit than to her dishonor; and in the light of modern civilization, the picture of the beautiful Zenobia, walking with firm step and imperial bearing among the captives of the Roman conqueror, excites deeper feelings of admiration than Cleopatra, the suicide, lying dead upon her royal bed of state.

Palmyra being conquered, Aurelian seized upon its vast treasures, and leaving there a Roman garrison, he started to return to Europe, carrying with him Zenobia and her family. But having reached the Hellespont, tidings came to him that the Palmyrenes had revolted. Aurelian immediately retraced his steps, and arriving before Palmyra, he ruthlessly destroyed that beautiful city, sparing neither old men, women, nor children, in his bloody work of total destruction. The gorgeous buildings were soon smoking heaps of ruins; and though he afterwards repented of his wild fury, and sought to rebuild in part a few of its magnificent structures, it was too late. Palmyra became desolate;

and until about a century ago, when some English travellers discovered its ruins, the very site where once stood this beautiful Palm City of the Desert had been completely forgotten.

Upon Aurelian's return to Rome, his triumph was celebrated with extraordinary gorgeousness and pomp. Vast numbers of elephants, tigers, and other strange beasts from the conquered countries presented a novel sight to the wondering Romans. Sixteen hundred gladiators, who were devoted to the cruel contests of the amphitheatre, followed the line of strange beasts. Then appeared the ensigns of the conquered nations, and the magnificent plate, jewels, and royal robes of the Queen of the East were displayed in immense profusion. Ambassadors of Æthiopia, Arabia, Persia, Bactriana, India, and China, attired in their rich and striking national costumes, revealed the extent of the Roman power. After these came the long lines of captives, including Goths, Vandals, Sarmatians, Alemanni, Franks, Gauls, Syrians, and Egyptians. But every eye was riveted upon the famous Zenobia, Queen of the East. Arrayed in her royal robes, and covered with her blazing jewels, the weight of which was so overpowering as to cause her almost to faint under the burden, she walked before her own magnificent chariot, in which she had hoped to enter Rome as a conquerer, rather than thus walk a captive. Her arms were bound with fetters of gold, which were so heavy that slaves were obliged to assist in supporting them on either side. But though her delicate form was bent by the weight of her galling fetters, – gold though they were, – her proud eyes

were undimmed by tears, and her queenly head was carried with imperial grace.

There are two accounts of the after-fate of Zenobia. Some writers state that she starved herself to death, refusing to outlive her own downfall and the ruin of her country. But according to other records, the Emperor Aurelian bestowed upon her a magnificent villa at Tivoli, where she resided in great honor, her daughters marrying into noble Roman families, while her youngest son became king of a part of Armenia.

MATILDA OF FLANDERS. A.D. 1031-1083

"The little work-tables of women's fingers are the playgrounds of women's fancies, and their knitting-needles are fairy wands by which they transform the whole room into a spirit isle of dreams." – Richter.

MATILDA of Flanders deserves mention for three reasons. First, because she was the wife of William the Conqueror; secondly, because she was the first consort of the kings of England who was crowned and who received the title of *la reine*. For, on account of the crime of Edburga in poisoning her husband, Brihtric, king of Wessex, a law was made debarring the consorts of Anglo-Saxon kings from sharing in the honors of royalty. Previously to the time of William the Conqueror, who chose to ignore this law, the wife of the king had simply held the title of "The Lady, his Companion."

The third reason which has made Matilda of Flanders worthy of mention is on account of the famous Bayeux Tapestry, the work of her own royal fingers, which is still preserved in the cathedral of Bayeux.

Cleopatra and Zenobia are illustrious for their warlike valor and remarkable learning; but Matilda of Flanders has made famous the needle, rather than the sword; and with that little

domestic instrument, the industrious fingers of the first Norman queen, assisted by her attendant ladies, gave to the world a very important historical document, whereon was pictorially chronicled the famous Norman conquest of England. And thus the sword of the king and the needle of the queen have become indissolubly associated in the history of this momentous mediæval event.

Matilda was directly descended from Alfred the Great. She was the daughter of Baldwin V., count of Flanders. Her mother was Adelais, daughter of Robert I., king of France.

Matilda was born about the year 1031, and was possessed of much grace of form, as well as an attractive face.

In those days, skill in needle-work was held as the highest accomplishment for ladies of rank, and the remarkable skill in this handicraft, displayed by the four sisters of King Athelstan, is said to have secured for them the addresses of the most eligible princes in Europe.

