

THE  
QUENCHLESS  
LIGHT



AGNES C. LAUT

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*Title:* The Quenchless Light

*Date of first publication:* 1924

*Author:* Agnes C. Laut (1871-1936)

*Date first posted:* July 1, 2019

*Date last updated:* July 1, 2019

Faded Page eBook #20190701

This eBook was produced by: Al Haines, Howard Ross & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>



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THE PRINCESS STRUCK THE TREMBLING CREATURE A BLOW ON ITS FLANK.

*The*  
QUENCHLESS LIGHT

BY  
AGNES C. LAUT



D. APPLETON AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK :: LONDON :: MCMXXIV

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## FOREWORD

How much is fact and how much is fiction in the narrative told here of the early struggles against fearful odds in the lives of the Disciples? And why could the life of each Disciple not be given in direct historic record?

For readers to whom these questions present themselves, answer can be given in few words.

The most cursory reading of the Gospels and Epistles makes self-evident that the writers were very much more concerned with the message than the messenger; and this was natural in an age when zealous partisans were much more eager to rally round political and religious leaders than to demonstrate the truth of the message in better living and good works and pure beliefs. It is as if the early evangelists of the Faith were determined to let the cause rest on its eternal truths rather than on the merits or frailties of the human medium through whom the truths were transmitted to humanity. It is as if the records seem to say—don't judge the message by the frail human vessel from whom you take it. Judge it by its own effects.

Of the human events in the lives of all the Disciples and Apostles—the former, the first followers of the Living Visible Christ; the latter, evangelists, who later became followers—very little, almost nothing, is told. One finds some of the early followers first with John, the Baptist, on the Dead Sea at Jordan Ford; then with Christ in Galilee, then after the Crucifixion, in Jerusalem, in Antioch, in Babylonia, in Rome, in the cities of the Roman Road in Asia Minor, in Greece, in Thrace, in Macedonia. Connected narrative of their movements, there is none except a few chapters in the Acts on Paul's travels from Damascus to Rome; and even in this, there are long gaps. Paul speaks of hopes to go to Spain. Did he go? We do not know, for if he did, Luke his historian, leaves no record of that trip. Peter writes a letter from Babylonia. Was he in the region of the Euphrates; or was he in Rome, writing in cypher because of the perils to the Faith from the time Rome set up Emperor Worship in all the pagan temples? Again, we do not know; for consecutive narrative from year to year, there is none; so that any attempt to give a connected life of the leaders of early Christianity would fall down from sheer lack of data; but the facts, which we possess authenticated beyond controversy by contemporary sacred and profane writers, and by recent and ancient archaeological and linguistic research covering from Egypt to Ethiopia, from Ephesus to Mesopotamia—throw so much light on the early struggles of the New Faith that by taking what the modern scenario writer would call—"the spot-lights" of their activities—we can reconstruct the early lives of the leaders

of the purest Faith the world has ever known.

And now how much is fact and how much is fiction in these narratives? Very little of the essential is fiction. The fiction is only the string for the jewels of Truth. A semi-secular figure, who is absolutely historic, has been chosen as the actor. The actor's experiences are taken from real life and actual fact. The reaction of the experiences on the actor's personality may be called imaginary; but they are such as similar experiences would have been on you, or me today; and each action is chosen to throw a flash light on some era in the Disciples' and Apostles' lives, which is known and proved and authenticated in history, archæology and the documents now coming so richly to light, owing to better mastery of ancient script. In this way, we can get a picture of the heroes and heroines of the early days, who kept the Faith for us. We can get a picture of them as living, struggling, heroic, dauntless men and women, and not the shadowy figures of half myth, half fairy stories, with which we have too often enveloped the keepers of the ark of the covenant of the Faith.

I have referred to youth seeking light, where many of the old school accuse them of thoughtlessly seeking only pleasure. I consider this a libel on modern youth.

It is in the hope of showing the verity of the heroic lives in the early days of the Faith, that I have planned these records. It is in the hope of showing the keeping of that Faith as the supremely best vocation for youth that I have tried to dig out the unknown, historic facts bringing us the Faith and clothe them in flesh and blood. If the stories send back with fresh eyes readers to the old records, their aim is fulfilled, and all the errors, I pre-claim as my own. The truths, themselves, are eternally old as they are eternally young.

A. C. L.

WASSAIC, HARLEM ROAD  
NEW YORK

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## BE GLAD

1

*“Be glad! Be glad!” I sing!  
The sun rolls round the ring  
Of law! His beams outfling  
Like birds of song on wing.*

2

*Be glad the sun is bright—  
Be glad the sun is light—  
Be glad the law is right—  
Tho’ truth we learn through pain—  
Be glad the darkest night  
Rolls round to light again.*

3

*Our sin is but a sleep  
Out from the vasty deep  
Of Death’s eternal Keep  
For God, to Whom we creep.*

4

*Breast forward! Shout the cry  
Of Joy, of Life, on high!  
To sadness give the lie!  
Ten-thousand spheres give voice  
The rivers racing by—  
The chorus join—Rejoice!*

5

*Mistake not carcass pains—  
They are your growing gains  
Of Soul on Self, ere wanes  
The Sun; and through the lanes  
Of the Far Golden West*



*You pass to your long rest,  
O Warrior Soul; where shade  
And dark by that sword blade  
Of Light are cleft from you  
And never more pursue:  
The shadows cleft and reft  
By Him  
Who guards the Tree of Life  
From snatching hands of strife  
Elohim!  
And you pass to your rest  
In the all Golden West  
Where Sun sinks never more  
And Light far to the fore  
Sings with ten-thousand spheres—  
Give voice, Rejoice, Rejoice—  
Again, I say, Rejoice!*

A. C. L.

# *The* QUENCHLESS LIGHT

## CHAPTER I

### NEITHER BOND NOR FREE

The old Idumean soldier of the Prætorian Guard sat on the stone bench in front of his prisoner's hut on the canal road to Rome and listened to the drunken songs coming from the bargemen at the place called the Three Taverns.

It was a fair evening in spring. Frogs piped from the marshes. Oleander and apricot bloom drugged the night with dreams. The sun hung over the far sea in a warrior shield, and the dust from the chariot wheels filtered the air with powdered gold.

The Spring Festival was over. The corn ships from Egypt had come in to Naples on time for the free gifts to peasant and slave. All Rome seemed out in holiday attire, on foot, on barge, on horseback, or in chariot, either going home to the hill towns, or down to the villas by the sea. The plodding peasants and slaves had their little bags of free corn and goatskins of wine flung over their shoulders, and were followed by their wives and their children as they turned off up to the hills, where their bonfires were already aglow with flamy eyes in the blue shadows of the mountains, for all-night revels.

On the canal and its paved road passed an endless procession of the great and the rich. Litters, palanquins, chairs, with black Nubian slaves between the poles, went surging past with the patter of the runners' bare feet on the pavement and the glimpse of painted face or jeweled, pointed hand, when the breeze blew the silk curtains from the latticed windows. Barges, with black-faced slaves chained to the iron rowlocks and gayly clad men and women lolling on the ivory benches beneath awnings and pennants of white, red and gold, went gliding down the canal with a drip of water from the oars colored in the dusty air like a rainbow. Then there would be the sharp ring of iron-shod hoofs over the cobblestones—a centurion with his hundred horsemen riding in rhythm as one man, their three-edged lances aslant, would gallop seaward, followed by the whirl of gold-rimmed chariot wheels, when some general or senator went flashing past to take his pastime for the night down in his grand villa by the sea.

The old Idumean soldier of the Prætorian Guard glanced in the hut to see that all was well with the prisoner inside, glanced toward the Three Taverns, whence came louder songs and wilder revels, loosened his metal headpiece, laid the helmet on the stone bench beside him, and, with another glance up and down the thronged road, raised a bronze tankard of wine and drained it to the lees. Smacking his lips, he set it down and began eating some bread and cheese, when the revels in the Three Taverns rose to the tumult of a noisy brawl. A figure darted out of the dense road crowds, running like a deer, pursued by a rabble of drunken bargemen armed with pikes.

The fugitive dashed along the stone parapet of the canal, looking wildly to right and left, frantic for a way of escape. Then the figure dived into the thronged road, as if the crowd would afford best hiding, in and out among the plodding peasants, who scattered from the road in panic, with the bargemen in full cry behind shouting, "Stop him!—stop him!—slave!—slave!—runaway slave!"

The old Idumean guard had sprung up with sword in his right hand for a slash at the flying figure, when a great hue and cry rent the confusion.

"Make way—make way—the Emperor!" and a centurion band galloped through the dust, clearing the road with their long lances.

There was a flash of gold-rimmed chariot wheels with flying horses in a blur. There was the figure of a youthful man with a bare head and shaved face, holding the reins far out as charioteers drive; and Nero's royal equipage had passed in a smoke of dust with a great shout from the barge travelers, who clapped their hands and rose and waved their flags. The fleeing figure, the pursuing bargemen, and the drunken rabble had melted; and a little form crumpled up in the doorway of the prison hut, panting as if its lungs would burst.

The old Prætorian guard stood motionless, sword in hand.

The pursuing rabble had disappeared back to the drunken revels in the Three Taverns.

The old Idumean drove his sword back in its scabbard with a clank.

Then he surveyed the figure lying prone at his feet.

A thin voice called softly from the dark of the prison hut: "Who is there, my Julius? My eyes grow poor. I cannot see in this light. I thought I heard some one running in distress."

"Nothing—nothing—Master! 'Twas only that madman Emperor of ours passed in his mad race with his proselyte Jewess Queen. You heard only the knaves of the Three Taverns noisy in their cups."

The crumpled figure had not looked up, but lay panting on its face. A green-and-white turban, such as mountaineers wear, had fallen off. The hair was gold as the golden light of the sunset and hung in unshorn curls about the

neck. There were the sky-blue jacket of the Asiatic Greeks, the scarlet trousers and pointed red soft kid sandals of a page; but the garments were torn as if snatched by the pack of human wolves.

The burly Idumean guard smiled till his teeth shone like ivory tusks through his grizzled beard.

“No runaway this, but some grandam’s lackey,” he smiled. “Is it boy or girl?”

He touched the prone, panting figure with his boot. The form did not rise. It crouched upon its knees, and, with face hidden in hands, bowed the head at the soldier’s feet.

An evil-faced old woman with bleared eyes and wiry, disarranged gray hair came swaying drunkenly up from the Three Taverns and paused, peering.

“Off out of this, harpy, snake of the dirt—sniff earth!” the soldier clanked his scabbard against the metal of his leg greaves, “back to your wine-shop den. I’ll question you later of this! We’ll have none of you here—” and the leering woman vanished in the gathering dusk.

The soldier sat down on his stone bench.

“Up—boy or girl, whichever you are—help me unbuckle my breastplate and greaves!”

The figure sprang up with the nimbleness of youth. The eyes were blue with the terror of a frightened girl, the cheeks were burned with the tan of a hillside grape, and the lips were fine and full as the caressed lips of a child. The long, slim hands had slid off the metal breastplate of the Prætorian, and were unbuckling the greaves of an outstretched leg, when the soldier’s great hand closed on the slim wrist and twisted the palm upward.

“No slave you! No callus here! No gyve marks on the wrists! You’ve never worked among the galley slaves—my little runaway! Thighs too thin and shoulders too slim for these foreign swine we bring to Rome in droves. Where do you come from, young one?”

“From the mountains of Lebanon, my Lord Julius,” answered the downcast face.

The Idumean gave a start. “How know you the Romans call me Julius?” he sharply asked. “I’m an Idumean of Herod the Great’s Guard.”

“Because you were commander on the Alexandrian corn ship that carried all the Jewish prisoners wrecked at Malta,” answered a trembling voice in the falsetto between youth and man.

“You were not among the prisoners, young one—nor sailors either! I recall them—to a man. I’ll test your truth. Mind your tongue! Describe the ship, the passengers, the prisoners.”

“I took ship at Fair Havens, Crete. I came down from Phrygia. You remember the Prophet, who was a prisoner from Cæsarea, wanted you to tarry

there for the winter?"

"By Jupiter, I do; and now I wish I had, for I'd be back in Idumea, leading our General Vespasian's cohorts if I hadn't wrecked that accursed corn ship, and not be cooling my heels here, waiting the trial of these Jewish fanatics—what next? Describe what next—the ship?"

"The ship had a golden goose at the stern. It was full of Egyptian corn to the rowers' benches. She was deep as she was broad, and long as from here to the Three Taverns—"

"Go on! You guess well and may lie better—all corn ships are the same—"

"She had flaming pennants and huge iron anchors and two monstrous oars as paddles that you used as rudders, and the pilot at the helm was a bald-headed old man—"

"They all are—these Greeks—from wearing caps so tight. Any bargeman at the Taverns could have told you that. Go on—"

"And she had only one little boat astern, that almost swamped in the mountain waves; and when the northeaster struck her you were afraid of being driven to Africa, and cut the great mainmast and threw her overboard, and drifted for fourteen days, four hundred miles; and when the hull sprang a leak and strained to split apart you frapped her round and round with great cables and trussed her up as cooks tie up the legs of a fowl! And when the soldiers would have sprung into the little boat, you cut her adrift; and when you would have slain the prisoners to prevent escape, and slain yourself to avoid punishment for the loss, it was the Prophet, who is the prisoner in your hut there, stopped your hand and foretold you not a soul would lose his life. Then you cast the cargo overboard.

"No stars, no sun we saw for fourteen days, only the clouds and the pelting rain, and fogs so thick a sword could cut them. When the breakers and the surf roared ahead, you heaved and heaved and heaved the lead, and knew we were driving straight ashore to wreck in the breakers, and you cast four great iron anchors out astern to hold her back; but they only combed the fine sand as a housekeeper's knife cuts dough. The shore of Malta Bay was soft as paste. The pumps you set to work; but she settled on her prow, like a swine's snout in mud, with her goose-beaked stern, high in the crash of waves, breaking to splinters—"

"Stop!" cried the Idumean. "I'll test your truth right there! The bargemen of the Taverns might have told you all the rest. When the ship broke and the sailors and the prisoners plunged over in the pelting dark to swim for it, what said the Prophet, who is my prisoner, then?"

"When you could not look the wind in the eye, my Lord Julius, the Prophet bade you be of good cheer and thanked his strange Judean God, whom he called Christus, that he was reaching Rome."

“By Jupiter, child,” cried the guard, with a crash of his sword on the stone bench, “you have spoken truth! What next? Be careful how you answer—your life hangs on it if you are slave! It is death to harbor a runaway in Roman law —”

“I know not what next, my Lord Julius; for Publius, the Governor of Malta, took all your shipwrecked crew in, and you tarried to come by the *Castor and Pollux* on to Neapolis (Naples) while I took secret passage on a fishing vessel and reached Rome first.”

The Idumean then knew the youth spoke truth; but not all the truth—what more? Here was a lad of noble birth and clad in a page’s garments, caught and held and hounded by the harpies of the wine shops amid the rascal loafers of the underworld—lost in the gutters of Rome for two full years. Whose son was he and why was he here?

The old guard’s manner changed. Could he find the boy’s parents there might be money in it—honest money—not the kidnapper’s ransom for which the knavish criminals of the Three Taverns had tried to steal him; but the old soldier knew he must proceed cautiously. No gain to frighten a startled bird that had fallen in your hand; a gift of gold from the gods. Good money from a good father somewhere back in Grecian Asia could he but win the lad’s trust and get his story true, and save some royal youth from those sharp-taloned hawks of the wine shops.

He bade the little stranger sit down on the bench.

“The wine in the tankard there I drained; but here’s bread and cheese—eat! How does that compare with the bread and cheese of your Lebanon herds?”

The lad ate ravenously. The guard went inside the hut and brought out fresh wine.

“The cheese is not so white as our goat curds; but the bread is like pearls after Rome’s slave fare.”

The old Idumean pricked up his ears. “Slave fare!” Then the boy had been held by some one in Rome. The guard’s caution redoubled, to which he added courtesy.

The spring frogs piped from the marshes. Last snatches of bird notes came from the oleander and acacia groves in front of the villas on the far side of the canal. A cooling breeze came down from the hills where the festive bonfires now winked a flamy eye. Only a few barges glided down the waters of the canal. The traffic of the paved road had quieted to an occasional soldier-tread echoing iron on the stones, or the barefoot patter of a hurrying furtive slave, or the loud laughter of lewd women, and louder disputes of the bargemen in the lodging houses.

“What brought you here?” quietly asked the guard.

“To see the sights of Rome—”

“And I’ll warrant you’ve seen enough of them. Have you seen the gladiators?”

“Their blood sickened me,” answered the lad. “The narrow streets choked me. I could not breathe their yellow air after our Lebanon sunshine. These marshes send up a yellow stench; and the lodging houses stank; and your freedmen loafers are night demons! I’d give all Rome for one night back in Daphne’s Gardens at Antioch, or down by the sea at Cæsarea. Your iron-shod hoofs keep me from sleep. I’d give all Nero’s Empire to hear the padded tread of our camels over the turfs where the caravans of Damascus and Chaldea meet!”

The Idumean pondered that. He must, then, be the son of some Damascus or Grecian merchant in Asia. Good money and plenty of it in those iron chests!

“Know you the ‘Camel Song’ of the sand rovers of Arabia?” he asked.

In the starlight he saw tears spring to the long-lashed blue eyes.

Sweet to mine ears are the sounds  
Of thy tinkling bells, O my camel!

“And, oh, how the singing sands made melody, my Lord, when the hot winds drove them like sheets of snow!”

“Aye, that they do,” returned the old Idumean, “and I would I were where I could hear them sing instead of cooling my heels in Rome waiting for this crazy Prophet to get his head chopped! Much good that will do!” The old man’s manner warmed to desert memories of his native land.

“I’ll befriend you. You can stay here. The Prophet needs some one to care for him and cook his meals. He’s growing old. His sight is fading fast. I’ve grown tired of nightly sleeping chained to the arm of a prisoner you could not bribe to run away, while the Emperor takes his pleasure and puts off the acquittal of a man Agrippa wrote was innocent, all because his wife plays the convert to Jerusalem Jews to get a revenue for protecting them, and hates this new sect of Jews that call themselves Christians. You could not pay this prisoner to escape, though fewer and fewer friends come to see him every day. They know the Empress is their enemy and may work Nero to some fresh madness any day. If it were not I value my own head, I’d sometimes believe him myself; but no head of mine for these mad zealots! It takes the iron hand of a Herod to beat out the flame of their sedition, and not the gentle pleading of young Agrippa to bring them to their senses! When the Prophet gets his pardon, if he is wise he’ll haste to Spain and never set foot in Rome or Jerusalem again.”

A second draft of wine—for the mountain lad had not touched the fresh tankard—had loosened the old soldier’s tongue. “I mind when I served

Herod's son as a lad like you at Cæsarea and won my freedom in the great gladiatorial combat in the theater, where the sands swam in blood to the knees, with Agrippa the Great sitting clad in his mail of silver, before the owl flew over and brought him ill-omens so that he fell down dead—”

“What?” interrupted the boy—“were you once a slave, too, my Lord Julius?”

“Too,” noted the old Idumean. The softened manner hardened. Was he a slave after all? “What did the harpies of the wine shops want of you? A lad clad in Damascus silks would not touch these sows of Rome's gutters.”

The boy answered eagerly. “They said the Emperor would pass in his chariot to-night; and the Empress Poppæa was to go down to the sea in her ivory barge. They meant to strip me, throw me in the water, rescue me, and offer me for sale as her barge passed—”

The old guard laughed so harshly that all his ivory teeth gleamed ugly as a boar's tusks. “And I'll warrant if ever she saw your milk-white mountain skin stripped, they would have made the sale at three times a slave's price. There is more in this—there is more in this. Why did you leave your mountains of Lebanon?”

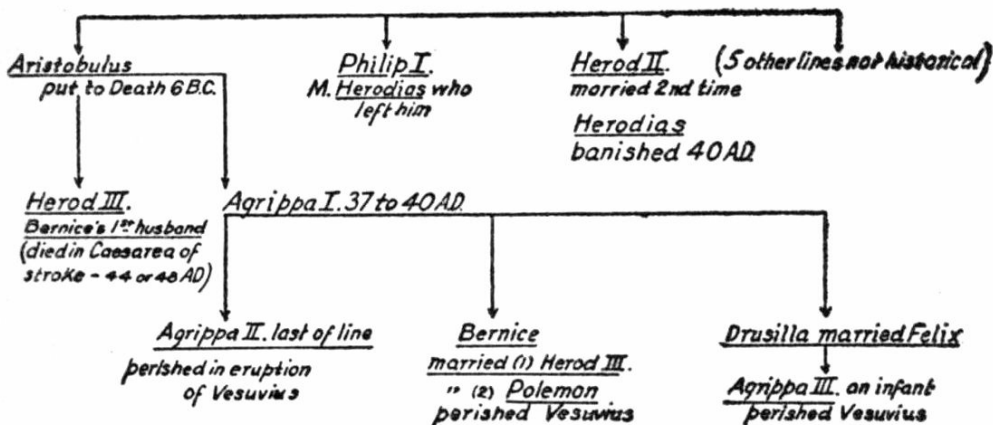
“I did not,” hotly protested the baited boy, becoming frightened at the changed manner of the Idumean. “When Felix cleared the robbers out of Galilee, I was held for ransom in their caves. They said we mountaineers were robbers. We never were. We are shepherds; but I was caught in my father's caravan. He was the great sheik of the road from Damascus to the East; and Felix gave me to young Agrippa for a toy, a plaything. I was a page to the Princess Bernice when your prisoner Prophet in there made his plea before Agrippa the Young to come to Rome and prove his case; but when the Princess Bernice was sent to Cilicia to marry that old man there, and still the evil tongues about her and her brother—”



# Family Tree of the Herods

## Herod-the Great-I.

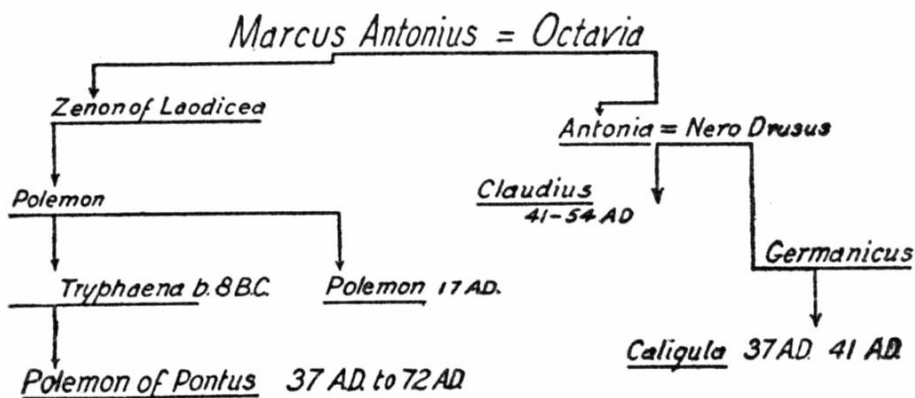
41 B.C. to 4 B.C. or 4 A.D.  
married Mariamne and 4 other wives



## Family Tree of Polemon, who married Bernice and

## Tryphaena, who adopted Thekla

(as indicated by Mommsen and Sir W<sup>m</sup> Ramsay)



The boy paused in confusion, blushing red as a girl. The Idumean grasped his wrist. "Go on—the truth—or I'll have you torn limb from limb by the tigers in the arena. What of that night monster, Bernice, with the snaky Herod

blood in her veins?”

The boy cried out with the pain of the viselike grasp. “The Princess bade me not to fear to come to Rome, where she would come when she had shaved her head and paid a vow in Jerusalem—”

“Where she is now, and all Rome laughing at the pretext,” the old Idumean loosened his grasp. “Where she is now, to slip her old husband and throw her net over Titus, our General Vespasian’s son. I’ll warrant it will be a net of air she’ll weave; the spider maid will throw her wiles on the next poor fly! Did the King Agrippa’s sister send you to Rome? Have a care how you answer that!”

“No, my Lord Julius, the King, her brother Agrippa, handed me to a Grecian merchant in Colossé; but with the gold his sister gave me I ran away and took ship to Rome from Crete.”

A curious, terrible crafty change had come over the guard. No wild boar of the desert was he now, but crafty hunter stalking human prey in Rome’s underworld. “Young one—I have no love for these seditious Judeans; but I’ll befriend you because I have given you a Roman’s pledge. Here’s my right hand as pledge no Roman ever broke. Had I lost my prisoners it would have cost my head; but when you go into the Prophet there, see you do not bleat like one of your long-eared mountain goats! Blastus, Herod’s old chamberlain, is friend of his; so is Manæn, Herod’s foster-brother, and Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward! Keep yourself out of sight in the inner room when strangers call; for some of Cæsar’s household also come here, whether to spy or believe, how do I know? But how did the knaves and body snatchers of the Three Taverns snare you?”

“I was coming out to seek the young scribe Timothy—I saw him once and helped him carry the Prophet in, when he was mobbed and stoned and left for dead in Lystra—I thought he’d help me back to my people!”

The Idumean rose impatiently.

“That spider maid! The vixen with Herod’s snaky blood! Go inside! I’ll lock the door! Prepare the Prophet his supper. I’ll to the Three Taverns to ferret this. Remember if you try to run away—there is no escape from Roman power in all the known world from Gaul to the Ganges; but I see one rich way of escape to fortune for you, and money for me to make me rich, if Bernice ever cast her eyes at you—might save young Titus, son of our General, falling a victim to her wiles! Go in, I say, and keep your tongue from blabbing—or I’ll cut it out with my dagger! Princess Bernice! Titus’ mistress! By Jupiter, ’tis my lucky day at last and I’ll make offerings to Fortune,” he muttered, striding off.

The heart of the frightened boy almost stopped. He seemed to have jumped from danger close to death or torture. What had he told, or not told, that made him, a friendless Grecian boy in Imperial Rome, of great money value to the

Idumean guard the minute Bernice's name was mentioned? Why had the rough soldier called the young princess a "night monster," "a spider maid," "a vixen with snaky blood," "a nymph" aiming a net at Titus, the son of the Roman General in Asia? Why should a girl princess not flee one old husband, married to silence evil tongues, and seek a younger mate in the General's son? Wise, wise as seer or prophet is the intuition of youth; but stronger than the breastplate of Imperial Rome the innocence of youth; for the boy had not told all the truth. Something he held back for the love of the royal mistress, who had befriended him. He had not told the Idumean captain that when he had been handed over to the merchant of Colossé he had been sold by King Agrippa because his young master was jealous of his sister's affections for a page; and when he had taken ship at Crete, dressed as a page, he was a runaway slave, with Princess Bernice's gold in a goatskin wallet round his girdle, obeying her orders "to have no fear to go to Rome; she would meet him there: to wait."

To his youthful heart it seemed no evil thing that she should come to Rome and marry Titus, Vespasian's son, where he again could be her page. He could not know that all Rome was now counting on General Vespasian to save the Empire and become Emperor. He would not have had long to wait, as destiny soon rolled the years to Vespasian's triumphal entry into Rome—if the harpy women of the wine shops on the water front had not taken note of his beauty and set the bargemen on to kidnap him as bait for higher game in Nero's Palace, where ruled an evil woman, guided only by her own wicked desires.

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The boy heard the door clank as the Prætorian guard drew the chain across outside and snapped the great twin locks with a key as long as a man's forearm. He heard the ring of the swift soldier tread as the Idumean strode over the stones for the Three Taverns.

Then he turned. The room was dark but for a flickering peat fire on the hearth and a little guttering olive oil wick in a stone or breccia lamp on a rough board table. The floor was softened with sand and earth. The window was high and latticed, but let a soft breeze in from the sea. A little, stooped old man with a white beard and snow white hair and skullcap such as doctors of the law wore, sat on a backless stool at the table, writing on a scroll which he unwound from a roller as he wrote, with his eyes so close to the papyrus that he did not see the boy's form against the dark of the door.

Except for the table and the backless stool there was no furniture in the prison hut but two couches, close together near the door; and the boy noticed that while the prisoner's right hand wrote and wrote on unheeding, his left arm, resting on the table, had a huge handcuff attached to an iron chain which also lay on the table; and this was the Prophet, whom he had helped the scribe

Timothy carry in stoned for dead at Lystra. This was the man, when the wreck broke up at Malta, who stood in the pelting rain and the dark and bade the Lord Julius “be of good cheer” and thanked his strange God “that now at last he could publish the Glad News at Rome.”

The boy had not noticed the strange leader of the strange new sect in the Judgment Hall at Cæsarea, because he had been too young, the toy and plaything of the youthful King Agrippa and his younger sister, Bernice, and he had noticed him still less at Lystra, some years before, because he had been still younger and much too excited over the mob. There is a discrepancy here in the boy’s story as picked out of the old records; and yet the discrepancy proves its truth, for he could not have been more than four or five. Yet he distinctly remembered coming in on one of his father’s caravans for Damascus from the South, and seeing the maddened mob, and running with all the camel drivers toward the gates of the city, where he had picked up the insensible Prophet’s cap and helped the young scribe Timothy to shuffle the almost lifeless form through the doors into the house of Lois and Eunice, Timothy’s people, who were Greek merchants.

On the ship wrecked between Crete and Malta, he recalled the prisoner of two years ago well enough; but he had kept himself out of sight from both prisoners and sailors all he could on that voyage, staying below deck on plea of seasickness by day and coming up only in the wild nights, when the high-rolling cape of his black cloak had hidden his face; and he could dream his dreams of awakening youth, and the message of hope his Princess’s black glance had thrown him when she slipped him the wallet of gold pieces from her litter chair and bade him “haste to Rome and wait there.”

Yet it had been no easy business for him “to haste to Rome,” for the merchant of Colossé to whom Agrippa in a moment of jealous suspicion had sold him had been an exacting master, and had set the new young slave to keeping accounts in the great warerooms. It had only been his knowledge of the Phrygian patois dialect, half Assyrian, half Greek, that had induced the merchant to send him to the seacoast and the Isles of the Sea to collect exchange on accounts. He had collected the accounts. Then he had taken ship at Crete and run away without a qualm. Why should he have qualms? Had he not been kidnapped by the robbers of Galilee and held for ransom, and, when the robbers were routed out by Felix, given as a slave—he, who came from the mountaineers who never had been slaves—to young King Agrippa and the sister, Bernice?

After that, life had become a golden dream of awakening youth. Though Bernice had been a wife to one Herod, and now was sent north to be wife to another old man, after the custom of the Herods to strengthen their thrones by marrying their daughters to powerful rulers, Bernice had been almost as young

as he—she was barely twenty. He had been set at first to seeing that the Nubian slaves kept the royal baths at Cæsarea clean. Then in a fit of suspicion over having any but black eunuchs, who were mutes, attend the royal baths, Agrippa had sent him to keep the tracks of the chariot races powdered with soft sand to fill the wheel ruts and save the horses' knees if a racer slipped on the swift course.

There he had gained the first glimpse of the Princess's favor toward himself. She had been driving with her royal young brother in one of the trials for the chariot races. The snowy steeds of the young King's chariot were given precedence of all others, the Festus's wild Arab horses were champing the bits to pass, and the Roman had great ado to hold them behind Agrippa. A dozen other prancing teams were surging behind. She had worn a silver bangle round her brow to hold back her hair. On her brow hung a jade-stone ornament from Arabia with the swastika cross of luck beaded in gold. In the wild charge of the racers the jade pendant had bounced from its setting in the sand. Leaping in front of the other racers, the boy had rescued the emblem of good luck from trampling; and all the people in the seats of the great hippodrome had cheered his pluck. Fortune had come to him in the little jewel with the odd cross.

When the charioteers came round the course again, King Agrippa himself had stooped to receive the restored jewel; and the people had cheered again; and when Agrippa and Bernice had gone up to Daphne's Gardens at Antioch, for the wild, lawless pleasures there, then had followed another golden dream of awakening youth. The boy did not know, when he had been with the royal lovers in Daphne's Gardens, that only a few miles away was the Prophet, with the Christians of Antioch; and here they were, both thrown together in the evil snares of Rome.<sup>[1]</sup> Amid the roses and the palms and the love temples and the fountains of the gardens were artificial lakes, where plied boats with silken awnings rowed by Naiads in silver-and-golden nets to the music of zither and harp under the Moon Goddess.

[1] This is the only point in the boy's story where there is any discrepancy between his experiences as told by himself and the sacred and profane writers of the period. It does not appear among the sacred writers whether the corn ships carrying the Prophet at the various ports of call delayed long enough for the prisoners to have gone in to Antioch, as they did at all the other ports where Christians dwelt; but in the profane writers of Rome and Greece at the period '61 A.D. to '68 A.D., are abundant proofs of all the youth's adventures in Daphne's Gardens; and Bernice's record became an infamy in Rome.

Here Agrippa and Bernice took their pleasure, and he, now the trusted page, accompanied them, as steersman for the nymphs. He was clad in silvered silks, the girl rowers in spangled nets, with naked limbs the color of pink shells. He knew that five hundred bastinadoes on the soles of his feet would be the punishment if ever he breathed a word of what he saw on these nights; and he saw nothing; but dipped his steersman paddle to the rhythm of the temple music, and watched the limpid water ripple in drops of moonlit gold, and dreamed his dreams of awakening youth, which are wiser than seers in their intuitions and stronger than breastplates of bronze in their innocence. He knew nothing going on around him because he saw nothing but Bernice's eyes; and she was so far beyond his reach, he saw no spider net in those black, fathomless eyes.

And then one day crashed down his house of dreams in catastrophe about his youth. It had been a wild day of painted barges, of soothsayers, of magicians, of story-tellers, of dwarfs, of buffoons, of libations to Bacchus, and temple nymphs clad in golden gauze. The flesh of grown man did not live that could pass that day unscathed; and the page, who had been a mountain boy, knew naught of a goddess who could turn men to swine. There had been an older man with King Agrippa and his sister that day. The boy remembered afterward the older man had the face of one of the satyrs, half man, half goat, of whom his mountain tribes told.

There had been frenzied dancing in the love temples and more libations to Bacchus; but the mountaineers do not drink; and at the end of that day, to quiet evil tongues, Princess Bernice had been affianced to the King with the satyr face; and the star of the boy's lamp had gone out in utter blackness, with his heart cold lead, till, passing from the love temple in her curtained, latticed litter, she had thrust out her hand to him in the dark and given him the purse of gold and bade him haste to Rome and meet her there, while she went to Jerusalem to pay a vow! He did not know the nature of that vow, though all the fashion of Rome was laughing over it, and poets made mock of it and actors in the theaters extemporized lines on "Bernice's locks" and do to this day.

He knew with the knowledge of youth she had shaved her head and taken her vow to escape her elderly spouse; and now the rough Idumean guard had said all Rome was laughing at the way the sly maid had gone to Jerusalem but to throw her nymph net over Titus, son of Vespasian, who might become Emperor after Nero.

And now he stood in the prison hut of Rome, with the wolf harpies of the water-front wine shops outside, locked in by the Roman soldier, who knew there was fortune to be grasped by restoring a slave, with the threat ringing in his ears—"There is no escape from Roman power in all the known world; keep

your tongue from blabbing—or I'll cut it out with my dagger," and the Lebanon boy had seen captives whose tongues had been cut by daggers. He knew this was no idle threat; but he did not know it was his boyish beauty that had cast the fatal net of danger round himself.

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The boy stood with his head hanging, behind the locked door of the prison hut, like a fly caught in an evil spider web. He did not ascribe the net flung round him by dark eyes seen through the lattice of a palanquin to any spider maid; for he was still thinking with the knowledge of youth rather than age. He only knew the spider net had become strong chains binding him to the evil forces of the great Imperial City of the world, and that he had been flung into that net by a destiny uncontrolled by him except for the one act—when he had run away from his merchant master at Colossé.

He was too deeply sunk in sudden despond and fear to notice the flickering of the shadows from the lifted breccia-stone lamp held in the Prophet's hand, while the other hand shaded the old man's defective vision peering at the ragged figure against the back of the locked door. All hope had flickered out for him with the turning of the double lock by that great key the Idumean carried.

A voice spoke out of the dark, quiet, clear, and limpid as his own mountain streams in Lebanon: "Child, come here! Why are you troubled?"

The boy raised his long-lashed blue eyes and looked across to see, not the little withered wisp of a man he had remembered as the Prophet, but a snow-white face illumined in an ethereal light and framed in an aureole of snow white hair.

"The Lord Julius bade me prepare your supper."

The Prophet did not press his question. "There are the corn bread and the leben in the alcove," he said, pointing to a dark corner of the stone wall, "and in one jar you will find the drinking water and in the other the fresh pulse."

The boy laid the meal on the rough table without a word and took his stand behind the Prophet's stool. He was still dust spattered and torn from his fall.

"Bring the couch to the table," requested the Prophet.

Thinking the Master wished to eat reclining, after the manner of the Judeans, the boy lifted the couch and placed it at the table.

"Join me," gently urged the Prophet. "I remember when I was a lad in Tarsus before I went down to study law in Jerusalem, we used to say of the mountain men, when they had broken bread and salt with us, they would be our friends forever, and never utter word, or think thought against host or guest. A good rule, child."

Tears sprang to the lad's eyes; for what the Prophet had said was true, and recalled all the stern tradition of the mountain tribes, who dwelt in tents and

roved the desert on camels.

“Let us bless God and give thanks,” said the Master, bowing his head; and the boy understood neither the strange Deity to whom thanks were given nor what there was for thanks in a prison hut.

It must have been the white hair or the white beard; for though the wick was guttering lower in the breccia lamp, that luminous look seemed to shine brighter and brighter round the figure of the Prophet. The boy could see his hands like hands of snow in the gathering dusk of the hut; and his brow shone with the radiance of the sun’s white flame at dawn.

“Why did you wish to see Timothy?” he asked, as though reading the lad’s thought.

Thereat, the youth’s pent emotions of terror and despondency and fearful unknown danger broke in floods of speech.

“And, oh, Master,” cried the boy, finishing the narrative that the Idumean had forbidden him to tell, and holding back nothing but his love for the Princess, “my Lord Julius says there is no escape from the power of Rome from Gaul to the Ganges for a slave. Let me be your slave, oh, Master! Master, buy me and save me! I’ll serve you as never Emperor was served in thought and speech and act! I’ll serve you forever with no brand on my palms or shoulders.” And the little mountaineer, who never yet had bowed his head to earth as slave, fell at the old man’s knees sobbing, and would have placed the Prophet’s foot on his neck.

“What was your merchant master’s name in Colossé?”

“The Lord Philemon; and oh, my Master, I’ll pay him back my price and all the money I stole to run away to Rome. I’ll work my hands to the bone! I’ll earn wages for my price by acting as runner between the poles for the great Romans in the villas here. I’ll pay him back fourfold as the law demands. Only let me stay—keep me from the wolves of Rome—keep the Lord Julius from selling me to Nero’s Palace, or tearing out my tongue for telling you, or flogging me five hundred bastinadoes on my feet for running away, or betraying me for telling of Bernice’s kindness. I know now what I should or should not tell, nor why—”

“Ah, those crafty foxes of the Herod brood! ’Twas what Christ called them when they slew John for Salome’s dance. She was of the same brood of vipers long ago; and the blood of a Herod runs true to color.”

The Prophet’s hands were over his eyes and he seemed to be thinking back long, long years. The hearth fire guttered lower. The lamp wick had burned almost to the edge of the oil, and still the Prophet’s face shone with luminous radiance as of an inner white flame; and his hands looked like ethereal hands through which flamed an inner fire of the spirit in kindly deeds.

“Dear Master, let me be your slave—”



“Child, there are nor bond nor free in the Great Kingdom which I serve; for neither life nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heights, nor depths, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God.”

“Nor bond nor free?” cried the little mountaineer. “Is there a kingdom in all the world where there are neither bond nor free?”

“The Kingdom is here and now,” said the Prophet; and his brow shone with the radiance of moonlight on the snowy peaks of Lebanon.

“But, sir,” cried the boy, “they held me slave, and they hold you in bonds; for the King Agrippa told the Lord Julius—”

“Two bodies there are,” answered the Prophet gently, “one terrestrial and one celestial—one that waxes old as a garment which we cast aside, and one that grows younger with fuller life as the years nearer draw to God; and neither life nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other creature than ourselves can place bonds upon that body. Like the air, which we do not see, but in which we live and move and have our being, that celestial body lives and moves and has its being in the love of God. Child, rejoice, rejoice, again I say rejoice, that the Glad News has come and the Kingdom is here—and now.”

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When the Idumean returned, his mood seemed again gentler. He bade the boy fasten the wrist gyves of the chain on the prisoner’s left arm to his own right wrist, and to sleep on the floor, so that he as older man would not be troubled in his sleep by the clank of the chain when he tossed restlessly at night, as age is wont to do.

And when the boy wakened in the morning with the day-star shining through the lattice of the high window, he found his new Master had thrown over him, against the dank chill of the marshes at night, his own black gabardine doctor’s cloak of Damascus velvet. While the Idumean and the prisoner, chained up again at sunrise, took the air in parade before the barracks of the Prætorian Guard, the youth swept out the hut floor with a broom of brush and laid the breakfast on the rough board table. Then the bonds were unlocked from the guard’s arms and the prisoner sat down to write letters, or receive visitors, and the old Idumean again posted himself on the stone bench in front of the hut.

When the lad came out, the Idumean bade him sit down on the bench to talk. “The prisoner says he has arranged to take you for—by Jupiter—he wouldn’t call you ‘slave’—a queer lot these followers of Christus—he said he’d take you for his helper—he’d known your merchant master as a friend in Colossé and would take you for a pledge of what that merchant owed him. That’s good Roman law. You’re safe enough now. He said your new name

must be Onesimus—the Helpful One.”

“Why, that—is my very own name. How could he know?”

The Prætorian guard smiled. “He knows queer things in queer ways, this prisoner. Rome is full of magicians and sorcerers and soothsayers, mostly Greeks and Jews; but I never knew one could tell what he foretold about the storm, nor hold from mutiny two hundred and seventy prisoners swimming for freedom unchained in the open sea. What puzzles me is, when he has this power, why doesn’t he use it to get himself his freedom instead of wasting two full years here babbling of the Glad News—Glad News—Glad News? News, indeed, ’twill be if Nero places all his tribe in the arena to feed the wild beasts! Why doesn’t he use his power to build himself a fortune, and buy a kingdom as Herod did, and rule all Jewry? Then I’ll follow him myself; for Rome is breaking up.”