Matilda had several suitors, but she fixed her heart upon a young Saxon noble named Brihtric, who on account of the fairness of his complexion was called *Meaw*, meaning "snow." He was the Lord of Gloucester, and was made envoy at the court of Flanders by King Edward the Confessor.

But he did not return Matilda's love, and he afterwards married another; this slight Matilda never forgot, and in time she retaliated.

But Matilda, though ignored by the Saxon, was most

chivalrously loved by the bravest prince of all the courts – William of Normandy. This prince was the son of Duke Robert, though his mother was of humble birth; but as his father had no other heirs, he declared this child his lawful successor to the ducal throne, and then Duke Robert departed upon his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, from which he never returned.

William was educated at the court of Henry I. of France, where he remained until the Normans sent to claim him as their duke.

At the time when William sought the hand of Matilda of Flanders in marriage, he asserted that Edward of England had named him his heir; but some looked upon this as an idle boast, and fair Matilda seems to have been so little in love with her warlike cousin, that he sued for her for seven years in vain. At last, determining to prove that a "faint heart never won a fair lady," he resorted to a most uncommon and hazardous mode of courting.

For seven long years he had wooed Matilda, who, absorbed in her vain fancy for the indifferent Lord of Gloucester, turned a deaf ear to brave William's glowing ardor, until at length he was roused to desperate boldness.

One morning, as Matilda was returning from early mass in the city of Bruges, she was suddenly confronted by the unexpected appearance of Prince William, who, with glaring eyes and lips quivering with intense passion, accused her of loving Brihtric of Gloucester; and as she disdained to deny it he cried in bitter tones: —

"Edward, England's king, has named me his heir, and by the holy cross, the Saxon churl who dares aspire to thy hand, shall ere long be crushed by the vengeance of our royal resentment."

"Mighty words, easily spoken, and verily proof neither of greatness nor of valor," replied the princess; then, laughing aloud in his face with disdainful manner, she continued: "The doubtful Duke of Normandy, monarch of England! – truly, a most excellent joke! But why does not my aspiring and politic cousin declare himself the future emperor of all Christendom?"

Stung by her sarcastic words and the implied insult regarding his birth, Prince William was driven to a frenzy of anger; he seized Matilda, rolled her in a muddy pool near by, and even struck her, in his wild fury, and leaving her fainting upon the ground, he leaped upon his charger, and galloped out of town. Strange wooing, surely! and yet after-events would seem to imply its efficacy. Truly, none but a William the Conqueror would ever again have dared to enter Matilda's presence. Matilda's father, incensed at the treatment his daughter had received, made war upon William of Normandy; but the king of Flanders was so badly beaten in the contest that he was glad to make terms of peace with his Norman conqueror. As Brihtric, the Saxon lord, refused to marry the princess of Flanders, Matilda's love turned to hate, and she received the victor, William, when, with amazing boldness, he renewed his suit, with every mark of courteous forgiveness, and consented to accept him, declaring "that she thought the duke must be a man of the highest courage and

most daring spirit, to come and beat her in her father's city." "So faithful in love and so dauntless in war," this brave knight won his bride; and never was wooing so fiercely bold, nor fair lady so strangely won. King Baldwin V. of Flanders was only too ready to receive this brave knight as a son-in-law, and quickly concluded the marriage contract, having already had sufficient experience of the powerful sword of this fierce wooer. Matilda and William were married at Château d'Eu, in Normandy; and her father gave her a rich dower, in lands, money, jewels, and costly trousseau. William then conducted his bride with much pomp to his duchy; and she made her public entry into Rouen in magnificent array. The bridal mantles of William and Matilda, richly adorned with jewels, were long preserved in the treasury of Bayeux Cathedral. As William and Mary were cousins, the Archbishop of Rouen declared that their marriage was illegal, and excommunicated them. But the dauntless William was not to be terrified by any monkish bulls, and appealed to the Pope, who nullified the sentence of the archbishop, and sanctioned their marriage, on condition that they should each build an abbey at Caen, and found a hospital for the blind. This they willingly agreed to do; and Matilda, who possessed much taste in architecture, took great delight in the erection of the stately abbeys of St. Stephens and the Holy Trinity; the former was endowed by William, for the monks, and the latter by Matilda, for the nuns.