“What does he say when you ask him that?”

“Oh, folly about a Kingdom not made with hands; a Kingdom of the soul. What’s a soul to Roman legions? Sometimes, like Festus, I incline to think much learning hath made him mad—”

“I remember the very words—the very words he said at Cæsarea the day I saved the jewel on the chariot course for Princess Bernice; and King Agrippa said ‘Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian’—you know the way King Agrippa has, pretending to agree, to draw the adversary on—”

“And what said our Prophet to that?”

“He smiled that gentle, fearless way of his and said—‘I would thou wert such as I am’; and all his prison chains rattled to the floor as he threw up his arm when he said that; and the great ones on the judgment seat broke out in laughter. King Agrippa laughed the merriest of all; and the Princess whispered ‘The gods forbid.’ What does he teach? What does he believe, Lord Julius?”

“How do I know?” answered the Idumean roughly. “It’s always Glad News—Glad News—Glad News; Rejoice—Rejoice—Rejoice! By Jupiter, what have the Jews had to rejoice about for a thousand years, till Rome came and gave them good roads and theaters and forums and aqueducts, and held the fierce sand rovers back, plundering their very Holy Temple with its golden doors? I mind once hearing the soldiers talk of an Egyptian, I think it was, who plundered their precious Temple before Herod rebuilt it; and when he entered into their Holy of Holies, where never man trod, and their own priests opened only once a year to take the gold angels above the Altar, there wasn’t even the image of a little gold god—not a thing in brass or silver like a god—only a queer blue cloud like a flame from some of their magic fires—”

“A queer blue cloud like a flame?” repeated the boy. “Why, that’s the way his face and hands look in the dark. What does he teach?”

“Listen when his visitors come, and you’ll learn soon enough if you can

make anything of their Greek doctrine and Jewish jargon—I can't. I'm Idumean—Roman—I believe in pikes and swords—in law and gold. One day it's 'don't be insipid'—'don't lose your salt'—'never assume gloomy looks'—'don't throw pearls to swine'—'away with fear'—'laugh at the sting of death'—'lead justice to victory'; or else he tells these Jews of Rome they are 'fatheads and dullwits and grosshearts,' with which we Romans agree; or else 'the earth is an inn and death the eternal house to which he has the key to another house of many mansions,' or he quotes that old Job legend of the Arabs, about 'flesh renewed as a little child's'; but you should hear him when the young Timothy comes— 'It's Timothy, son, beware the young widows.' That's what I call sense.

"It would be good advice to you next time a princess with black eyes casts her net at a simpleton! He calls his Christus a Lamb of sacrifice for sin. That's queer; for I remember nearly forty years ago, when I was your age, I helped to crucify that Christus. Still it's not so different from the Sacred Bull of Egypt by which the priests get revenue, or the Sacred Lion of Chaldea, or Jupiter of our Sun Temples. Our kings all get revenue by some religious trick hitched up to fear of some god—sun or star or love of war! As I tell you, I'm a plain soldier. I can make nothing of it. I'm for the power of Rome, the law of Rome, the wealth of Rome; there is no power on earth can stand up against it."

The boy sat pondering. He couldn't forget that little blue flame above the desecrated Altar of the plundered Temple, like the radiance of the Prophet's brow in the dark. Perhaps all eyes could not see that flame. Perhaps that was what had blinded the Prophet. He'd ask him about that.

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And so the summer ran to winter and the winter to spring again, when the emptied corn ships went back to Greece and Egypt, laden with tin from Britain and hides from Gaul and copper from Spain.

The boy saw and pondered much. He was known now among the Jews of Rome as the adopted son of the prisoner. What passed between the boy and the Prophet, only God knows. They were as loving father and more loving son. The Prophet was restless when the boy was out of his sight; and the boy's eyes followed his master with the mute love of a child for a saint. But fewer and fewer converts came to see the Prophet; for Nero's mood was darkening toward the new sect; and the believers were scattering to the hills and to the Isles of the Sea before the storm broke.

Only the gentle Greek physician called Luke kept coming; and one Mark, a deacon, who talked much of a great leader, Peter; and the young scribe, Timothy, grown more ethereal and frail as he added years, and a great one, called Epaphroditus, who was friend of many great ones, but led no sect for fear of his head. Once Epaphroditus came with a learned Jewish scholar called

Josephus, whose records may be read to this day.

And he and the Prophet talked long and bitterly of the law, of the Roman rulers and armies in Judea. Like Epaphroditus, Josephus openly joined no sect that was cold or indifferent to Rome; but his beliefs may be read between the lines of all he wrote.

And once there came with Epaphroditus a strange huge man clad all in white from Alexandria, followed by a caravan of camels that Roman rumor said had traversed all the world. His name was Apollos; and he joined the learning of the Persians to the learning of the Greeks; and had prophesied all that the prisoner told; and his sayings, too, may be found to this day both among the Egyptians and the Persians. The Prophet and the huge man in white embraced like brothers; and all Rome went mad with the sensations of a day over what they called the Magian. Rome was more mad over his caravan of camels than about his doctrines.

Once the boy turned to his beloved patron: "Master," he said, "when you have power to save me, why do you not use your power to save yourself and flee from the dangers of Rome?"

"Because he that saveth his life shall lose it."

And that night, when he was writing a letter to Timothy, who was in Greece, to come to Rome, the boy heard the Prophet dictate the words, "I have fought a good fight—I have finished my course. I have kept the faith." Why, the boy wondered, does he say he has finished his course?

When Timothy came to Rome, the boy went in to his patron.

Again, the frogs were piping in the marshes. It was a fair evening in spring. Again, the oleander and the acacia and the almond and the apricot bloom drugged the night with dreams. Again, the sun hung over the far sea in a warrior shield, and the dust from the chariot wheels filtered the air with powdered gold. Again the Spring Festival was over and all Rome seemed out-of-doors, afoot, on barge, on horseback, or in chariot, either going home to the hill towns of the poor, or down to the rich villas by the sea. Again, the bonfires burned on the hillsides with flamy eye, and gold-wheeled chariots flashed over the canal road in a smoke of dust. Again, the bargemen and sailors and slave rowers up from the corn ships of Egypt on Naples Bay made the night ring with knavish revels in the water-front wine shops; but though the sun sank as golden on the waters and the stars came out as silver over the hills, the canal was no longer the happy thoroughfare of gay throngs in spring under colored silk awnings with Nubian slaves on the rowers' ivory benches; for a mute fear was settling over Rome as to what madness Nero would next pursue; and the great senators and generals no longer thronged to Rome. They had moved their families to their hillside estates and villas by the sea. The army and the loafers and the idle freedmen and the slaves openly ruled Rome. Nero could hold the

loafers and the idle freedmen and the slaves with gifts of free corn and wild Bacchanalian festivals and gladiatorial combats and the baiting of captives taken in war by wild beasts, but all Rome was asking who was strong enough to rule the vast Imperial Army. What would Vespasian, busy in the wars of Palestine, do when he came? What would Titus, over whom Bernice was casting her spider net, do?

A pall rested over the gayly colored spring scenes of Rome. It was as if Vesuvius rumbled and darkened long before the lava-flow buried the beautiful villas in lakes of rock and fire.

So when Onesimus, the helper, had asked the prisoner Prophet why he did not save himself by escaping from Rome, and had pondered that answer about those who save life losing life, and those losing life saving it, he came back in this spring evening and stood timidly before the Prophet.

“My beloved Master, now that you have Timothy with you to write your letters and the physician Luke to care for our body, would you miss me if I went back to Colossé?”

“I would miss you as I would a beloved son begotten of mine own flesh,” said the prisoner gently. “Have you not cast out fear of all that man can do unto you? Why do you wish to go to Colossé instead of carrying the glad tidings to your mountain people?”

“O Master,” Onesimus had fallen to his knees, with his face in the Prophet’s hands, which he bathed in tears. “I fear not what all Rome can do unto me; for I have joined that Kingdom not made with hands; but I fear only the reproach of a good conscience and of my Lord of the Glad Kingdom. I have saved enough of my earnings to pay back the merchant Philemon fourfold the money I stole from him.<sup>[2]</sup> He bought me from King Agrippa for a price. I would go back, his slave, till your King gives me my freedom.”

[2] The value of a slave at this time was about eighteen dollars of modern money, though much more was paid for beautiful girl captives and young men who gave promise of becoming gladiators.

The Prophet’s hands lifted and rested on the boy’s hair. In the dark they shone with the luminous light of the stars on snow. His lips were moving—the boy heard him whisper— “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

That evening the Idumean of the Prætorian guards remained down at the water front among the wine shops, and the Prophet wrote far into the night. Onesimus would have written for him, for the prisoner’s eyes had grown

dimmer; but the Master said it was better this letter should be written privately; and he wrote it on a wax tablet with an onyx stylus to guide his failing sight. When he had finished he put the tablet in a parchment case sealed with wax and bade the boy give it to the merchant Philemon of Colossé. Then he embraced Onesimus and sent him to board the barges that would go down the canal to the corn ships setting sail at daybreak for Grecian Asia.

Here briefly is what he wrote. You will find it exactly and fully as he wrote it in the oldest record of documentary history in the world—the most widely circulated documents in the modern world and probably the least thoroughly read of all books in the world. Space permits only the briefest outline of the letter, the original of which any reader can compare in any language known in the world. Some few phrases differ according to the language, but the purport is the same in all; and the story is meticulously true in every essential, though scholars and schools still quarrel over some dates and two or three names. As far as it is possible to figure these early dates, this letter was written between 62 and 64 A.D.

“. . . to Philemon, our beloved and fellow worker, and to Apphia, our gracious lady . . . I had great joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of God’s people have been and are, refreshed through you, my brother. . . . Therefore, though I speak very freely, it is for love’s sake I rather beg of you . . . I, the aged and prisoner . . . write to entreat you on behalf of a child, whose father I have become in my chains . . . I mean Onesimus, who was a bad bargain to you, but now, true to his name, has become a helpful one to us both.

“I am sending him back to you in his person, and it is as if I sent my own very heart . . . I wished to keep him with me that he might minister to me in my old age and chains, but without your consent I would not; for I wanted it of your free will. Receive him back no longer as a slave, but as brother, dear to me, beloved, as a fellow worker for Christ. If you still regard me as comrade, receive him as myself. If he was ever dishonest, or is in your debt, charge me with the amount. Hold me responsible for the debt on your books. I pledge my signature. I will pay you in full. (I say nothing of the fact you owe me yourself the same amount.)

“Yes, beloved, do me this favor for our Lord’s sake. Refresh my joy in Christ. I write you in full confidence. I know you will do more than I say, and provide accommodation for me; for I hope through your prayers I shall be free to come. Greetings from my fellow prisoners, among whom are Mark and Luke. May the graciousness of Christ be in the innermost soul of every one of you. . . .”

And though they put the signatures to the letters first in those days, which was a better thing than our custom of having to read through a letter to know who wrote it, the name signed to that letter by a half-blind little old man, ill,

and so near death (Nero's blade was already whetted for the sacrifice), with a chain on his arm in a prison hut, was

“PAUL.”

## CHAPTER II

### ARDATH, THE FIELD OF FLOWERS

Three women sat cooped in the great fortress of Machærus, east of the Dead Sea, peeved that a war for world power had interfered with their own personal plans and petty intrigues. The rose-tinted mountains of Moab rose far to the east, tier on tier above the Desert, dyed in a mystic fire of cloud and light that might have been the abode of gods from eternity. North and south, you could have dropped a pebble from the turret, where the women sat, down precipice sheer as a wall twenty-five hundred feet. West, the clouds boiled a silver sea far below the Fort bastion on the blue and green of deep translucent waters. These waters are to-day known as the Dead Sea. At that time, they were called the Asphaltis Sea owing to the pungent burnt odor of petroleum and sulphur, that came up from their hot springs.

Safe as an eagle's nest above the storm clouds perched the Fort on the mountain height, where rulers' wives and daughters were housed from stress of war and raid, but angry as an eagle's young were the strident voices of these pampered favorites of harem and court, that the blood of men flowing deep as the horses' bridles over at the siege of Jerusalem, should be keeping these caged birds from the garden of joy in life.

The elder women rose petulantly and stood at the deep casement of the window in the open turret, where the breeze came up from the silver clouds lying below on the Sea. By the uncertain feeling out of her hands for the stone wall, it was apparent she was almost blind. Her hair lay lustrous black on her brow, but here and there a silver line showed she was past middle age, and the slight film across the pupils of her black eyes betrayed the cataract obscuring light.

"A curse on these seditious Judeans," she protested, tapping her sandaled foot impatiently on the stone floor. "Rome gave them the best government they have ever had—justice, safety, forums, aqueducts, theaters, low taxes; and what have they returned to Rome for protection from enemies east and west? Rebellion for seventy years! First Herod the Great slew some brats in Bethlehem; and he must needs go mad with jealousy and strangle his Jewess wife, and be haunted ever after by her pale ghost in this accursed Fort! Then because I chose to love the Second Herod instead of his brother Philip, to whom I was sold as child, I must be taunted as a sinner of the streets by the little Hermit John; and my Lord Herod must turn soft because he loved the



ragged madman's 'rough honest ways.' Honest? I call it insolence and would have torn his tongue out if I could! What right have raving fanatics to pry open private lives? I got him prisoned in the dungeon here for two full years before I caught my Lord Herod in his cups and settled the Hermit's mad impudence with the headman's sword. . . ."

The two other women, who were yet in the flush of first youth, rose and joined the elder in the open window of the turret. One was short, with crafty laughing eyes and full voluptuous inviting lips, and the air of insolence in her beauty that could challenge life. The other was tall and slender with eyes that dreamed, but what or how they dreamed no soul outside her own deep thoughts could know.

"Then, Aunt," pleaded the slenderer of the two, throwing an arm tenderly around the blind woman, "with your mad Hermit dead, why rage and bruise yourself against the past?"

"Little soft dreaming fool!" The blind woman petulantly threw the girl's arm from her waist. "Have you forgotten when my Lord Herod's first wife—that discarded rag of treachery, who could not hold the love I won—went back to her father, the King of Arabia, and roused all the tribes to attack us here, we lost? We lost, and I was blamed, and my Lord was banished first to the barbarians of the Danube and then to the savages of Spain, to whom I must go unless you can snare Titus, the Emperor's son, over in the siege of Jerusalem there. Only you can save the last of Herod's line—Bernice."

The younger woman designated Bernice gazed deep in the silver clouds boiling above the Dead Sea.

"Much chance I have to snare Titus shut up here away from the warriors of Jerusalem; but if we Herod women must be played as pawns to win kingdoms, let us play pawn for the biggest prize of all—Rome."

The elder woman had placed her elbows on the casement of the window and sank her face in her hands.

"If you were not such a little fool of dreams, Niece Bernice, you would never have left Jerusalem. You would have stayed on in the Temple Herod built, paying your vows, if you had to cling to the Altar horns! You were wife of Herod Third; and who did more for the Judeans? Free feasts, free games, you remember Cæsarea; and all because your Lord let the Jews stone James, that zealot of the Nazarene, know you what the populace says? They say their God, whom no one has even seen, slew your husband in his coat of silver mail!"

"I thank their God for that," absently answered the girl Bernice. "Herod Third was too old. You chose your Herod. I was sold to mine."

The other younger woman with the insolent inviting voluptuous lips laughed.

“Because you had fallen in love with the little blue-eyed slave, Onesimus, whom Felix and Festus rescued from the robber bands of Galilee.”

“That slur sounds not well from you, Sister Drusilla! You, yourself, married freed slave. Have you forgotten Felix was freed slave?” asked the slenderer of the sisters.

Drusilla of the voluptuous lips laughed. “No, nor have I forgotten he is the only one of all the Herod husbands who left his wife safe with wealth in times of peril. He rose to be ruler under Rome. . . .”

“And drove the Jews to insurrection by his thefts and taxes to give you wealth,” interrupted Bernice.

The older woman whirled on them with the fires of fury in her blind eyes. “Peace to your sparrow chatter—fools—fools—fools! What do you know of love, or constancy? You barter love and time for gain as gamblers throw their dice. My Lord Herod and I bartered all for love—and lost—and love as ever! And he is far among the savages of Spain and I am caged here to wait the fortune of war at Jerusalem! And time is short, and I grow old, and does his love grow cold? You read his letter brought by the post this day, how he longs to hold me in his arms once more! Nightly, I have prayed to Istarte and Venus and Astoreth for my love to descend to him in far-off Spain down the beams of the starlight, or moonlight, to hold him forever to me true! Instead of answer to my prayers—what? This accursed Fort haunted by the spirits of the dead! ’Twas here the spirit of Mariamne, whom Herod the Great strangled, came haunting him till he went mad. ’Tis here where we are shut up prisoners of the past, beating our weak women hands ’gainst the fetters of fate, the ghosts of our past come haunting us! I tell you fools that in the dark I can dream I am not blind, but when I pray for my Lord’s love to come and wrap me in his arms, when it is dark and I can forget I am blind—what comes? What comes? What comes? I say! I could be a lioness to fight for my cubs, as all the Herod women ever are; but when I pray for forgetfulness, what comes—I say?”

“Dear Aunt Herodias,” gently expostulated the younger Bernice. “These are not wise words. Our weak hands only bruise when we batter fate.”

“Fool—your course is not yet run—dreaming of a blue-eyed slave, when you should be in Jerusalem mending all our fortunes by marrying Titus, the Emperor’s son!”

The two drew back from the violence of the elder woman standing in the open-windowed turret.

“Herodias will be maniac unless we send her to her husband in Spain,” whispered the sister Drusilla.

“Maniac,” repeated the blind woman in scorn. “So you would be, if nightly when you prayed for love there came rolling over the stone floor the bloody head of that wild Hermit beheaded in the cellar here. . . . If I could tear these

scales from my eyes and prove it is not true; but can a blind lioness fight. . . .?”

“Let us go to the garden—we only anger her. She will rave to exhaustion till she gets some sleep, and dreams she sees the head again,” murmured Drusilla. “I could wish we were out of the haunted fortress here. It is ill-fated! Do you go to Jerusalem and get the Emperor’s permission for us to leave for Rome. . . .”

“I will do that, Sister Drusilla, but do not anger her by making light of her mad love for Herod. No Herod woman dare grow afraid. Our past is a black, back wall! Our future is blacker if Jerusalem falls and Judea is ruled direct from Rome. Our brother Agrippa will be deposed. He is last of our line. Everything hangs on winning Titus’ favor; and with the road to Jericho blocked black by troops, it is easier to say ‘go to Jerusalem’ than go! Unless a caravan comes this way from the East bound for the Sea, which I can join disguised, how can we escape the Roman guard set to watch the gates?”

They descended the stone stairs of the turret in thoughtful silence and emerged in the great garden of the Fort. A broad walled parapet ran round the edge of the sheer precipice on which the Fort was perched above the cloudy Sea. Only one side gave exit, or approach—a narrow causeway to the east with drop straight as a wall on either side, leading out to the rose-tinted mountains of Moab, tier on tier above the Desert dyed in a mystic fire of cloud and light.

An old Idumean guard sat in the shade under the arched gate to the causeway. He took his helmet off and yawned drearily. His beard had grizzled gray and his thatch of close-cropped curly hair had whitened with age. As the two sisters approached walking along the wall of the parapet and came under the shade of the arch, he rose stiffly and saluted.

“How are the roads to Jerusalem, old Julius?” asked Drusilla, throwing her purple silk cloak back over her shoulder so her bare arms shone jeweled with bracelets.

“Blocked, blocked, Good Ladies,” returned the old Idumean wearily. “Dreary task this, your Highness, guarding sibyls, who could bewitch all Rome’s generals if they escaped down to Jerusalem.”

“What is the hammering we hear below the fog of clouds?” asked Bernice trying to penetrate the import of his answer.

“Camel bells of some caravan coming up the causeway, or clanking of the forges down at Jericho making war engines for the siege.”

“Are there many refugees in the caves between here and the Jordan, Julius?” pressed Bernice.

“The Nazarenes are fleeing from Jerusalem to the Desert of Moab like sheep harried by wolves; and robber bands are everywhere. I’ll warrant those poor sheep will be fleeced of their wool before they reach the caves of their Secret Lodges. Dangerous, Ladies, too dangerous for princesses in royal robes

to venture these roads when my head's pledged for their safety."

"Why should a princess want to pass that way, old Julius?" smiled Drusilla of the voluptuous lips.

"Because Titus, the Emperor's son, is at the end of yon road." He pointed down the precipice path towards Jericho beyond the Jordan.

Drusilla laughed again. Bernice strolled through the arched gateway and gazed past the rose-mist of light and clouds above the Desert mountains.

"Are there ghosts in the dungeons beneath the Fort, dear Julius?" pressed Drusilla.

"None that I know but spears and swords to protect the women here if Titus fail at Jerusalem," answered the old Idumean, stretching his spear across the open gate of the arch to the causeway across Princess Bernice's way.

The two Princesses turned and retraced their steps along the parapet. The old Idumean sat down on the bench again with an evil smile that showed all his yellow teeth like boar's tusks.

"Witches! Enchantresses to turn men to swine! If I had my will, I'd throw them all over the precipice into the Dead Sea."

"You see, Drusilla! We are really prisoners at Rome's orders, though they pretend they are protecting us here," said Bernice.