Normandy enjoyed peace and prosperity under the wise rule of William and Matilda, who were much beloved by their

subjects. Their children were remarkable for beauty and promise, and were carefully educated under their mother's supervision.

About this time, Harold, brother to Queen Edith of England, was taken prisoner by the sovereign of Ponthieu; and as a brother of Harold had married a sister of Matilda, William compelled the Earl of Ponthieu to release Harold, and then he invited the Saxon prince to Normandy, where he was betrothed to one of the young daughters of William and Matilda, after which Harold returned to England; but no sooner had Edward, king of England, breathed his last, than Harold seized upon the sovereign power, notwithstanding he had made a promise to William of Normandy to assist him in gaining his rights as heir to King Edward.

William thereupon invested Matilda with the regency of Normandy, and associated with her their eldest son, Robert, and prepared to invade England, and assert his claims as the successor of Edward the Confessor.

Unknown to her husband, Matilda had ordered a magnificent ship of war to be built; and when William arrived at the port of St. Vallery, he found this splendid present from his wife awaiting him, and gorgeously adorned in his honor. This ship was called the *Mora*, and in it William embarked at the head of his fleet.

The Norman fleet reached the port of Pevensey, on the coast of Sussex, in safety; but as Duke William was landing, he fell headlong upon the ground. "An evil sign is this!" exclaimed the superstitious Normans in affright. But the duke, rising with his hands full of sand, cried: "I have seized England with my two

hands, and that which I have seized I will maintain." And most truly did he fulfil this prophecy; and by the bloody battle of Hastings the proud realm of England became the dominion of the Norman conqueror.

Matilda, the Duchess Regent of Normandy, received the welcome news of her husband's victory while at worship in the Church of Nôtre Dame, near St. Sever. She thereupon ordered that the cathedral should henceforth be called the "Church of Our Lady of Good Tidings."

William re-embarked for Normandy to rejoin Matilda, in March, 1067; but scarcely had he arrived in his dukedom, ere tidings reached him of a revolt in England. He immediately returned, quelled the insurrection, and then sent for Matilda and their children to join him in England.

Matilda arrived in England with her family soon after Easter. William now made preparations for her coronation. As I have mentioned, former wives of the sovereigns of England had not received this honor. But William the Conqueror would allow no obstacles to defeat his purposes.

Although William had already been crowned in Westminster Abbey, he chose to be now re-crowned at Winchester, that Matilda might be made queen.

It was during the ceremony of Matilda's coronation that the office of champion was first instituted. During the banquet, a brave cavalier named Marmion, clad in complete armor, rode into the hall and pronounced this challenge: —

"If any person denies that our sovereign lord, William, and his spouse, Matilda, are king and queen of England, he is a false-hearted traitor and liar; and I, as a champion, do here challenge him to single combat."

This challenge was repeated three times, but no one accepted it; and henceforth Matilda was always addressed as *la reine*.

But Matilda had never forgiven the slight she had received, as a girl, from the proud Lord of Gloucester; and no sooner had she become queen of England than she determined to take an unworthy revenge, which ever after tarnished her fame.

She obtained from King William the grant of all the possessions of Brihtric Meaw, and caused that unfortunate Saxon, whose only crime had been indifference to her youthful charms, to be imprisoned in Winchester Castle, where he died. She even deprived the city of Gloucester of its charter, and brought ruin to its inhabitants, probably because they had dared bewail the fate of their lord, her enemy.

Queen Matilda now commenced her famous Bayeux Tapestry, illustrating the conquest of England by William the Conqueror. In the cathedral of Bayeux, where it is still preserved, it is called the "Tapestry of Queen Matilda."

This remarkable piece of canvas is nineteen inches wide and sixty-seven yards in length. Upon it are worked in cross-stitch many hundreds of figures, of men, horses, birds, trees, houses, castles, churches, ships, and battle scenes.

A dwarf artist, named Turold, is supposed to have made the

designs for Queen Matilda, and he has cunningly introduced his own effigies and name into the work.

Matilda's table, while in England, was furnished at the daily expense of forty shillings; and twelvepence each were allowed for the maintenance of her attendants. She received from the city of London oil for her lamp, wood for her hearth, and imports on goods landed at Queenhithe.

At this time, also, the famous curfew bell was established, which was the signal that all lights and fires must be extinguished at eight o'clock in the evening. This was an old Norman custom, but it occasioned great dissatisfaction among the English.