"What are prison walls to true love? Eat, drink and be merry; for tomorrow we die," laughed Drusilla. "Why are they holding us prisoners here?"

"To grace Rome's chariot wheels if they conquer Jerusalem," Bernice answered bitterly. "And if I go to Rome, I go not with chained hands behind the chariots. I ride with Titus in the chariot under the conquerors' arch—"

"And I thank Jupiter," insolently laughed Drusilla, "that my slave husband Felix left enough gold to bribe freedom."

They descended the stone steps from the parapet to the gardens. The rose-and-silver mist still boiled above the green translucent depths of the Dead Sea. It looked, so far below, a jewel in jade. An odor of roses and oleander came from the sloping gardens. Far below they could see the flat tiled roofs of the village outside the walls clinging to the precipice like birds' nests; and every roof was crowded with women and children, to get the air.

"I hate women. If I had been a man, I would have been a warrior in the thick of it at Jerusalem there," said Drusilla. "Women are feeble and helpless sheep. They either huddle in fright and go mad over the past like Aunt Herodias up in the turret there, or—are eaten by the wolves. If I knew where Felix camps among the barbarians, I'd throw my royal estate to the winds and join him to-morrow."

"I would not. I'd rule the wolf," said Bernice thoughtfully.

Their purple silk cloaks brushed the snowy petals of the cyclamens lining the garden paths. Bernice stooped and picked a field daisy.

“Heart of gold,” she said dreamily, “with vesture of white silk round it, I’ll pluck your petals and—wish.” She plucked the white petals one by one, throwing them on the ground.

“What does it say? Do you get your wish?” asked Drusilla.

Bernice’s fingers rested on the last slender white petal. She plucked it and kissed it. “I get my wish,” she said.

The clank of an armed tread startled their daydream.

They turned. It was the old Idumean.

“Ladies, a camel caravan has just now come up the causeway from the East. ’Twas their bells you heard! They ask permission to rest in our khan during the heat of the day and go on to Jerusalem by night across the Jordan.”

“Who are they?” demanded the Princess Drusilla imperiously.

“That was why I came to ask your permission, Princess! They are of the new Christian band that gave such trouble to all the Herods. One is a great figure of a man dressed in white with a flowing beard and train of servants bound for the Isles of Greece. His name is Apollos. I saw him in Rome, where he was held in honor, before Nero took the head of the prophet, Paul! The other is a young presbyter, whatever that may be, blue eyes, gold hair, who I could swear as slave served Paul in Rome. His name has slipped my mind; but they came in great state with the protection of Rome and ask lodgings in the Sun Temple till the heat of day passes.”

“Onesimus,” exclaimed Bernice.

“Yes, as I mind now, Lady, that was his very name; but he has grown a powerful man, fair as the angels of Gaul—but this Apollos as I questioned him, seemed a follower of the mad Hermit, John Baptist, ’gainst whose ghost the Queen Herodias raves at night. If they did not bear permission from Rome, I’d bid them pack to save trouble; but—” the old Idumean scratched his thatch of whitening hair.

Drusilla laughed insolently.

“Bid them take quarters in the Temple of the Sun but avoid the Palace here! Excuse us! Explain the Queen’s illness prevents our receiving them with becoming honor! Send down the best of provisions and bid them enjoy the full freedom of garden and baths after their journey. Begone—” she peremptorily clapped her hands.

Drusilla turned with a cynical laugh to her sister.

“You get your wish, Sister! You can join their caravan and go to Jerusalem and plead our case with Titus; but this must be kept from Aunt Herodias. If this Apollos be a follower of the raving Hermit, John, whose bloody head she sees every night in her dreams, she’ll be for a potion of poison on him and ditch our plans deeper than the moat beneath the walls. I’ll take care of the older man in the flowing white, ’spite of his beard, if you’ll beguile the young

one with the golden locks. Now to the Temple of the Sun to make offerings to Istarte and Venus and Astoreth and all the goddesses of love under the Evening Star! Herodias cannot be moved while this madness is on her; but we can escape. You get your wish, Sister."

But Bernice had turned white as the cyclamen of snow which brushed the royal purple of her silk vesture.

"Yes," she repeated. "I get my wish! A curse upon it! Must Herod's daughters always, always be pawns in Rome's royal game?"

"What matter, if we are winning pawns?" smiled the other. "Cheer up, Sister! Throw away regret! Cast off fear! We can escape. Herodias has lived her life and won, and lost, and sits like an old fool drooling over her loss; but we are young yet! Let us eat, drink and be merry; for to-morrow we die."

"You said, yourself, but a moment ago, you thanked Jupiter your slave husband Felix was the only one who had left a Herod daughter safe—"

Drusilla, like her aunt earlier in the afternoon, whirled upon her sister. Laughter had left only craft in the deep black eyes, and on the cruel voluptuous lips.

"Fool," she said with a stab of scorn. "Do you hesitate because Onesimus, your slave boy, has come back grown to man? Will your lure be weaker, or stronger, now that he is grown with the strong wine of manhood in his veins? If you, a Herod's daughter, could hesitate now, I'd stab you with my own hand the first time I found you asleep. Go to Jerusalem! Win Titus! He will be Emperor, too, in time. Onesimus can meet you in Rome. Bend fate to your will! Do not be bent and broken by any fate. We go to the Temple gardens to-night."

The old Idumean went clanking back to the gate under the arch, stiff-legged as legs are wont to walk, that have been in armored greaves for seventy years.

"A curse on this Herod brood," he went, muttering. "These women have thrown every Herod from his throne. If I had my will, I'd weight their feet with stones and throw them over the precipice in the Dead Sea; and I'd see these Nazarenes feed the lions as they fed the wild beasts in Nero's days. Disturbers! Disturbers! Trouble makers! Pilate, a suicide stabbed by his own dagger! Procla, his wife, whining about the crucifixion and bad dreams! Herod First a madman. Herod Two an exile with his wife raving here over the Hermit's bloody head! I'd like to know didn't she order his head off at one blow in this very Fort! Herod Three falls dead in the theater of Cæsarea and his jade of a girl wife here up to fresh tricks on Titus! Pah! A nice task for an old soldier keeping guard of such harpies! I'd slash their lily-stem throats if I had my way."

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The sun went down behind the rose-tinted mountains of Judea to the west. Their peaks gleamed in blood and fire above the red and golden sands. Bernice sat on an ivory bench in the gardens above the silver clouds lying on the Dead Sea below. In her hand was a bunch of snowy cyclamens, which she idly plucked. Before her stood the young presbyter, Onesimus, clad like his master in flowing white, with black sandal straps braided halfway to the knee, a sword hanging by a gold cord from his neck, his hair as gold as the cord but cut short to the neck after the Greek fashion, his deep blue eyes gazing at the Princess as he would read her soul. Onesimus had grown to powerful manhood in these seven years since he left Paul at Rome.

She sat silent, thinking, but what she thought, he could not follow. There was a fying of insects from the dry grasses, that bordered the garden walks. As the sun set over the blue green lake and the orange hills beyond, the clamor of war from the cañon below dulled and fell like the subsiding waves of an angry sea. She turned her seal ring round and round, and drew it from her finger as if to pass it to him. She pressed it to her lips.

“Will this be amulet to keep you from all harm?” she mused.

The young presbyter trembled.

“My Unseen King will keep me from all harm,” he answered; “and I dare not wear it till we are united for His Kingdom.”

“Look,” she said, “the Evening Star—Isis. The dewdrops are her tears.”

“’Twas the Star brought the Wise Men of the East,” he answered, “and there shall be no more tears in His Kingdom.”

An awful loneliness and an awful loveliness seemed to envelop her fragile form.

The young presbyter drew towards her as if to wrest her from her Dead Sea hopes and take her to that Unseen Kingdom with violent hands.

“Where have you been with the great Apollos, these long long years, my Onesimus?” she dreamily asked.

“To Babylonia and Assyria aiding the greatest apostle of all—Peter,” he answered.

“He, who lied and denied his leader and cut the High Priest’s servant’s ear off at the trial long years ago, as I have heard the Queen Herodias tell?” she asked.

“Say rather, Princess, he who learned in sin his own weakness, and whose great heart grew tender for all who fall in slippery places. He learned not to trust his own strength even in love, but—God’s.”

She pondered that absently plucking the cyclamens; and her hands were slender as the lily stems. The silver clouds rolled from below and the translucent water lay a painted sea.

“What does your Master Apollos teach? How differs he from the others?”

"I'll answer that as Paul answered years ago in Rome, when Ephesus and Corinth wrote to know whether they should follow Paul, or Apollos. Paul followed the Nazarene. Apollos professed John, the Baptist; and when the followers would have wrangled one against another, and so missed the news of the Glad Kingdom in strife, Paul wrote back—'twas but a few years before Nero slew him—Paul plants; Apollos waters; God gives the increase!"

"You speak as a gardener."

"I am, dear Princess— We are all gardeners, gardeners in the field of flowers which the Persians call 'Ardath'—the Garden of God called Paradise."

"I like that. I can understand that better than an Unknown Kingdom not made with hands! That Garden kind of Kingdom would be Glad News to me, Onesimus! I could wander through that kind of Garden, forever, if I had hold of your hand! Sit at my feet, dear playmate of the long ago, and tell me of your Garden—no, sit by my side, I would hold your hand now!"

She drew him down to the ivory bench beside her. He flushed as deep as the rose-tinted mountains in the setting sun.

"Now tell me of your Garden called Paradise, while I can feel your thoughts flowing into mine through the palm of your hand. This is Paradise enough for me."

"Your hand, dear Princess, throbs too hard for the peace of that Garden. It is a Garden where there is eternal light, nor suffering, nor care, nor sorrow, nor dark, nor sleep to miss one hour of joy."

"That, too, I like," she said. "Let us not miss this hour of joy."

"It is watered by the Rivers of Eternal Life. God's thoughts are the seeds. They bloom in human flowers. 'Tis ours to keep those human flowers from running into poisonous weeds. The flowers of this your earthly garden are fixed by roots, where they are planted, but the human thought seeds have power of choice like wings to bear them where they will to go; and I would that you would will to join our Unseen Garden, not made with hands but thoughts—"

She drew his hand between her breasts and drank his eager gaze like one athirst.

"See yonder above the Sea is Istarte, the Evening Star of love, Onesimus! Will love dwell in our garden there as it shone in the Garden of Daphne long ago, when first I read your dear blue eyes?"

"The God of Love is the Sun of that Garden, Princess," he answered, gently loosening her passionate grasp and placing in her emptied palm the cyclamens she had let fall. "You bade me tell you of that Garden and Apollos' teaching. You know how the caves and grottos of the Jordan from the Dead Sea to Damascus are filled with the Nazarenes, who have fled from the siege of Jerusalem, which our Lord foretold. In all the cities of Decapolis, Apollos



preached in the Temples of the Sun. You know these cities of the Greeks love and worship the Sun; but it was the Son of God, Apollos preached, which John the Hermit foretold; and so when the priests had sung the psalms, Apollos would sound out in his great thunder voice like a silver trumpet: ‘Lift up your heads, oh, ye gates, and let the King of Glory in! Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of angel hosts, He is your King of Glory’; and when the multitude had settled to listen, he would tell them of Ardath, the Garden of God in Paradise, where God’s thoughts are seeds and bloom in human flowers. Once, I mind, when a woman came weeping whose child had been slain in the siege as she escaped, after she heard Apollos she left the Temple rejoicing because her child had become a flower of light in the Garden of God; and a lover, whose bride had been slain, went out, weeping no more, because his bride was not dead, but waiting him in the Garden of God; and a soldier mad with remorse that his cruelty had killed his wife left all calmed because he had faith she, too, had gone to the Garden and had sent him Apollos to teach the way.”

Bernice plucked the snowy cyclamens again from their stems. Her slim hand trembled.

“Show me the way, Onesimus.”

Her voice was so low he had to bend across her slender figure to catch the words.

“There is no other way but to repent, be baptized, leave off sin and follow the Light of the Eternal Son.”

So absorbed were the lovers they did not see the tall white figure of the great teacher Apollos approaching on the path, accompanied by the Princess Drusilla.

“What is—this thing you call sin, my Onesimus? Is it sin for me to love you as I do?”

“Sin is the shadow of self, shutting out the light of God.”

She pondered that. “And when I love you so you turn all life to rosy mist, do I love self?” she asked.

“Sin is anything that holds us in the realm of shadows, away from God. It may be crime that fetters us in blind dungeons without bars like the Queen Herodias up there in the turret. It may be gayety. It may be wealth. It may be fear. It may be love of flesh, or power. It may be anxious want. It may be doubt; but it is always shadow of self.”

“And what is repentance? Would it cut me off from you?”

“No, but it would cut you off from planning to gain power by snaring the Roman General yonder. Repentance is to cancel sin by sinning no more, forsaking self and following Light.”

She threw her bare arms about his shoulder. “But if I gained Titus, the Emperor’s son, I could have you too, Onesimus! You offer me a Shadow

Kingdom I cannot see or touch with hands. I aim at Rome.”

“You aim, beloved, at the image of clay and iron seen by the Prophet Daniel; and even now the iron is falling from the clay and the image is crumbling down. The other Kingdom is of gold and light and eternity. . . .”

Two shadows fell athwart where they sat, and the Princess Bernice drew back, while the young presbyter rose. Unutterable pain was on his baffled face. Apollos in his flowing white garments cast a long giant shadow between them. His back was towards the bench and so was the figure of the Princess Drusilla. The towering Apostle with the white hair and white beard had raised his shepherd’s crook and was pointing to the rose-tinted peaks swimming in mystic fire of clouds and light; and as he pointed his upraised staff and arms cast a shadow of the cross between the young presbyter and the slim daughter of the last of the Herods.

“Yonder,” he was saying in a voice so like a silver trumpet that traditions have come in Crete to this day that when he spoke all the silver bells of the temple service rang, “Yonder are the mountains of the wilderness, where our Christ was tempted. First, He was tempted to satisfy the hungry cravings of wearied and faint flesh. Then, He was tempted to try out whether God was God enough to save Him from rash slips; and then he was offered all the kingdoms of the earth and their pageantry as in a dream. . . .”

“And why didn’t He accept the challenge as a Roman would?” asked the Princess Drusilla in a cold, hard, calculating voice. “If He could have proved His Kingdom instead of going to the Cross like a felon, I’ve heard the Queen Herodias say all Judea would have risen and rallied to Him and thrown off Rome. . . .”

“Because the power given Him of God was not for service of self, but to lead men back to God. We may not make playthings of miracles for self,” he said.

“So if the Queen Herodias will not acknowledge your God, you cannot cure her madness?” demanded Drusilla.

“Remorse is not repentance,” answered the Sage; and the two figures passed on down through the oleanders of the garden.

The rose-tinted misty mountains were wrapping them in shadow mantles of purpling folds. A cold wind blew up from the waters, still and glassy as a painted sea.

The young presbyter stood silent. Bernice shivered.

“How can you believe in your Unseen Kingdom, when your King was crucified, and his followers are now scattered from Judea to these caves?” she urged.

“Death is but a boat across another sullen Jordan to the Gardens of God,” he said, “and His Followers are scattered that they may scatter the seed for the

Garden to spread here on earth. Already the scattered seed reaches from Rome to Ganges.”

“Where does Apollos go now?” she asked.

“To become preacher in Crete.”

“And you?”

“To join John, beloved of Christ, at Ephesus.”

“And you leave?”

“In an hour to travel in the cool of the night.”

Far north, they could see to the snowy peaks of Hermon, where the sheet lightning played. The clanking of forges plied in the valley below on engines of war for the siege of Jerusalem, echoed like silver bells from cavern and grotto. The pungent flower-drugged air had odor of temple incense, and the breeze was as a cool hand laid on a fevered brow. The shadows etched themselves clearer in the translucent depths of the emerald Sea. The young presbyter’s lips were moving as in prayer. Princess Bernice roused herself as if to throw off dreams.

“ ’Tis not I who tempt you, Onesimus, with flesh, or daring, or power. ’Tis you, who tempt me to abandon the last of the Herod line for a shadow Kingdom. My brother, King Agrippa, the last of the Herods, is with Titus besieging the rebellious Zealots of Jerusalem. I’ll get my bodyguard, Julius, and join your caravan, and go with you.”

The young man’s face lighted up as a brow in sunrise.

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Out under the arched gate they rode in the moon’s silvered dark, Apollos in a litter on a camel, leading down the narrow precipitous causeway. The Princess Bernice, too, rode a camel, but her form was swathed in cloak; and the old Idumean rode before her on Arab horse, while the young presbyter walked by her side. He carried his sword in his hand.

Down the narrow bridle path from the causeway led the road to the Jordan and Jericho and Jerusalem, scarce broad enough for the beasts, steep and winding as a circular stair. Once where the way narrowed so that those on stirrups had to dismount and only the camels kept sure footing, the Idumean dismounted and held back to give right of way to the Princess’ beast, before he turned his own horse and the young presbyter’s free to let themselves down on their haunches.

“Well rid of her! Well rid of her!” grumbled the old man. “If she had not been going off with you, I would not have let her go. Have you no other Nazarene teachers can rid me of the other two? Had she attempted to escape to Titus, the General’s son, I would have cut her throat.”

Down, down, the narrow winding way, the caravan descended, and where the hot brooding malarial air of the Jordan smote them, the pebbly shaly path

turned to clay trampled to mire by the refugees fleeing the siege for open desert and rocky cave. The current was dark and sullen and flowed with the hurrying rage of human passion driving to the nemesis of its own destiny. The heat was hideous and the din deafened thought.

At the ford of the sullen dark river, they paused to water their beasts, and mounting his horse, the young presbyter rode abreast the Princess' camel and signaled the Idumean to ride for her safety on the other side.

"So would I ride with you through the Gates of Death, my Princess," he whispered, leaning towards the white face in the muffled cloak. "'Twas here Christ was baptized and tempted of Self and the Evil One, and renounced all earthly power to save men for the Glad Kingdom. You, too, another time in safer place shall join our ranks by the sacred rite of baptism, my Bernice."

But the white face answered never a word. She reached out her arm, where she sat, and touched his brow with a hand cold as death. Then the caravan plunged in the ford. The horses swam and scattered slightly, heading downstream with the waves, but the camels kept footing and floundered. As the beasts came panting up the far bank in a thicket of willows and oleanders, the Idumean led to force the way, for the narrow road past Jericho was packed with a slow-moving mass of fleeing women and children and aged, escaping from the siege of the Holy City on Zion Hill.

Apollos, the great master, rode back abreast the Princess, and the presbyter, Onesimus, led her camel afoot.

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, know that the desolation thereof is nigh," Apollos said. "Let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains. They shall fall by the edge of the sword. They shall be led away captive into all nations. Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles. When these things begin to come, then look up, and lift up your heads; for redemption draweth nigh. Know you Who spoke those words, your Highness?"

But the Princess answered never a word; for her heart was cold with fear of the sights she saw as in a shadow by the silver starlight. Where Herod's Pleasure Gardens had lain at Jericho, was such a press of soldiers, they could not approach the city gates. The clank of the forges for the engines of war had become as the rumble of thunder or earthquake. Where she knew the Holy City must stand on Zion Hill, she could discern only the blaze of towers and uptossing in midsky of flaming javelin and torch to throw destruction inside the city walls; and as the caravan advanced through the press of legion and cohort in serried ranks of helmet and breastplate and spear, the narrow ascending mountain road lay thick in a screen of smoke with a sickening odor of burning she had not known could exist outside the purlieu of a nether world.

The old Idumean came back and wheeled his horse beside her.

“We cannot get through the press though I break the pate of every head under helmet,” he said. “We shall have to fork to the right for the Damascus Road past the General’s tent.”

“What is the smell of burning?” she asked, leaning forward from the muffle of her camel.

“The dead! They are burning the dead as they throw them out over the walls in Gehenna Valley,” answered the old soldier; “and this road is swimming in blood coming down the walls. The soldiers tell me it is swimming in blood to the horses’ bridles beneath Olivet.”

“Fear nought, Princess,” called the young presbyter, remounting his horse to guard the rear, “you are only escaping a world that plays all men false”, and they pressed on, taking the road that forked north of the city.

Daylight dim with fog and smoke and the dust of battle saw them on the crest of the highway that led north from the Holy City towards either Cæsarea on the Sea, or Damascus in the far snowy mountains.

They paused again to breathe their spent camels and horses.

Bernice signaled the young presbyter.

“I would have your Arab horse,” she said. “I cannot ride this beast. He is spent.”

Onesimus helped her to dismount the panting camel and take place on his own horse, fresh because he had ridden little. He felt the tremor of her slender form as he helped her to saddle. Far as eye could see were tents on the heights and plains: but the Holy City they could not see for the fog of smoke and dust and mist.

One great yellow tent spacious enough to house a thousand men lay not a hundred yards to the left of their road. Above it blew the eagle pennants of Rome.

“On,” shouted the old Idumean, “we are safe here. That is the General’s tent. They have paused because this is the Jewish Sabbath and they parley for surrender. To-day will see their Holy City fall and ring to our trumpets’ victory.”

The caravan moved slowly forward. Soldiers rose sleepily where they lay on the ground and saluted the old Idumean. The camels moved through the mist in grotesque ghosts. Myriad tents were myriad island peaks in the lifting morning mist. Then the sun outburst over the rose-tinted mountains of Moab in the east; and the trumpets blew in a million echoes through glen and grotto.

Mountains and plains seemed to awaken with myriad soldier forms from ground and tent. Their metal helmets gave back the morning light in silvered fire. As the trumpets blew their silvery blasts amid the echoing rocks, the young presbyter’s horse reared in panic terror. The Idumean and the young

presbyter sprang to snatch at the bridle. The Princess threw out her arm and struck the trembling creature a blow on its flank with the bridle rein. It bounded in mid-air and fled as on winged feet straight for the tent of the sleeping Roman General.

The old Idumean came a-sprawl on the ground, rolled over and sprang up with his helmet awry. The astounded young presbyter had retained his seat on the wearied camel, but gazed after the fleeing form as one who has received his death blow.

“A curse upon her and all her vixen foxy Herod brood,” raged the old man, getting stiffly to his feet. “I might have known it was a trick when she said she would go to the Grecian Isles with you.”

The caravan moved forward again. The old Idumean was galloping furious as his Arab horse could leap in wild bounds towards the General’s tent. Just as the sunlight burst in a shield of fire over the embattled hosts, the young presbyter looked back.

The old Idumean had thrown himself from his horse and stood with drawn lance across the door to the tent of the sleeping Roman General.

“And because Peter erred through love in a slippery place, it gave his great heart tenderness for all who trust in flesh,” said Apollos. Then he smiled gently at his young presbyter. “The old Idumean is closer to truth though he fell hard and cursed as Peter, than this Princess, blinder in the fetters of her own wiles than the Queen Herodias, prisoner back in the Fort,” he said. “We all have to learn by errors, Onesimus, but it makes the way longer; and he who follows truth by a circling road, comes out where he began.”

## CHAPTER III

### THE SWORD AND THE SUNBURST

If a woman is forced by the chain of circumstances to barter her love for power—is she justified in bartering herself to the highest bidder?

That was the thought that chased through the Princess Bernice's brain in a dizzy whirl, when she struck her horse, and bolted from the missionary's caravan to force herself on the notice of the Roman Emperor's son and make such bargain as she could with her own charms for coin to save herself and her brother—the King—from ruin. Had she ever known a day of freedom of choice from early girlhood, when she had been sold to one old husband to steady a tottering throne, to opening womanhood, when widowed, she had again been sold like a slave on the shambles to another aged and repugnant spouse to win alliance to strengthen that same insecure throne? And when she had fled from that second aged buyer on plea of religious vow, her name had been dirt under the feet of the very beggars on the street—a byword among the Jews and a joke among the actors of the Roman theaters in all the known world. If the world would hound her to lawlessness for refusing to bow to legalized slavery, she would accept the challenge and bid for a power that would put the world under her feet and reduce the dogs, who barked, to lick her very hands.

“Dogs—dogs—dogs!”—she hated the whole scheme of life, that made of her love and womanhood a pawn to lust and power. 'Twas all very well for the Christian presbyter and the great revivalist to hurl anathemas at her sin; but was the sin hers, which had forced her down in the cesspools of lustful slime? If the world had made her sin, she would take toll of the world for her sin and exact tribute that would compensate her loss for the sin.

Rebel? Yes, she knew she was rebel; but who had turned her into rebel? If she could not fight Rome, she would exact price from Rome, by beating it at its own ruthless gamble for power. To be sure, the presbyter and the revivalist had offered her refuge from Rome in a Shadowy Kingdom not made with hands; but had the God of that Shadowy Kingdom reached down miraculous hand and saved her from the price she had already paid? Could all the tears of repentance and sorrow for that past—which was not her fault—wipe out the memories that seared her soul a quivering red? The great revivalist had warned it was she who was tempting the young Greek convert of the New Faith. Tempting? She laughed; and struck her frantic horse again with all the vicious

strength in her woman arm. It was she, who had been tempted by a type of love she had not dreamed could exist in the world of men; and what could she give back for that type of love—now? An assoiled thing with drugged memories, which all the waters of Dead Sea hopes and useless tears could not wipe out. How easily she could have drawn the young Greek convert's lips to her own and drawn his soul through those lips and held it enchained forever in enchanted fetters he did not dream! She loved him too well to make of his life what fate had made of hers.

She laughed now because she was forever past tears. She struck the horse again and again because she would have made all living creatures suffer a little of what she was suffering; and she could have screamed in such a fury of incarnate demon exultation as the warrior women of the barbarians screamed when they tortured fallen foe— She would have laughed if the horse had stumbled and caused her death—that, at least, would be going down with defiance in the very teeth of fate; but a frantic horse on devil's errand somehow does not stumble. It carries us into the very pit of fate.

It was just as the mists of morning were rising that some of the soldiers stirred uneasily in their sleep to the echo of the trumpets and bugles sounding reveille and the sharp iron-shod pound of the two horses ridden at furious pace over the flinty rocks. Some of them sat up wearily. A few commanders sprang to their feet, sword in hand. Their first thought was of fresh dispatches from Rome, or word of surrender from the besieged Holy City. What they decried through the rising gauzy mist was the figure of a woman leaping from her horse in front of the commander's tent, followed by a soldier throwing himself from his horse across her way and thrusting his lance before the tent entrance. Not thus had refugees escaping over the walls of the besieged city by rope come to the Roman for permission to seek safety in the caves beyond the Dead Sea.

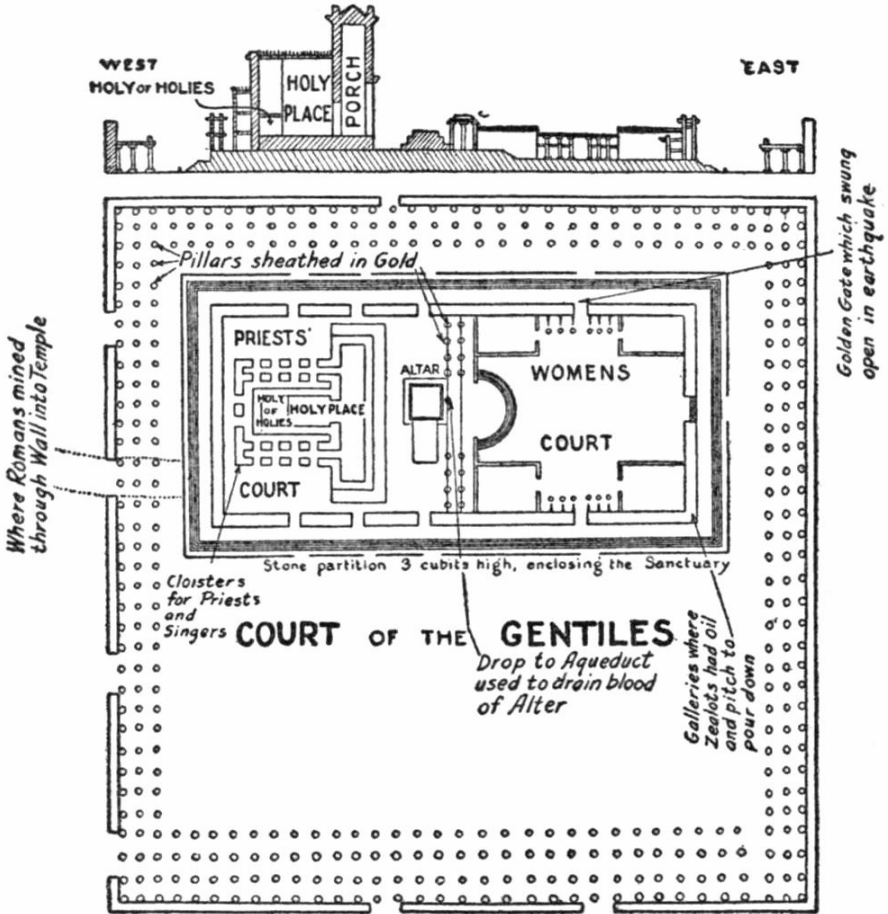
The officers smiled in hard contempt. The soldiers laughed, an ugly suggestive laugh. They laughed because they knew that while the war lasted, if a goddess had come garbed as a woman, she would not be received in that tent. They trusted, loved and idolized their commander as they would a god, and already openly talked of Titus as the army's future Emperor, when the cares of Rome from Gaul to Ganges would have worn out his father, Vespasian.

The Roman Legions lay encamped on valley and hill in front of Jerusalem. Seven months now had they besieged the Holy City from Passover Week in spring when a million Hebrews from every country in the known world had come up to Jerusalem to celebrate the birth of their nation from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. It was now the golden summer season, which we know as the end of August and opening of September. Russet mist shimmered on earth and sky. As the sun rose over the red mountain rims of Moab far to the east of the



Dead Sea, the gauzy clouds took to themselves wings and rose to mid-heaven, white as the snow of Hermon in the north, and joyous as the lark's greeting to newborn day.

## THE TEMPLE REBUILT BY HEROD



Seven long months the Roman Legions had beaten with their huge engines of war against the three impregnable walls of the Holy City. Beleguered and assailants were both exhausted and had appointed this day a truce; for it was the Jewish Sabbath. The besieged citizens would long since have surrendered to Rome; for Rome had given them peace and prosperity and security in their own Hebrew laws for a hundred years; but the mad Zealot Robber Bands and Short Sword Ruffians, known as the Sicarii, who had seized the city twenty-

thousand strong Passover Week to plunder in the name of Liberty from Roman yoke, when all the Temple Chests were filled with gold tribute from Jews the world over, knew that surrender meant death, and holding all the arms of the city, kept the gates of the three unscalable walls locked against Roman entry or citizens' escape. Escape was possible only by leaping or dropping ropes from the high walls. Women were held prisoners in the houses, as cattle for slaughter are hemmed in shambles, to force the obedience of the men to the mad Zealot Robber Bands. He who threw himself from the broad parapet of the upper walls and missed death in the frantic leap, saw all his kin flung forcibly over after him by the Zealots, into the bloody moat beneath the southern precipice, where the slow burning fires of Gehenna had already consumed more than six hundred thousand Jews.

But all was peace of parley this calm Sabbath morning.

Not a watcher appeared on the broad top of the walls from the Temple on the east to the three Towers of Herod on the higher Zion to the west. The world of fighters slept in the dead exhaustion of men who had lived in armor day and night for seven months. The footmen of the Roman Legions sprawled on the ground, helmets and face pieces still fastened, metal armor still buckled to breast and thigh. The horsemen lay with heads pillowed on saddles, their beasts stretched on the ground beside them, bridle rein crooked in their elbows, shields thrown for protection across their lower limbs. The huge battering rams, which the Romans had hauled up to the walls and mounted on hurdles of trees and rocks and sod, rested suspended in mid-air, the giant beams hanging over the wall for first blow the next day, with rams' heads of solid iron twisted and torted from the smash of seven months' ceaseless work. Where the cable, that hauled back the beam coiled round a horizontal windlass, had been tied to a stake driven in the ground, a hundred ropemen lay in a sleep dead as death. The great catapults, with jaws of a giant leviathan gripping rocks for the toss over the walls, also hung silent and still against the calm sky, with more cables fast to ground stages and more fighters asleep with hands not a finger length from the ropes for the call to fresh fight, when the trumpets should sound.

North of Jerusalem, far as eye could see on mountain and plain, was a yellow tent city of Roman Legions grouped round one large marquee on the central ridge, above which gleamed the ensigns of the Emperor's son, Titus, the gleaming eagle in brass on a lofty pole in front of the commander's quarters.

The woman and the soldier stood facing each other with blazing eyes before the commander's tent. The man did not speak. If Rome won, he would not risk his head by letting her pass. If Rome failed, neither would he risk his neck by offence to an imperious mistress, who was not wont to be stopped in her will.

Their eyes blazed. Both breathed hard.

“Down with that lance.” The woman’s order was emphasized with a stamp. She had tossed aside her black cloak, revealing royal purple below and her right hand sought the pearl-handled dagger in the gold cord round her waist.

“The Emperor sleeps, Princess,” the soldier gasped back. “One to win favor, had best not disturb the tired conqueror unannounced.”

“Liar,” she said with the quick gleam of an angry comet, “drop your spear.”

The tent curtain lifted. An unarmed man in royal vesture like her own emerged as if dazed from sleep.

The Idumean’s lance went up with a flash in the sun, butt on ground, point in air, held by hand as of an unseeing statue. The hair of the man in the tent doorway curled unkempt and damp with night sweat on his brow. He was unshaven and bent, unlike soldier mien, as if crushed with burdens too heavy to be borne. He was still in the drowse of heavy sleep.

“Bernice—Princess—Sister,” he ejaculated. “Are you ghost—or flesh? In the name of all the gods of Rome, how came you—here?”

“Aye—how came her Highness here?” angrily repeated the old Idumean guard. “And my life was sworn to hold the two Princesses and the Queen Herodias safe in Machærus Fort beyond Jordan while the war lasts; but she tricked me by tale of joining some Nazarene Christians going to the Isles of Greece; and when the caravan passed this way up from the Jordan, she broke from rank and wheeled her horse affrighted by the morning trumpets straight for the General’s tent.”

“Silence—fellow,” ordered the man. “Who gave you leave to speak? Come inside, my Sister!”

He lifted the tent flaps, and they passed in. There was not a soul inside all the great tent but a Sabeen slave laying out his master’s armor for the day.

“My Brother—my King—Agrippa—last of the Herod line,” the woman opened her arms; and they embraced with the passion of the Herod line, that loved as it hated, with the hot blood of the torrid Arab strain.

“You may go,” the King ordered the man.

Left alone, he turned to the Princess.

“What means this—mad—adventure, Sister?”

“It means, dear Brother, that the Herod women will no longer endure to be cooped like sheep to be eaten by wolves yonder in Machærus Fort! Herod women are of the lion line, my King! They fight not in cornered walls. They crouch and spring for the foe’s throat, and never wait for any foe to strike first.”

“Dangerous words, if Rome overhears,” said he.

“Have you forgotten how, from the male side, we spring from the

unconquered Arab, and from the other side from Mariamne, daughter of the greatest of the Hebrew high priests?” demanded the Princess. “Have you forgotten when the Great Herod would have broken Mariamne to his imperious will, she defied him; and when he slew her, she came back and haunted him till she drove him mad in that same Machærus Fort? Have you forgotten how the great Imperial Cæsar called Herod to Rome, and Herod would not lower eye or knee in presence of Imperial Rome; and how for his fearless courage he won respect of all the Senate in Rome and gained the Kingdom of Judea, which our Royal House has held from that day to this? When did Herods win a kingdom by cringing in fear? Not thus are kingdoms won, Brother! Old Queen Herodias grows madder every day with dreams of the Hermit John’s head slain in the dungeons there. Sister Drusilla, who has ever been jealous of me being younger and your favorite, swears she will join her husband Felix, whether he is in Rome, or among the barbarians. Know you not if the Romans win here, the secret Zealots and Sicarii Sword Ruffians in the Fort there on the Dead Sea will rise and cut our throats for loyalty to Rome; and if the Romans lose here, they will tear us to pieces with bloody hands and feed us to the dogs beneath the city walls?”

The man’s head sank forward despairingly.

“You should have been King in my place, little lioness! Rome’s luxuries in youth have softened my Herod daring. I am no longer wild Arab of the desert willing to wade waist deep in blood to power. I crave no more kingship, but rest and peace.”

“Then—confess it not,” scouted the Princess.

“But I do confess it. I am weary of fighting for a kingdom to do as Rome bids! If Rome fails, we are lost. If Rome wins, all Judea will be ravaged from Galilee to the Dead Sea, and every city put up on the auction block to the highest soldier bidder, slave or free. Know you our royal revenues all come from the tribute taxes of these cities? Only Felix, the freed slave, sister Drusilla’s husband, had cunning to foresee. We of the royal line have been blinded by our own ambition and mistook a shadow kingdom for the real. We are only weak shadows of Rome. As waves Rome’s arm of command, so jumps our obedient shadow. Rome is crumbling like a colossal image of clay. Only Felix laid him away gold enough in strong iron chests to buy a villa down on Naples Bay, where I had planned to send Sister Drusilla to her husband; and the Queen Herodias on to her lord in banishment in Spain.”

“And what did you plan to do with me?” asked the Princess, with the eye of a harrier hawk on a weakling bird.

“Trust Titus’ mercy! You have ever been favorite with him. He likes your wild daring; but dare not too much! We have been loyal to Rome. . . .”

“Mercy?” the Princess Bernice laughed. “Is that the Great Herod’s voice I

hear in the last of the Herod line? Do you also plan to march with shackles on hands and balls on feet behind the conqueror's car under the Triumphal Arch at Rome?"

"Sister, dearest Princess, my lioness," answered King Agrippa, caressing his sister's hands. "Have you forgotten how a year ago we stood on the Bridge of Fate that runs from the temple roof across the middle lower city to Herod's palace on the west, to plead with the high priests to stem this revolt against Rome; and the whole populace of Jerusalem took up stones to kill us? Only the height of the bridge saved our lives. Have you forgotten the shameful names they shouted at you—Rahab, they called you—a Herod Princess—because you had left your ancient spouse up in Cilicia and came down to pay your vows in Jerusalem—you, my Queen sister, the daughter of the high priests back to Aaron? Have you forgotten the insults they hurled at me, for defending you—my favorite Sister—though never Herod did more for the Jews than I have done? What would you if we trust not Titus' gratitude?"

"Gratitude," the Princess harshly laughed. "Gratitude, the sour-milk diet of weakling fools and coward hopes." She drew back from her brother and screened her face by throwing her purple cloak over her shoulder as she spoke. "What would I do? I'd do what every high priest's woman has had to do since Miriam, Aaron's sister, beat the timbrels of victory on the Red Sea. I'd rule the man! I'd ride with the conqueror in his car beneath Rome's Arch of Triumph! I'd turn a shadow kingdom into a real earth power ruled with iron grip though it were fleshed in woman. They call us—weak." She laughed again.

"I'd send Drusilla with her dove-cooing love to her slave husband Felix on Naples Bay. I'd send the old drooling Queen Herodias to her dotting failure of a spouse in Spain to waste their souls away in vain regrets; but I'd strike, and I'd strike now, straight at Titus' heart for the throne of Rome. . . ."

"Not that—not that way, my Queen, my Sister," her brother drew back in horror. "Know you what names the populace call you, my royal Sister?"

"A curse on these barking dogs! What care I for the curs of the gutter? He who fights curs, finds himself snarling in their gutter. We Herods have given Judea security for a hundred years. What have they given us? They have snapped hands that fed them royal bread, free. Let the Romans conquer and throw every Judean over the walls to the fires of Gehenna, or sell the seditious slaves to Egypt for the price of dogs. Think you, beloved Brother, that I have not sacrificed love for power? I left the only man that ever I loved in my life but you—my King, to break from the caravan to the Isles of Greece, and come to Titus, here. Yes, the Greek slave—Onesimus, from whom you parted me in the Gardens of Daphne long ago, now grown to man majestic as a gladiator! He offered me the shadow kingdom of his Christ, and my weak heart might have yielded to that love had I not seen the Emperor's tent here when the mist

rose; but I would not drop the real kingdom of Rome within our grasp for all shadow kingdoms of all the prophets since time began. What have the prophets done for us, Brother? Show me a kingdom I can grasp; and I'll close my clutch on what I feel. I grasp not rainbows, my Agrippa!"

King Agrippa sank to his cot with his face in his hands.

"If you ride with the Emperor in his chariot under the Triumphal Arch, know you what Rome will say?"

"And what do I care what Rome says? Can Rome say worse than these Judeans have shrieked as we rode through the streets? What care I what Roman rabble bawls if I rule Rome? With the army in Titus' strong hands, the Senate will eat from our hands, whipped curs. Where is Titus? Take me to him, Brother! We can save the last of Herod's line."

King Agrippa rose irresolute. The Princess had stung him to action; but one, who must be stung to action, must be kicked on by prods in action.

"That I cannot, Sister Bernice, though you were Queen of Heaven." King Agrippa began pacing the tent. "We have a remnant of the Roman garrison secure in the three great Towers of Herod, whence the Zealots and Sicarii Sword Ruffians have been unable to drive them out—they are our old loyal garrison of a year ago; and they have ample water in the roof cistern, to hold out till we go in. That's why our engines have avoided throwing rocks at the west Towers. With them are three of the Nazarenes who refused to be driven to revolt. Our spies tell us these Nazarenes have rescued all the sacred scrolls from the Ruffians now in the Temple to the east, and carried them for safe-keeping to Herod's Towers by the secret Aqueduct that runs from beneath the Temple to Herod's Palace on the west. You would be safe there; but I—cannot—take you there. The Overhead Bridge from the Temple to the Palace has been smashed by the great rocks we have been throwing over the walls, and the Aqueduct from the Altar to the Palace is filled with rotting dead and plunder—the rebel bands drove the high priests under, and cut their throats in the Aqueduct, and the Temple floor now swims in blood. . . ."

"And think you, Brother, my feet are so dainty they would spurn to wade in the blood of these dogs or trample the rotting bodies of high priests to gain our end? Have you forgotten how Herod the Great had strangled, beneath the baths of Machærus, his wife's brother, who was High Priest, to gain his end; and how when his best loved wife taunted him with murder and turned from him in hate, though he loved her to madness, he slew her, too, and stopped at naught to make his throne secure? I am such a Herod daughter! Shall we let slip what he paid such price to gain?"