So frequent were the revolts among his English subjects, that at length William thought best to send Matilda and their children back to Normandy, where she resumed the regency. She did not reside in England after this time.

Robert, the eldest son of William and Matilda, now occasioned his parents much trouble. At last the quarrel between father and son resulted in open war.

Matilda, whose excessive partiality for her eldest son much offended her husband, supplied the rebellious Robert with large sums of money; and when means failed her, she even parted with her plate and jewels to aid her favorite child. William was in England when the news reached him of the rebellion of Robert and the part Matilda was taking in the matter, and he immediately set out for Normandy. Upon arriving there, and learning the truth of these rumors, he met his wife with bitter

reproaches. There was stern grandeur, not unmixed with tender pity and love, in the harsh words which he addressed to Matilda, which were not entirely unmerited; and there was also a sublime depth of mother's love in her reply. Fixing his eyes upon the queen, the Conqueror exclaimed with trembling voice: —

"The brightest jewel of my bosom hath pierced my heart with the deadly dart of treachery. Behold, my wife! – the treasure of my soul – to whom I have confided my wealth, my crown, my greatness, my all. She hath supported my rebel son in perfidy, and aided him to raise his sword against his own father."

"My lord!" replied Matilda, "far be from me to do you wrong. But when you spurn our firstborn and retain from him his rights, you drive him to wretchedness and distraction. Be not surprised if I feel a mother's tenderness for her child. Nay, so much do I love him, that for his dear sake I would dare any danger, do any deed. Ask me not to enjoy the pomp of royalty while he is pining in want and misery; as a loving husband, you have no right to impose such insensibility on a mother."

Robert and his father met in battle at Archembraye; and in the contest Robert unhorsed his father, and, unconscious as to whom he had defeated, was about to pierce him with his sword, when he recognized his foe, and fell at his feet begging forgiveness, horrified at the thought of how nearly he had committed the awful crime of parricide. A reconciliation took place, and Robert accompanied William to England.

Matilda's last years were embittered by domestic troubles. She

remained in Normandy. The death of her daughter Constance and renewed quarrels between Robert and his father, added to her own failing health, quickened her decline. She died at Caen, in November, 1083. Her husband hastened from England when informed of her danger, and arrived as she breathed her last. She was interred in the Church of the Holy Trinity at Caen. William the Conqueror survived her only four years, when his death was occasioned by an accident during the storming of the city of Nantes, when his horse stumbled over some burning timber, and throwing the king violently forward in the saddle, he was so seriously injured as to result in his death. William the Conqueror was buried in the Church of St. Stephen at Caen. The portraits of William and Matilda were painted upon the walls of St. Stephen's chapel.

William was remarkable for his great strength and imposing beauty. He was a head taller than all his subjects. The face of Queen Matilda was beautiful and delicate. Their two sons, William Rufus and Henry, reigned successively over England. Robert died in prison. Their fourth daughter, Adela, was the mother of King Stephen.

In 1562 the Calvinist soldiers broke open the tombs of William and Matilda, hoping to find rich treasures; but finding nothing but a sapphire ring upon Matilda's finger, they rudely threw the bones carelessly around. In 1642 these relics were collected, and their tombs restored, though at the close of the last century the French Republicans destroyed the monumental

memorial of Matilda, which had been there erected by her husband before his death. Thus the needle-work of Queen Matilda has proved to be a more lasting memorial of her fame than the costly monument of marble erected to her memory.

MARGARET OF ANJOU.
A.D. 1429-1482

"The red rose and the white are on his face,
The fatal colours of our striving houses."

– Shakespeare.

ONE of the most momentous civil commotions in the annals of English history was the famous War of the Roses, which was waged for many years between the Houses of Lancaster and York, during which sanguine contests the plains of England were deluged with blood; eighty princes were slain, and the ancient nobility were almost entirely annihilated.

With these exciting incidents the name of Margaret of Anjou is indissolubly associated, and she stands forth in history as one of the most important participants in that great civil struggle, which may be thus briefly stated.

Henry VI., the reigning king of England, was the son of John of Gaunt, a younger son of Edward the Third. About this time, the Duke of York, who was descended by his mother's side from Lionel, an older son of the same Edward, aspired to the throne, and gathering to his standard many powerful nobles, he sought to dethrone King Henry.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.