The King's brows knitted deep. Though scarce past mid-life, he bent with the impotence of fate too powerful for him to master.

"Princess, I cannot risk the General's anger if we disobey his orders. There

is truce to-day. It is the Jewish Sabbath. The Emperor is for mercy and letting famine force surrender. We have the city hemmed on every side. They must surrender or starve. But the army will not hear of another day's delay! It will hurt our Emperor's prestige! We shall marshal all our strength this day to show the Jews inside, there cannot escape one living soul from our circle of fire and sword. If they surrender not to-night, neither old nor young, nor man nor woman, shall escape the sword; and when the sword is dulled of slaughter, all others will be sold as slaves. The soldiers are now down in the burning moat stealing coins from the dead to buy slaves at the price of a dog, and not a man in rank dare break the truce on pain of death! The General and his young lieutenant, Trajan, are in the turrets of Antonia's Tower next to the Temple. Titus has not left off to lead for one hour from Passover Week. Till victory perches on his eagle, he does not know that woman exists; and if he did, he'd bid his soldiers knock her on the head!"

"Pah!" she laughed. "You know not woman's power on man."

"But this is no man—Titus is iron, my Sister—I occupy his tent alone! Not one night for seven months has he slept in his bed; or known rest; or taken off his armor. He is soldier now, and not lover dangling on a woman's whim. He fights hand to hand with Jews. Last night we had mined from Antonia's Tower under the Holy of Holies, and if the Jews do not surrender this eventide, we break through. The orders are to slay and slay. The Jews suspect. They must have heard our pickaxes below the Temple breaking a hole in the wall of the foundation. Their soldiers crowd all the upper galleries of the Temple to pour down boiling pitch and set fire if we enter. Our spies tell us even now these swine Zealots lie in stupor drunk with the holy wine mixed with Roman blood all over the sacred Temple floor. One, son of Lazarus of Bethany, escaped from the walls by rope last night, and told us the rotting dead pile the streets, and the living pale shadows faint from famine; and when the Zealots broke into the houses of the prisoned women to search for food one Jewess of Arabian Petra fed these ravening beasts her own child boiled for flesh; and then laughed and told them, and stabbed herself to death raving vengeance."

Sister and brother paused and gazed desperately in each other's eyes.

"There is no hope but to trust the Roman Emperor's mercy," repeated King Agrippa.

"Rome's mercy!" Princess Bernice laughed, and her voice was hard as sword striking metal. "Sheep for hungry wolves! Would Herod the Great have hesitated and whined 'mercy, mercy,' to wolves, as we pause now, Brother of mine?"

"Herod the Great dealt not with Titus. He dealt with a cringing Senate. This Titus is a man."

"Then, if he is man, I—am—woman. Know you what that means? Take

me to Titus, though we wade in blood to our waists! Be not less than man, yourself. Shall my power be less because he is man? Do you remember your mad jealousy when we were younger? Do you think I'll fail with him because he is man? I have had two weak kings for husbands! Now I aim for an Emperor."

"Bernice—are you mad? Do you know the price you'll have to pay?"

"Price? Fool!" she scouted. "Do I know the price I've paid to man since I was a little child? This time, I'll get paid for all I barter if I have to cut his throat while he sleeps—"

"Woman—," he threw his hand across her lips. "You risk both our lives with your mad talk."

She drew his hand from her lips and kissed it as she drew back.

"Who go in as spies, Brother?" she pressed.

"Who risks his life?"

"I'll risk my life—if you will do as much," she urged.

"You would not have the royal line of the Herods creep into their kingdom spies?" he wavered; and in his wavering, she saw the triumph of her old power and laughed.

"I would have the royal Herod line creep through the fires of Hades to grasp a real kingdom instead of this shadow of Rome's leavings," she answered. "Go to the Tower of Antonia and get Titus' permission! Tell him you have found a woman of the high priest caste who will go in as spy. Tell him she will take refuge in Mariamne's Palace of the Herod Towers—to give her pass to the remnant of the Roman Garrison there! Tell him she will throw over the walls each day from the dovecots of the Queen's Tower news of all that passes inside the walls." She clapped her hands. The old Idumean came stiffly in.

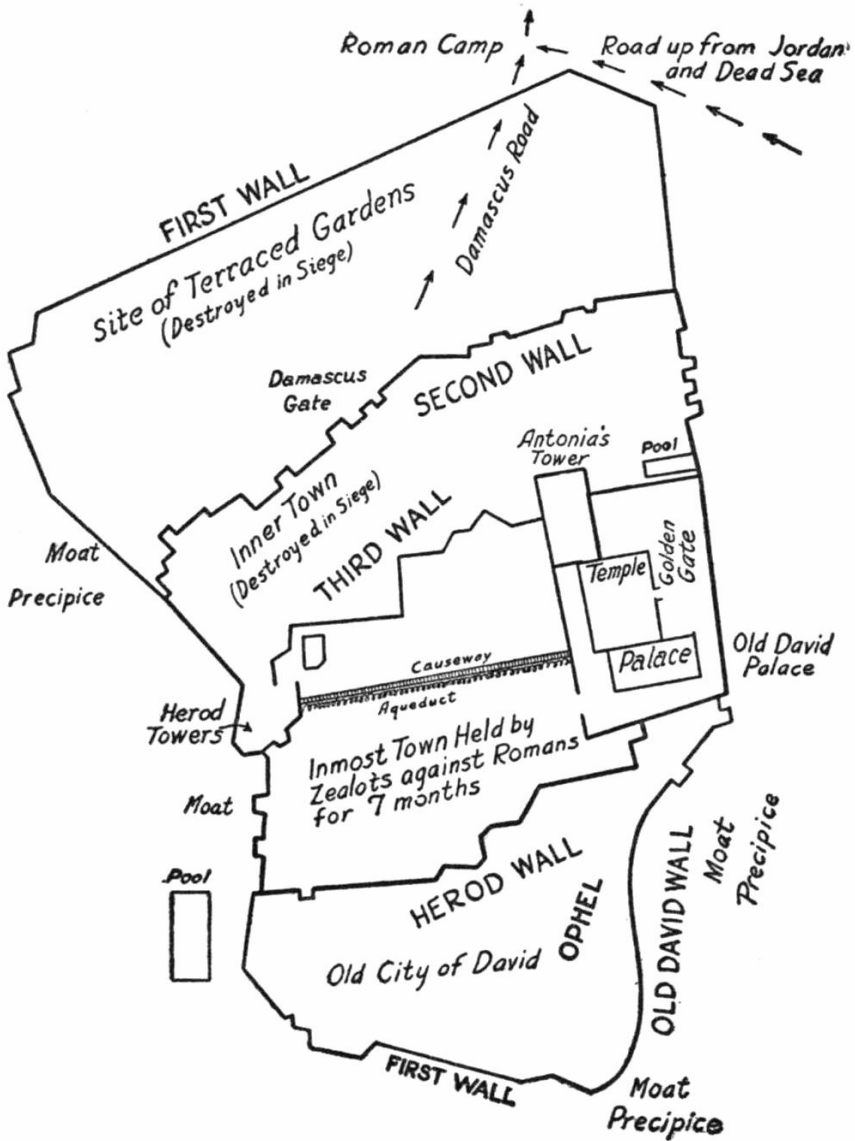
"Julius, follow King Agrippa up to Antonia's Tower. Take your station where the Roman sappers have mined the wall to the Temple. Bide there till I send you word by page lad! Sharp your short sword as you wait and get helmet that will meet your breastplate at the neck! Be sure to protect your neck—you've only one! When the lad comes ask no question! Leap through into the Temple and lift the pavement of the floor before the Altar into the Aqueduct. Drop the lad through below! Then escape for your life back through the hole in the wall! If you succeed, you shall have free farm and pension all your life. If you fail, your tongue shall be torn out!"

She smiled joyously as the old Idumean went out; and then she bade King Agrippa get her the garments of his page boy.

Toward the tenth hour of the stone dial in front of the Imperial tent, a page lad walked out following King Agrippa. He wore a cloak and his turban cap came down over his ears to his very eyes.



All the terraced garden below the outer walls had been cut to the roots. Palm and cactus and hedge and olive trees had gone to build the huge hurdles on which the idle battering rams stood suspended in mid-air. Just once the page paused and swayed as he followed the king going up to Antonia Tower. 'Twas where the Romans had torn down the first and second walls of the Holy City. On the angle of a projecting bastion on the inner third wall, where those on the parapet above could see, swung the rotting skeletons of five hundred Jews crucified hanging by their spiked hands. Their loose garments blew to the wind and the ravens still circled above the featureless blackening skulls. Where the battering rams rested motionless above the parapets, bags filled with sand and dripping inky pitch showed how the besieged had fought back by firing the hurdles and engines of war. Rumor ran through the Roman camp how an old blind follower of Herod the Great, let down by ropes to work he could not see, had fired and burned the first hurdles. But for the creaking of the ravens perched on the turrets of the towers and fighting over the black skulls, the silence was of an awfulness that was stabbed by every footfall. Once or twice the page saw gaunt figures on the wall top appear like phantoms and toss naked dead over to the burning moats below; and down in the burning moats could be seen ghoulish figures of the Roman Army searching the dead for coin to buy slaves in victory. A quick catch of breath broke from the page. King Agrippa looked sharply back but did not pause. Javelins, darts, broken arrows, bent spears, crumpled shields littered the dust where gardens had once terraced the hills. The ground was hot beneath the page's sandals as though seethed in flame. By the Tower of Antonio in front of the Temple, trickles of red clotted blood black with flies ran out under the demolished walls.



Then, they had vaulted the clutter of crumbled stones in the lowest story of Antonia's Tower where its east wall joined the Temple. Where the broken wall was plugged by plank and bag, a cohort of Romans stood guard silent as stone. The King raised his right hand. The old Idumean came forward so swathed in sheet of mail and leggings of chain greaves he could scarce be recognized but for the stiffness of his aged legs. In his right hand, he carried a long sword, in his left the short circular dirk such as the Sicarii Sword Ruffians inside bore.

Not a word was uttered. The old soldier, disguised as Zealot, moved forward and pulled some bagging from the hole in the wall. Head first, then right leg, he stepped through the hole. With frantic look of appeal as a dumb brute going to its doom might cast in affectionate farewell to a loved master, the page glanced back at the pale face of King Agrippa. Then, he followed the disguised soldier through the hole in the wall and the Romans stuffed the bagging and plank back in place.

They were inside the sanctuary of the Holy Place.

The silence was of a tomb. Gone was the golden Altar. Gone were golden cherubim and seraphim above the Altar of which the Psalmist sang. Gone were the golden candlesticks in mystic sevens. Gone were the great golden basins and the brass brazier in which the priests had burned sacrifices for the people's sins from the days of Solomon. Gone were the cunningly wrought tapestries of Damascus and Babylon in woven gold and blue and purple and scarlet, which veiled the Holy of Holies in mystic purity from profane gaze. Ax and sword had hacked the sheathing of gold and silver from the pillars to each side supporting the cloisters and galleries. And where were the mystic treasure boxes between pillars, in which the Jews hoarded the offerings of the faithful through the fateful centuries? The Babylonians had rifled these treasures long centuries ago; but they had left the treasure chests. So had Antiochus of the North; but even he could not destroy these great iron boxes, though he had offered swine upon that vanished altar; and when Herod the Great had restored the Temple, these treasure chests had been left filled and untouched for a hundred years. Again the page swayed as faint; for sprawled on the pavement floor lay drunken Sicarii Ruffians in the dead sleep of swinish debauch, with sword in one hand, the golden flagons and cups of the altar service in the other, and they slept on a floor thickening with human blood. A slight tremor ran through the Temple, as of an earthquake from the Dead Sea; or was it that the senses of the page swam at what he saw? The Temple pavement seemed to heave and sink. The great Golden Gate to the east—ninety feet it was in height—swung open as of unseen hands, flooding the horror with a burst of sunlight. The page covered his face with his hand. Was this the crumbling kingdom of reality for which one grasped, rejecting that other shadow kingdom not made with hands, but made of rest and peace and light and love and eternity?

Julius, the old Idumean, with one eye gleaming through his vizor on the swinish forms asleep, and his long sword in his right hand, was prying with the dirk in his left to hoist the stone that gave secret drop to the dry Aqueduct below. The stone lifted as on hinges. The old Idumean laid down his right-hand long sword, grasped the page by the neck, signaled him to catch the edge of the black hole for the drop and was still holding the trapdoor up, when either the tremor of the earthquake, or the flood of sunburst from the Golden

Gate, disturbed the sleepers.

“Down, you tricky she-vixen of hell,” the Idumean hissed, “and hang by your hands, which I’ve trapped, till Rome rots.”

But Bernice, the Princess, had thrust up one arm in a sudden revulsion at the drop in the under dark and caught the descending trap door with the palm while she hung suspended by her right hand from the edge. The noise had roused the sleepers. They were on him with a howl of tigerish fiends. She saw him snatch at his long sword, miss it, leap back, strike out with his short dirk sword. The iron-shod boot slipped on the bloody floor. He fell with a crash of armor on stone. They sprang on his outstretched arms, his mail-clad legs, his metal breastplate, hacking at the chain thighs with their swords. Her last glimpse of the old Idumean was of him shoving his chin down to meet the breastplate and save his neck from their spears. Then a great broadsword crashed down. His metal head piece went bounding over the floor with a gush of livid blood. Her hand hold gave from the edge of the trap door. The stone slipped back to its place in the floor, and she dropped to bottom in the dark of the Aqueduct.

It was black as night. She paused to think which way was west. Which way lay the Herod Palace? Had she turned as she swung on the edge of the trapdoor—and dropped? Then back in her dim memories of all the glories of the Herod line—was it memory or a throwback of the mad daring blood in her own daring veins?—came half consciousness of how Herod the Great in like case let down by baskets into robber caves of Galilee, black as the night of this Aqueduct, had plunged on fearless in the dark, and driven the cave robber bands over the precipice to a man. She boldly advanced through the dark. By the feel of her feet, the stone footing beneath was descending. That, she knew must be wrong; for the dry Aqueduct was used to flush water from the Altar out east from the pools at the Palace west. She turned. The Aqueduct ascended. That must be right; for waters do not flow up; and it was the Palace pools that flushed the Aqueduct to drain the Temple, and she fled through the dark like a night demon. Was this the price she must pay for a kingdom of which not one stone would be left upon another by sunrise if the Jews did not surrender that very day to Rome? Fool! Judea was lost. It was at Rome she aimed.

Her foot tripped. ’Twas but the plundered gold of the Temple chests, she knew by the rattle of coin on stone; and she sped on through the dark. Then an odor struck her in the face that is like no other odor on earth. It was the odor of those long dead in damp. She swayed faint against the circular arch of the Aqueduct and like a flash in the night came memory of the tales of long ago—these were the high priests that Herodias’ lord had spurred to crucify the Christus of the Nazarenes. Her breath came in gasps. Was she to perish here haunted forever by that Christian cross, which the line of Herods had risked all

to destroy in order to perpetuate a crumbling kingdom? Her sandal touched a soft and naked thing. She leaped over the tangled mass of unseen putrid flesh and ran till her forward right hand touched bronze gate beneath the Towers of Herod's Palace.

Three raps she gave, and then four, in the mystic number of the Hebrew seven. It was the Roman pass to deceive the Jews in their own mystic number. No answering sound came back.

She rapped again, three—then four—louder and yet louder and could hear her own muffled heart beats in the dark.

Had the old Idumean, whom she had tricked, perished trapping her in revenge? Her heart beat till she thought her temples would burst; and she saw as in colored fires the bloody head of the Hermit John, who had taunted Herodias to madness; the ghostly wraith of Mariamne, Herod's murdered wife; the pale face of the Nazarene, James, whom her own Herod husband had ordered stoned to death—then circles of fire went whirling before her eyes and in the circles a fiery cross with the crucified figure of that Son of Man—she screamed and beat on the bronze door with her hands.

It seemed a century before seven faint taps sounded back from the other side of the door.

She rapped again frantically, beating the door with her clenched fist and screaming "'Tis I—Princess Bernice—open—open—open the doors! For the love of God, open the doors."

Then she sank to her knees, with the fiery circles whirling in her dying consciousness, and in the midst of the circles ever the dangling figures of crucified men on a wall. The bronze door creaked, and rasped, and swung open. A Roman soldier, wan with hunger, stood in the dim light. He fell back as if from a ghost and would have clashed the bronze door shut; but she thrust the pass from Titus in his amazed hand and fainted across the threshold at his feet.

Must a woman ever pass through the portals of hell to gain her end?

She risked her mother's life in gaining birth. She risked her own in giving birth; and was this the end? Why was woman accursed? Was there no redemptive power in all the long chain of circumstances to free her from the power of that ancient curse for grasping at the Tree of Life? What was life? 'Twas life she had snatched at and lo! a flaming sword of fire—circles of fire and in the center ever the cross of a crucified love. Then, in her delirium, Onesimus, her lover, was bending over her in the Garden of Ardath, the Paradise of Flowers; and every flower was a child's soul; and through her veins ran a flame that did not burn but was of the very essence of light; and at her feet lay no Dead Sea of tears but ran with the laughing glad voice of many waters Rivers of Life—and their vesture was of the light of the very sun. They

did not need to speak. They knew without words.

The flame was no longer fiery sword—it was golden light; and her lover was trying to tell her that light was love, golden as the dawn over the swimming mountains of Moab—over which they two seemed mounting in chariots of fire—when an unseen hand, white as fuller’s earth, snatched him from her—and she was falling—falling—falling—sinking with the dead weight of her humanity straight to that Dead Sea of tears—the laughter now was not the glad voice of many waters—it was the shrieking mockery of the Roman world. She was marching with ball on feet and gyves on wrists under the Triumphal Arch of Rome; and all Rome was pointing fingers of scorn at the naked captive daughter of the Herod kings; and the rabble dogs were snapping at the captive lines. She awakened with a piercing scream.

Was she living or dead? She was past caring. Let Fate do its worst. She looked up. Slowly she recognized one of the Palace chambers of Mariamne’s Tower; but whether the chambers were real or dream, she did not know. But seven months before, she and King Agrippa had fled from the threats of the populace beneath the Overhead Bridge to this very Tower. She had played in it as child, and wantoned in it as girl, and plotted in it as woman. She had drunk wine of life in that very Tower; and were these the lees of the wine, that at last would sting as a serpent? She sat up on her couch. Beside her stood the pale Roman soldier of the garrison and an aged Jewess. A mid-life man stood in the chamber door. An aged and venerable figure looked over her shoulder. One who seemed physician was pressing a brew to her lips.

“Who are these people?” she whispered faintly.

“Fear not, daughter,” gently answered the aged woman. “We are Nazarenes, followers of the Christ. It is no poison that Luke, the physician, would give you! He, too, is a follower of the Nazarene, though he is Greek. I am the mother of Mark, who has ever dwelt in Jerusalem. The aged apostle is Matthew, who used to gather taxes for the Romans.”

Then the instinct of fear, that haunted all the Herod blood and drove that blood from crime to crime, came over her awakening consciousness in a flood of memory; for had she not as girl stood on that Bridge between Temple and Palace when her own Herod kin had urged the Jewish mob to drag James, the crucified Christ’s kinsman, out to death by stone and spear? How she had laughed at the rabble then, and clapped her hands to see them hound the Nazarene preacher out from the Temple to his doom! And now that rabble, if they knew she was here, would tear her to pieces with bloody hands and throw her to the pavements for the dogs to lick her blood. And then the instinct of craft, that ran in her Herod blood, gave voice in question.

“Why do you call me daughter?” she whispered back.

And then she felt her hair which had fallen about her neck as she fled

through the Aqueduct.

“Because Matthew, here, recognized you as King Agrippa’s sister. What word of the Roman Army? Will they win the last wall to-day? When we let down the baskets for food last night, the Zealots threw pitch bags and burned the ropes. We dare no longer venture out on the Palace parapet. They shoot fire arrows. And not one of us will leave the others. Whether we live, or whether we die, it is nothing, daughter! The Zealots may slay the body. They cannot slay the soul. But what tempted you to come through the Aqueduct, child? Is to-day the end?”

For answer, the silver trumpets blew from turret and tower, from hill and plain, from cavern and grotto. The group rushed from the chamber for the turret window.

“Bear my cot to the window,” she commanded, the old imperiousness of Princess and daughter of high priests surging back in her reviving consciousness.

Down sheer seventy feet from the turret window to the plain where the Roman Legions had mustered, they gazed—first Titus, the Emperor’s son, on a black stallion; then Trajan, his young officer, on a white horse; then her brother, King Agrippa, on a low Arab fawn-colored steed, all in trappings of brass with silver shields aslant the horses’ shoulders; then the standard bearers with the Roman eagle in gold; then the pikemen, clad in mail, with their long lances like fields of wheat; then the horsemen in darker mail with lances aslant like knives moving in rank; then the great engines of war that moved on wheels like erect walls; then the Macedonian mercenaries on foot, six and seven rank deep they wheeled and marched and countermarched; while one Josephus rode on a white charger up to the walls shouting out: “Why would they die and not surrender to the clemency of Rome?”

The cowed populace answered never a word, but the Zealots and swordsmen swarmed to the broad tops of the walls with hoots of derision. Stones rained down on the emissary for peace. They hissed his words with shameless insults, and bade the Romans not draw back in cowardice because this was Jewish Sabbath, but to come on and dare to try the third strong wall. When the peace emissary would have shouted again, those on the wall threw a naked dead body in his face.

The wild warrior blood of her Herod Arab ancestors surged through Bernice’s veins. She knew then the urge that had driven her through the Aqueduct. She could have leaped from the walls to join the Romans down there fighting in carnival of blood had she been man. Why had she been born woman—the tool—instead of man, the hand that wielded the tool? She knew she was a rebel against Fate; but had not Herod the Great been rebel, too, till he mastered Fate and made himself King? She tore her purple girdle from her

waist and waved it at the conquerors from the turret window.

The Roman trumpets faded in fainter echo. The marchers and counter marchers encircled the city in a ring of swords. Bernice from the Tower saw that the hired Macedonian mercenaries had been thrust forward first. She knew what that meant—these were the swordsmen of the world paid in plunder—there would be no mercy. Those not slain would be sold as slaves, the men for the mines, the women—for what? Was this the Kingdom for which she grasped? A silence fell for a moment on the terrific confused clamor within the city. A melancholy wail of woe came up from the central valley between Temple and Palace, and some madman's maniacal scream resounded from the parapets to the Tower—"Woe—woe—woe is Jerusalem! How is that great Babylon drunk with the blood of the prophets fallen! Jerusalem shall fall this day! There shall not be left one stone upon another."

"Were not those the very words of our Lord, when you admired the beauty of the Temple?" asked Mark. "Peter bade me to put that in his Gospel of our Lord's life."

"So every disciple has related to me, and so I have written in His Life, for the Greek churches of Asia," answered the physician, Luke.

"And we thought he had come to set up earthly kingdom in this Temple," said the venerable Matthew. "And now we know it is a Kingdom not made with hands for which all Time has prepared, and this earthly kingdom shall vanish quite away for a New Heaven, and a New Earth. This is the passing of the Old. These are the birth pangs to the New. Let us read what the scrolls of the prophets have said."

And the three Apostles withdrew to a circular brass table in the middle of the Tower. On the brass table were carved the signs of the zodiac and the time of day pointed by an arrow as the outer sun swung round; but the Princess Bernice had no thought for what the scrolls of the prophets might say. An ancient urge was in her blood, old as those stars from which the astrologers had cast the horoscope of fate in the signs of the Zodiac. Again Roman power with its cohorts in silver and its legions with spears like fields of waving grain seemed a realer realm than a shadow kingdom not made with hands adown long future ages. How could she serve the Emperor to bind his gratitude to give her foothold on the ladder up to this earthly Imperial Throne? She had said she would wade through the blood of the living or trample the putrid dead; and she had done both.

A lull fell like the silence between the crash of two monster ocean billows. It was almost eventide, the end of the Jewish Sabbath, and the mountains were folding them in purple mantles like royal kings at rest, when the voices of the others in the room behind caught her ear. Luke, the Greek doctor, was speaking and pointing to the signs of the zodiac.



“You thought He spoke of time when He spoke of eternity. Here is the zodiac of Egypt and Chaldea. Here is their prophecy, when the star brought the Persian magi to the Bethlehem manger.”

Bethlehem? She hated the very name of Bethlehem. Had not her Aunt Herodias often told her the evil destiny of the Herods dated from the massacre of infants there? Then she remembered that the door from the hideous horrors of the Aqueduct had only opened when she called out in the name of the Love of God. What was this new thing coming in the war of worlds for power? But the pageantry of life blotted the answer to that question, and she heard as in an unreal dream the reading of the ancient scrolls.

“Here,” the doctor Luke was pointing to the zodiac, “here is the Scorpion, that Lucifer who fell from heaven from vaunting pride and set out to lead man astray to fill his kingdom. Here is Taurus the Bull, worshiped by Egypt and Chaldea which Abraham fled. Here are the Sun worshipers, when Israel burnt her sons upon the walls. Here is the Virgin, Mother of a Child in flesh to reveal God in form to man. Here is Pisces the Fisher, and when our Christians fled from Nero’s sword in Rome they used the Fisher sign to know one another. Christ said, ‘I make you fishers of men,’ and we knew not what he meant. The fall of Jerusalem is the fulfilment of our age. After our age, when the sword shall give place to sunburst comes the Age of Air and water and freedom with much going to and fro beyond the Isles of the Sea to nations not yet born.”

“Read from our own prophets and not from the astrologers of Chaldea and Egypt,” requested the aged Matthew. “Why have these evils fallen on the City of Zion?”

Mark, the youngest of the three, took up a cylinder of brass. From it he drew a parchment scroll written in Hebrew and rolled round a rod. “Here, Luke, you are a doctor of learning. You read the Hebrew. We Hebrews have not spoken our tongue since captive days in Babylon.”

Luke took the scroll and went to the window to see the clearer in the dimming light.

“Thus saith Jeremy,” he said, slowly translating in a patois of Aramaic and tradesman Greek. “Behold—our—reproach—our inheritance is turned to strangers—our house to aliens. We are orphans and fatherless. . . . Servants have ruled over us. . . . There is none that doth deliver out of their hand. . . . We get our bread by the peril of our lives because of the sword . . . our skin is black because of the famine . . . they ravish the women of Zion and the maids in the cities . . . princes are hanged by their hands . . . the Mountain of Zion is desolate. . . .”

“That of this Age,” broke in Matthew. “We shall see the fulfilment of that to-night; but what of the ages when the Time of the Sword has passed? Read Ezekiel, Brother Luke—what says he of the nations of the North beyond the

Isles of the Sea? What says he of the Age of Freedom? What says he of the Age of the Air when the Sword has given place to Sunburst? What meant our Lord when He said greater miracles than He worked should the world see before the end of Time? What signs will foreshadow a New Heaven and a New Earth?"

Luke turned the spool of the scroll and ran his finger from right to left—"Is this the Age of Air?" he asked, then he read:

"A whirlwind came out of the North, a great cloud, and a fire unfolding itself, and a brightness . . . and out of the midst of the fire the color of amber . . . and this was the likeness . . . a man . . . every one had four wings . . . their feet were straight and sparkled like burnished brass . . . the hands of men were under the wings on the four sides . . . they had faces and wings . . . the wings were joined one to another and turned not when they traveled . . . they went straight forward with unmoving wings . . . the signs of the nation a lion, an ox, and an eagle . . . two wings they had joined each to other on each side . . . straight forward they went whither the spirit wished to go . . . with burning coals of fires and lamps in front . . . up and down in the air . . . up and down in the air . . . and their fire went forth as lightning . . . but upon the earth they used wheels . . . there were whirling rings in front . . . dreadful to see . . . but when the wings were lifted the wheels were lifted . . . and in the firmament their likeness was a terrible crystal . . . and the noise of the wings was the rush of many waters . . . when they stood, they let down their wings. . . ."

"What means that?" demanded Mark.

But the bent figure of the Apostle's mother had risen with outstretched hands and in her eye was the light of ancient prophetic. It was as if she saw a Light with eyes of spirit, which eyes of flesh could not see—adown long, long Ages mid races of beings not yet guessed, nor born in thought. Her whole figure seemed aflame in vesture of unearthly shining Light. Mystic was she, prophetic, seeress, with eyes boring into the Far Future like stars piercing midnight dark. It was as if a flash of lightning suddenly tore through the impenetrable veil of Life concealed; as if an invisible Torch Bearer threw a flashlight on the Far Future. "When the Age of the Sword shall pass for the Sunburst of the Prince of Peace, there shall come dominion over the princes of the powers of the air," she slowly uttered, as one in trance of vision. "Greater things than these shall ye do, and the Old Things are passing away for the New; and Jerusalem must needs be destroyed to give place. . . ."

A terrific crash drowned the words. The siege of the last wall had begun.

The Palace rocked and vibrated with blows of the battering rams. Huge stone blocks from the engines of war smashed down into the Eternal City between Palace and Temple; and a fearful cry of throngs crushed as they ran, rent the air. A great light flooded the darkening room of the Herod Tower.

All dashed to the turret window. A flame leaped with the roar of livid sea to very mid-heaven of the vaulted blue. The Temple was on fire. The Romans were inside the last wall. Fiery swords, bucklers, battle axes, javelins, arrows, flaming balls of naphtha went tossing in mid-air as the Zealots on the roof plunged in the flames, or flung themselves to death in the burning moats from the walls. Jerusalem rained fire from the defenders on the parapet. The roar of the seething torrents drove all the city into the street and over the prostrate bodies rode the horsemen slashing with spear and sword, sparing neither women nor children, inflamed by the defiant insults to the proffered peace and insane with the demon lust for blood and plunder, held back these weary months. The Palace rocked again. Bernice leaned far out from the turret window. Just as the afterglow of the mystic sunset colored the heights of the Holy City, a mirage of chariots and troops struck the flaming clouds in shadow—the destruction of a shadow kingdom of sword and power. Armies, principalities and powers—seemed to be fighting in rolling billows of flame. The Princess hid her face in her hands on the window casement.

Jerusalem had fallen.

It was as if all the evils of all past ages in all past cycles of time crashed down in one vibrant shock that shook the world; as if the iron bands of law and order and empire forged in the furnaces of that Ancient of Days—had burst asunder; as though a great Tidal Wave from Eternity had submerged another Atlantis and thrown up in the wreckage on the Shores of Timeless Eternity another race, another age, another order. The terrible cry, that ascended to Heaven, was the cry of a Dying World.

The Kingdom of the Herod line for which she had risked her life and sacrificed her love was crumbling to dust and ashes under her eyes.

The Old had passed away for the New; and Fate had rejected her pawn.

Came the iron-shod trample of soldiers running up the stone stairs of the Herod Tower, and King Agrippa broke into the room followed by Titus, the emperor's son, and Trajan, the youthful lieutenant, all faces blackened with the smoke of battle.

“You are safe here, my Sister,” cried the last ruler of the Herod line. “The fire cannot touch these Towers. All the city but these Herod Towers will be laid flat as plain by morning.”

“And where,” demanded Titus, “is the Princess page, who risked her life running through the Aqueduct this morning to do Rome service?” And Titus was not such a figure as her dreams of power had painted. He was a plain, short, thickset soldier, with keener eye for spear than woman's guiles.

Then she stood erect and proud as Herod the Great had stood before the Roman Senate many long years ago. The daughter of high priest and King, she would meet Fate face to face.

“Small chance I had to do Rome service, my Lord,” she said. “Your brave legions captured the prize before I could add my woman help.”

“But when my soldiers guessed that the woman who had broken through the ranks in the morning to enter my tent was the page boy first to enter the hole in the wall to the Temple court, they swore they would take the city tonight, or perish to a man. Think you my Romans would be less men than a weak little Princess?” That word “weak” with its commiseration of male strength for child woman smote her hopes in the face like an iron gauntlet. She had played an ancient game with an ancient pawn—and lost, as Eve lost in an ancient garden; and she knew now what brought defeat to woman; and she knew now if she had answered the true urge of her heart, how she could have turned defeat to victory and wielded greater power with unseen hands than all Rome’s strength. Man could slay, but only woman could give life.

“You were the wine to my men’s flagging courage, my little Princess,” he said. “What reward do you claim?”

“My Lord,” she said, hiding her defeat in his chivalry, “when the chariots enter the Triumphal Arch at Rome, the last of the Herod line would not pace behind in captive chains. Let them perish rather. They would ride with the conqueror.”

The conqueror did not answer at once. He was turning over that request in his shrewd soldier mind. He smiled slowly as a man might smile at a child playing with a sharp sword which he had snatched from its hand.

“And it was for that you risked your life, child?” He laughed; and then his face saddened. He did not see the hidden appeal of the dark eyes gazing into his, though the young Trajan laughed brusquely and King Agrippa turned his reddening face away. “It is not mine to grant your request. Rome glories not in the blood of any race. My father did not covet the Imperial throne; nor do I. I covet only peace and rest. We have chosen seven hundred of the fairest Jews to grace the triumph; and they shall not walk in chains. They fought too well. They shall all ride in the chariots of the pageants; but my father, the Emperor, and I shall walk humbly on foot divested of all war harness and make thank offering to the gods of peace rather than victory. Such humble rôle would suit not you, my little Princess; but Rome never forgets even a will to service. I’ll appoint your brother and sister Drusilla a royal villa with dower by the sea at Naples; and there if the gods favor me, and my young officers do not carry you off, I shall see you sometimes, Princess.”

He strode quickly away.

The Princess and her brother Agrippa stood by the turret window.

Was it for this she had risked her life? She had reached Titus and grasped the prize, and found it turn in her hands to Apples of Sodom and the salt tears of the Dead Sea. She had thrown love to the discard and was being told to play

the wanton with underlings, whom her Herod pride scorned. She, the daughter of high priests, back to Aaron, was to eat the crumbs from Rome's table, like the lapdogs, pets to be fondled, abused, discarded—and then the grave! And for this, she had rejected the children of love in the garden called Paradise; the wine of life drawn from a lover's lips; the laughing glad voice of many waters from the River of Life; the golden light that was love—her spirit fell as it had fallen in her delirious sleep; and she broke in a storm of weeping in the arms of her weak brother, no longer King.

Less than ten years saw Titus ascend that Imperial throne for which he cared nought; but the very year he ascended the throne came another flood of flame in fiery river down Vesuvius mountain burying the fair villas of Naples Bay, and beneath that flood of death, unknown and unfound, perished the last of the Herod line.

## CHAPTER IV

### NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES

#### *The Dancing Girls from the Temples of Daphne*

Draw the upper horizontal line of a square and the lower vertical right hand line! The two sides of this square represented the Great Roman Road between East and West in the days following the Prophet, whom the Greeks called “Christus—the Anointed” and the Hebrews called “Jesus or Joshua—Salvation of God.”

All roads led to Rome. Along this highway like beads on a string were the cities of the Ancient World—Jerusalem, the Holy City, at the foot of the right hand side; Damascus, the oldest city of man, halfway up; Antioch, at the angle turning westward, the playground and halfway house, where merchant princes and conquering emperors paused in their far journeyings from Asia to Europe to take their pleasure and spend their fortunes, whether of plunder or traffic; then along the horizontal line leading from desert to sea, Iconium and Philadelphia and Sardis; then on the sea—Ephesus, whence one could sail to Athens or Rome, to culture or power.



MAP OF THE ROMAN ROAD

When the summer sea lay in painted crystal, calm as glass, one could come down from any of these cities, to fair harbors and take passage forward on the great grain ships of Egypt or on little sailing vessels; but when the equinoctial storms came in September, or when war filled the great grain ships with troops, travelers were forced to follow the caravan route, and the khans of all the cities were thronged with men of every color and race under the sun. The poor camped in goatskin tents outside the walls. They had nothing to lose from plunder. The rich crowded the city plazas and inns and public khans in the throngs of a great annual fair; and the merchants reaped their harvest in barter of little silver images and amulets to protect from travelers' perils, and in the sports of theater and hippodrome, where the latest plays from Athens and Rome were given; or lecturers from the Far East disputed their mystic philosophies with the keen wits of Athens and the cynics of Rome; or

gladiators fought; or captives in war were thrown to the wild beasts with a chance for life and freedom if they could vanquish tooth and claw with naked hands.

We sometimes bewail our modern civilization. Go read of the nightly entertainments in these cities of the Great Roman Road!

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It was the evening of September 24, in Iconium. Lystra and Derbe lay only a few hours south, and there, by the curious trick Fate has of interweaving lives, was the little Phrygian lad, Onesimus, with his father's Damascus caravans, beating southward for Damascus where he was first captured by the robber bands of Galilee and began his life of slavery, which took him first to Cæsarea, then to Rome, then seven years later, back over this very road where he rescued victims from crime as he had been rescued by Paul in Rome.

The city was thronged. Caravans returning from Ephesus had money to spend. Travelers from the Asian Desert going on to Ephesus wandered dazed amid the booths and shops, famed for their Tyrian purple damasks and gold-thread curtains and rugs of goat hair silky as finest fur. The plaza was a living mass of humanity clothed in brightest colors milling in endless circlings round the musicians under the central trees, who were paid by the city to give free entertainment to all visitors. The balconies of houses overhanging the city square began to open shutters; and dark eyes were seen above answering lovers' signals below; but on the sill of one deep casement sat a girl alone. A rabble had gathered round a speaker in the city square. The speaker was short of stature, with thighs that had been lamed in war or accident, but he was clad in the black silk cloak of a man of distinction, and though his receding hair showed premature care, his forehead reflected the white light of an æsthetic; and as he declaimed, his eyes lighted up with a strange fire of faith. Near the speaker lounged a richly dressed, stout, prosperous Greek of the merchant class. He was not listening. He was watching with amused cynicism the changing concentrated expression of the girl's intent face in the balcony above. The man twisted at the great emerald signet ring on his little finger. He clanked the sword dangling in its jeweled scabbard against the heel of his red morocco high boots. He stuck his thumbs in the gold sash belting his sky-blue silk jacket. Then he stroked his oiled curls projecting from the gold-and-blue turban cap. The girl's eyes never once glanced his way. They were riveted as on a life and death messenger towards the little deformed orator round whom larger crowds were now pressing.

The stout, middle-aged Greek dandy flushed angrily and stepped sharply up to the house door below the balcony. He lifted the brass knocker and rapped loudly. The knocker was a great Roman eagle. The door was opened by a middle-aged woman, clad in rich purple silk, and he was led to an inner court



open to the sky in the middle of the house. A fountain played in the center of the court, and over the railing of the stone stairs leading to the chambers off the upper balcony clung vines and blooming flowers scenting the night air.

“How now, my son, Thamyris?” smiled the middle-aged woman, showing teeth white as pearls between painted lips, and shaking the black jeweled pendants in her ears so they seemed part of the curls framing her ivory face.

“Not son—yet,” answered the man irritably, “unless your daughter Thecla has eyes for her lover rather than that Jewish babbler ranting in the square there.”

“A pest on these wandering synagogue ranters, who upset our daughters’ beliefs in the old gods.” The woman’s smile was hard as marble. “She has not moved from that window for three nights since the fellow strayed into Iconium and began speaking in the square! I can do nothing with her. I like not her silence, Thamyris! I would she stormed; but she sits silent as stone—listening, listening to that babbler! Who is he? A girl never knows herself till a man teaches her what love is. Can’t you get rid of him?” And the hard laugh of the girl’s mother had a sinister knowledge that was not of youth, as she shot a glance at the middle-aged man, which he read without words. “I want my daughter married. She is eighteen summers this night. She will marry as I bid her, or go to the temple gods and take her fate. I will have no daughter of eighteen summers betraying my years.”

The man laughed; but he laughed with angry red flush. He flung himself down on the bench. “And yet, my Mother, eighteen summers wed to fifty make not for peace to the man unless the maid come willingly. You ask—who is he? I know not, except that he has changed his name from Saul to Paul, follows the new sect of that Christus crucified in Jerusalem and boasts he is a Roman citizen, else we could have him crucified, too, for creating disorder by blaspheming against Greek gods. All I know is—he is a fool. When he came here first and worked miracles of healing, the people would have offered sacrifices to him as to a god—he could have grown rich from the gifts of one caravan. I would have pushed him, myself, for the profit in it, if he hadn’t played the fool and backed away from the rabble’s worship and gifts; but when the people were ready to crown him with garlands and make offerings of beasts and jewels and gold, he had to cry out he was only a man and stop them; and now the rabble are ready to stone him as a pious fraud. I could leave him to the rabble but I fear the damage is done—he has chilled Thecla’s love for me; and I’ll have no unwilling bride.”

“Can’t you get rid of him?” insistently repeated the mother.

“I’ll try. I can lodge a complaint and have him imprisoned for causing disorder; but he is Roman citizen—more than that, I dare not do—”

“More than that I will do,” added the mother harshly. “Unless she gives

you your word this night, I turn her from my door into the streets. There you can seize her and carry her to your own house, Thamyris; or the city magistrate will seize her for wandering the streets without the badge of a courtesan on her forehead and have her burned at the faggots. Little headstrong fool! Does she think to change our Greek customs for a puny whim? I have given her dower to make a princess rich; and you have given her gifts of an empress; and she sits listening to that beggarly babbler, whom no one knows, stone to her blood mother's commands and cold as a Venus in snow to her lover. Go to her! Plead not! Command! Do as you will! My ears are deaf! A girl denying her lover in Iconium would last long as a gazelle baited by hounds—Pah!”

The middle-aged, stout, heavy lover went bounding up the balcony steps fast as his fat calves and stiff knees would carry him. He drew aside the silk portières hanging across the daughter's apartment and advanced across the room a little breathless. The girl turned her head but did not speak. Thereupon, something he had not reckoned smote his courage cold. It was the love he had for the fair child in the window seat. He could not touch her. He could not risk turning love to indifference, or indifference to hate.

“How now, my little bride,” he said gallantly drawing something from his gold sash, “here are some gifts I purchased to-day from the Damascus caravans—emerald earrings set in Damascus gold wrought fine as a spider web, and a little silver mirror from an Arab merchant, which shall show your face fairer than Venus' eyelids penciled for the dawn.”

He had meant to lay the gifts in her lap and take her thanks in an embrace; but somehow he could only open the little cases and shove them awkwardly along the stone window sill.

The girl's long-lashed eyes filled with tears. She smiled sadly.

“My poor dear Thamyris,” she said gently.

“Not poor,” he interrupted harshly, “nor dear, either, unless I am dear to you.”

“Dear Thamyris—if these gifts are to buy my love, I cannot take them. I would be cheating you.”

He sat down on the window sill beside her.

“They are not gifts to buy your love. They are tokens of my love,” he said, toying with the gold tassel of her sash.

“Then, if they are tokens of your love, I am cheating you, dear Thamyris; for I cannot give you love in return.”

“I am no huckster,” he urged, flushing angrily. “They are the free gift of a free Greek. I ask no love in return. I only ask that you become my bride and let me teach you love.”

She mutely shook her head.

“Put them on,” he ordered abruptly. “Your mother has pledged you to me.

You are mine; but I will not claim you till you come willingly to my arms.”

“Because you command me, I put them on. I must obey you as long as I remain in my mother’s house.” She fastened the filigree clasps to her ears and thrust the silver mirror in her sash.

The man sat in the window studying her. The rabble round the speaker in the square below was growing noisier.

“Thecla,” asked the man abruptly. “Is it that you love some one else?”

The girl turned her full gaze upon him. Her eyes were deep blue. Her lashes were long and black and curling. Her brows were arches penciled fine as if done by an artist; and her whole face glowed with a radiance as of sun dawn in spring. Her breathing quickened.

“Yes, Thamyris, I love some one else; but you can never understand.”

“Not this beggarly babbler, Paul, with the changing names and magic?” he shouted.

“No,” she said. Her glance dropped. “Not Paul. That is why I said you would never understand. It is Paul’s Master—the Christ—I love—”

The man broke in a loud impatient laugh. “Why, child, He’s dead! He was crucified before you were born! You love a shadow—”

“He is not dead,” she answered simply. “That is why I said you would never understand. He is the Christ of Love and Light and Life—”

“But will love for a myth, who was crucified by His own countrymen, keep you from marrying a living man and lover? Does your Paul preacher down there teach men and maids not to marry? That is blasphemy, my Thecla! It proves the gods made a mistake in the way they made us.”

The man almost shouted his relief. He had risen and was pacing the floor.

“No, love for the Christ would not keep me from marrying living man; and Paul does not teach that. He teaches that the sin of sins is cheating love; and that is what I would be doing if I married you, Thamyris, and did not love you.”

The man came forward to the window and gazed down in the square.

“I’ll risk your not loving me,” he smiled.

“I will not,” she answered.

The man’s face darkened. He thrust his hands in his gold sash.

“Thecla, what is this new madness setting all the Greek cities of Asia by the ears? I am reasonable. I would learn; but I am a man; and I am flesh and blood. You are pledged to me. I can claim you. You say I can never understand. Let us reason this out. Granted I can’t understand—what does Paul teach, tell me that?”

“The Gospel of Youth and Gladness—” she began.

“I can’t claim Youth, but if you will marry me, I can Gladness!”

“And that the dead must bury their dead; and that you can’t put new wine

in old bottles," she went on.

The man's face flushed and darkened. "Go on," he said, "you are apt pupil for this deceiver! Try walking in the streets alone to-night and I'll warrant an old bottle would be good protection for new wine gone to a girl's head."

"That money is the root of evil—"

"But very useful to spoiled brides," he added bitterly.

"That children born of such union as you would force on me have teeth set on edge because their fathers have eaten sour grapes; that we must level up, not down; that the road to happiness is narrow as a razor; and that if we find the great pearl called love, we must not cast it before swine; and that is what I would be doing with your love—Thamyris—if I took it and gave none in return. I would be the Circe of your pagan gods turning your beautiful love into a thing for swine—"

In the growing dusk she could not see his face, but she felt the waves of his deep anger.

"Once more and for the last time, I ask you—is it yes or no, Thecla?"

"Dear Thamyris," she pleaded, rising and laying her hand on his arm, "it must be no for your own sake."

He flung her hand from his arm and strode heavily down the stairs of the inner court. The mother rose from the stone bench by the fountain.

"Well?" she demanded.

The merchant drew his sword from his scabbard. "I must get this arch-deceiver put away. I'll have the impostor whipped from the city for creating riots. He has turned her head," and he flung through the street doorway to the crowded city square.

Thecla heard what he said from where she sat sadly down on the stone sill of the upper balcony. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. . . ." she repeated, "and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me; and he that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth life for my sake should find it"—and she saw as in a trance, the red flowers dancing above the fountains of the city square, the snowy mountains like opal gems in the moonlight encircling the little city, the lake with its myriad pleasure boats alight with lanterns, where the mountain torrents fed the great water pool of the city—when the trance was broken by a wild halloo in the city square.

The little lame speaker was backing away from the menacing rabble now milling round him with hisses of ridicule. Two rough fellows to rear had picked up stones and hurled them. Rocks, rained down from a claque to rear, pushed those forward into a riot. The preacher raised his arm to screen his face. A rock had struck him. She saw the blood gush from his face. He fell—then all was mingled in the confusion of the people running for cover to the booths and

shops, when a pound of iron-shod hoofs came over the cobblestones. A Roman Legion swept into the square, encircled the fallen form of the speaker, threw him across the saddle in front of the captain, and wheeled towards the Roman prison on the far side of the plaza. As the crowd came out again from the shops, she caught a glimpse of Thamyris thrusting his sword back in its jeweled scabbard glancing up towards her seat in the window. She drew back sickened in soul and heavy-hearted.

“As though treachery would win love,” she said.

Her mother stood in the curtained entrance.

“Have you given Thamyris his answer?” the woman demanded harshly.

“I have,” answered the girl.

The woman clapped her hands for a servant. A black woman came noiselessly in and lighted the brass chandelier with a long taper.

The girl stood as still and white as death under the light. The mother read the answer in the white face, and her own face became white and hard as stone.

“Then—go—from—this house,” she slowly pronounced, “and never darken its doors again till you are wedded wife of Thamyris.”

The girl picked up her black cloak from the couch she was never to see again, threw it over her shoulders and passed silently down the courtyard stairs, and out to the night street.

The hard marble face of the mother broke in a harsh cunning laugh.

“And now—Thamyris,” was all she said.

The black woman withdrew with a shiver and followed her young mistress down the stairs. As she heard the street door shut twice, the mother laughed again.

The silence of midnight with a chill of the mountain snows fell on the little city where East and West met on the Great Roman Road.

When the two cloaked women passed through the outer door to the darkened and deserted square, they were followed by three silent figures—two of them rude fellows, who had thrown the rocks at the speaker and fomented the riot of the throngs listening forward, the third with a blue-and-gold turban cap, a blue-silk jacket and a sword in his gold sash.

“Follow,” the third ordered. “When they run for the dark lanes, seize them. Clap your hands over their faces so they cannot scream! Do what you like with the black woman—she is yours; but I am to rescue the maid. See you hurt her not, but frighten her well, and when I strike at you with my sword, take to your heels. Avoid the Roman watchman! This must not be known! Come to my warerooms for your reward to-morrow.”

But the Roman watchman with brass lantern on arm was pacing the center of the square, and to him the two women hastened. The three men following stealthily in the shadows of the buildings round the square saw them pause and

speak to the Roman. There was parley of some kind. The Roman soldier seemed to be hesitating! He had laughed loudly at first. Now he was in doubt and hesitating. The woman with the white face had thrown back her cloak, lifted her hands and was unfastening her earrings. She placed them in the Roman's hands. He had lifted his brass lantern and was examining the proffered jewels. He lifted his bugle and blew a shrill whistle. Half a dozen Roman soldiers came running from the prison side of the city square.

The three spies dodged into a darkened lane between streets. When they emerged on the city square again, stealthily glancing in all directions, there was not a sign of Roman watchman, soldiers, women. Thamyris drew his sword in a blind fury of balked passion.

"Clowns—blackguards," he stamped. "You were too slow! We have lost them," and he struck in impotent rage at his terrified tools. They obeyed his injunction of but a moment before and took to their heels down the dark lanes.

The turnkey of the prison sat nodding over a tankard of wine in a little room off the entrance from the square. A Roman watchman had roused him and the two were examining, by the light of the soldier's brass lantern, a pair of emerald earrings set in Damascus filigree.

"Good jewels—not false—by Jupiter—ten years' wages; and what do you say she wants?"

"To see the wounded teacher rescued from the mob to-night; but she has disobeyed her mother, refused to go to her affianced husband, and been turned out in the streets as a courtesan. She refuses to wear a courtesan's red band round her brow; and by Iconium law, she will be burned at the stake for that. These independent cities on the Roman Road have their own laws."

"What's that to us? The jewels are good! Take her to the prisoner's cell; but he is a Roman citizen. He must not be harmed without trial."

The watchman went back to the cloaked figures in the corridor. He led them without a word down the long passageway lighted dimly by iron candles with flaming pine knots. Before one cell tramped another Roman soldier. The watchman spoke to the guard in a low voice. He came back to the women.

"He says—what will you give him to let you in?"

Thecla drew a silver mirror from her girdle.

The watchman went back to the guard. Again, there was a conference under the light of the pine faggot in the iron clamp against the stone wall. The silver mirror was being examined. The watchman returned to the women.

"He says after you have seen him—what will you do? We Romans interfere not with Grecian laws in the independent cities. He does not want trouble over this. What will you do afterwards?"

"Tell him," answered the Grecian girl, "I shall deliver myself to the Greek magistrate to-morrow morning to be burned in the hippodrome for disobeying

my mother, and refusing to marry the man to whom she sold me.”

The guard heard the answer, put the great key in the cell lock and pushed open the creaking door. The two women passed in and the door locked behind them.

For a moment they could see nothing by the smoky light of the pine knot in the iron clamp of the wall except the silver beam of the moonlight breaking the dark through a casement window so deep you could only see the night sky outside as through a long high tube. There was the sound of breathing, and a man's figure lay on a cot against the wall, with one arm and one foot padlocked to a staple in the stones. His head was pillowed on a folded black cloak and his forehead bound in a white cloth, where the rocks of the rioters had struck him, but the moonlight falling on his face and hands showed a curious luminous radiance and white peace. At first the Greek girl thought he was dead and her knees gave under her. Then, she heard his breathing and knew that he slept and was dreaming happy dreams, as children dream in peace, for the white face smiled in its sleep.

The Greek girl's eyes closed and her lips moved in prayer. Yet she hardly knew how or to whom to pray; for in the temples of Iconium there were only statues of the goddess Venus, or Diana, or the Roman emperors; and she had never before prayed to an Unknown, Invisible God. Her serving woman fell to her knees and began to wail aloud, swaying her body to and fro after the manner of the Blacks. When Thecla opened her eyes from an almost inarticulate prayer, she saw the prisoner sitting up on his cot.

“Child—how came—you here?”

She told him in a few words.

“Have you counted the cost?”

“No cost can be too great,” she said.

He smiled quietly as though he had not been mobbed and stoned by a riotous rabble but a few hours before.

“True, child, no cost can be too great; for no one can leave father or mother, or brother or sister to join the Glad Kingdom but the reward shall be a hundredfold, both here and hereafter. The cost is but the trifling price we pay to pass through the portals to the Unseen Kingdom, whether here or hereafter; but why came you here?”

“To be baptized into that Kingdom before they whip you from the city tomorrow.”

“Bid your serving woman bring me the jar of drinking water.”

She kneeled at his feet. He dipped his finger in the jar and marked the sign of the Cross on her brow. “I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit into the service of the Glad Kingdom both here and hereafter, now and forever more,” he said. “Bid your woman hand me the

bread and the cup of wine. Quaff now the Loving Cup with me, child!" He handed her a broken piece of bread. "In as oft as you do this, you do it in remembrance of the Crucified One's Last Supper with His Loved Ones; but remember always, child—it is not the Doleful Supper, which these children of the Adversary say; it is the Loving Cup to commemorate His translation to the One and Only God."

So in the darkened prison of Iconium between midnight and dawn, the first woman martyr to the new faith was baptized into the Unseen Kingdom and quaffed the Loving Cup to her Lord; and in the little modern city of Konieh, a thousand legends of Thecla, some true, some fanciful, are told among the mountain folk to this day. Sometimes, they have it, that the faggots were kindled in the Iconium Theater and the wild beast tournament held in Antioch; but each city marking the crumbling stones of the Old Roman Road has its own legend.

Thecla rose from her knees.

"My Master," she said, "how can I serve the Kingdom if I am to be burned to-morrow?"

"That—I know not. God will lead you. If you are burned to-morrow, 'twill be but the fiery gate to the Unseen Kingdom and service there. If you are not burned, God will lead you to service here. I shall be whipped from the city at day dawn and go to Timothy, a child in years like yourself, at Derbe and Lystra; but at Antioch is the Brotherhood, where holy men and women plan our warfare against the Adversary—the World, the Flesh and the Devil; but hard by Antioch are the Gardens of Daphne, where many maids like you are forced to barter love for carnal gain. Go to them, child! You have been rescued! Rescue them! How, I know not. God will lead you and my prayers will follow you—a cloud of light to fore—follow it—a screen of protection behind—look not back—but press gladly forward to the high calling of a warrior for the Christ; and the Lord bless you and keep you in the inmost sanctuary of His Grace and Gladness! He shall renew your flesh as a little child's and keep in your heart an eternal youth, long as you drink of the Living Waters of Life! Never repine! Never envy! Go forth rejoicing always! Rejoice, rejoice, child, again I say rejoice! For our suffering is but as idle passing dream, and we shall awaken to Eternal Day."

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All Iconium was agog. As far as it is possible to set down definite dates in this era, it was about 46 A.D.

First, an impostor, who followed the Christus of the Jews, had been whipped from the city at day dawn for contempt towards the gods of Rome and Greece. The mob had given over pursuing when he fell senseless outside the walls of the city. Then, an overland caravan from Rome had come along



the road headed for Antioch; and in the caravan was the famous and rich lady Trefina, cousin of the Emperor of Rome, bound to spend the winter season in the pleasure gardens of Daphne; and the merchant princes of Iconium were planning a great fête to entertain these visitors and unlock their fat purses. It was bruited about that a Greek girl, a convert to the Christian disturber, was to be thrown to the wild beasts in the theater that night. Some said her crime was sacrilege. Others said she was a woman of the streets, who refused to wear the red cord that was badge of her calling, and had bribed the guards of the prison to go in and corrupt the very prisoners under the magistrate's nose. Others again averred she had refused to obey her mother and run away from the husband, who had bought her. And all Iconium, high and low, was agog to see the great fête in the theater that night for the Lady Trefina, cousin of the Emperor, who had but lost her daughter and was in such dejection that the citizens were determined to win her favor by an exhibition that would dispel her weariness of all living.

Again the fat Greek merchant, Thamyris, knocked on the door of the house in the city square; and again the middle-aged woman opened the door and drew him hurriedly in.

The man threw himself on the stone bench with a groan.

"You have heard the magistrate's sentence for to-night?" he asked; and the tears streamed down his cheeks. "I have tried to see her all day. I have offered an emperor's ransom to save her; but the coming of the Lady Trefina from Rome has fixed the Roman Commander in his purpose and he will not budge. They blame my slaves for fomenting the riot last night. They despise us Greeks! They will tear us to pieces with bloody hands and throw us to the beasts if we but stir to save her. My slaves have betrayed me! They say I have been caught in my own trick—" the merchant broke in heavy heart-shattering sobs.

The mother stood surveying him with unutterable hard scorn.

"Unmanly fool!" she taunted. "I thank the gods you are to be no son of mine! Why did you not seize her and force her to your will, when she passed through the door as we planned? Blunderer! Bungler! To let a wisp of a maid slip through your fumble fingers like a jewel to mud! Not thus did my Lord win me! He stole me from the hills of Phrygia, and broke me to his will; and if I were a man, would I pause for this little fool's tears?"

"Aye; and you poisoned your Lord for a night's pastime, and took his fortune and would sell your daughter to me to play wanton again for another rich husband! Think you I would love Thecla if she had been such as you?" and the wretched man broke again into terrible sobbing.

For a second, the incarnate fury standing above the unguarded man could not speak; and when she spoke, it was in the hiss of a serpent about to strike.

“Say you—that—to me?” she demanded. “Know you not I could denounce you to the Romans to-night as the corrupter of my daughter and the cause of all this riot to gain your ends? Say—you—that—to me? Take back what you said—fool!”

“Say—that—to you!” The man sprang to his feet and seized her by the throat. “Yes—that—and that—and that,” he stabbed her at each word, flung her on the tessellated pavement, and not pausing to see whether she were living or dead, dashed through the doorway to the street and ran through the deserted city for the theater, where all Iconium had thronged. He did not notice his sky-blue jacket was spattered with blood. He had flung his bloody dagger from him as he ran. He was a madman. He knew not whether the roar he heard were in his own bursting brain, or from the tier on tier of stone seats in the open theater, where all Iconium was stamping their impatience and shouting for the performance to begin. He tossed the guard at the gate a gold coin; and the Roman laughed.

“He was the maid’s lover,” said the Roman; and Thamyris vaulted the stone stairs to the highest seat, where he could see both audience and arena. The trumpets were blowing. Riders on horses with ribbons and tassels were prancing round the arena. The great lady Trefina from Rome was entering the royal box, for pipes and bugles and trumpets blew a blast; and the drums beat for the stone doors to lift and admit the wild beasts to the sanded circle below the spectators. First came a lioness lashing her tail from side to side; but the spectators hissed.

“Too full-fed,” the Greek merchant heard a Roman soldier behind him saying. “If we had known the Lady Trefina was to be here to-night, we could have starved the beast so she’d fight. I’d say—let in her cubs! Stab one of her cubs, and she’ll liven up!”

Then the fanfare of trumpets and pipes blew again to drown the shrieks of the victim—a door on the opposite side of the arena lifted and a horseman rode in with a naked girl across his saddle pommel. He spurred his horse to a frantic gallop five times around the arena. The audience rose and cheered to the echo. The Lady Trefina in the royal enclosure was seen to sink back and drop her veil at the sight of the entertainment that had been provided in her honor; but the horseman having speeded round and round the arena now approached the dazed lioness, reached over, and, with his long whip, struck the crouching creature a stinging cut, and dropped the naked form across his saddle pommel not a stone’s throw from the enraged beast. The trumpets blew till the echo rang amid the temple columns encircling the arena, and the spectators went mad in a blood lust of shouts.

The fall had loosened the victim’s hair. It fell in great black coils almost to her feet, and beneath her hair could be seen her nude form pink as a shell or

sun dawn. A terrible silence fell. The spectators held their breath. The trumpets had silenced to be ready for a blast to drown any cry of anguish. The naked Greek girl had lighted agile as a bird on her feet, and she moved not so much as a hair's breadth from the crouching lioness now snarling and lashing head and tail from side to side. Her flesh looked fresh as a little child's.

"Little fool! Why doesn't she fight, or run!" demanded the Roman beside Thamyris. The Greek merchant sank heavily where he sat and hid his face in his hands. He wanted to shout her name, but had the coward's protective presence of mind to know a shout would raise uproar and enrage the lioness. She was perishing and he, the real murderer, was watching her perish. Sweat of anguish stood out on his body in hot drops as of blood. What was it she had said—the sin of sins was cheating love?

The silence in the vast audience had grown so tense he could hear the snarl of the lioness, the lash of its tail on the sand, the breathing of the audience as if spellbound and cowed. He peered through his hands.

"She is an enchantress and ought to be burned," muttered a Jewish priest. "Paul hath bewitched the maid."

The lioness had crouched but it had not sprung. It was advancing with its red angry eyes on the motionless, naked form. The girl did not move. The beast paused. The girl stretched out her hand. The lioness ceased lashing its tail angrily and tossing its head from side to side. It was creeping on her as a cat creeps on a bird. She stooped and all her hair fell about and hid her nakedness. The great cat came on but it did not strike nor spring. Its eyes were on the Greek girl's, and the girl's eyes were on its eyes. It raised its head. She did not move her outstretched hand. It sniffed her hand and dropped its head to her feet. She slowly stooped and laid her hand on its head.

Again the silence stretched so tense that a shuffle of feet and whispers brought angry looks from neighbors on the seats. Slowly, gently, with the caress of a mother for her young, the Greek girl was stroking the head of the beast between its ears. It stooped and licked her feet and lay down as if in the presence of a friend recognized, where it had expected foe. On bended knee, the girl stooped, caressing the beast.

The Lady Trefina in the royal enclosure had lifted her veil and was leaning forward. The commandant was seen to lean across to her, and she rose and threw a laurel wreath into the arena. The horseman came spurring back and snatched the girl to his saddle. Other horsemen came galloping with long lances and drove the now terrified lioness back through the stone portal. All Iconium rose to its feet on the stone benches and shouted salvos of frantic applause; but the cries were mingled. Some shouted, "Saved—Saved!" others hissed and shouted back "More—More."

Blood lust felt that it had somehow been cheated of its full glut.

In the center of the arena stood a tall flagpole with the Roman eagle in brass on the tip. The horseman with the naked girl now circled this in frantic gallops. Reining his horse so suddenly that it reared on its haunches, he now leaped off with the girl in his arms. He placed the laurel wreath on her forehead. With such a broad belt as men use to girth chariot teams, he now strapped the victim by the waist to the pole. Iconium knew what was coming and began to roar in an earthquake of applause. Never did this Greek city on the Great Roman Road fail of entertainment for royal visitors. After all, the quick victory of the girl over the beast was not to cheat their lust for horrors. Black slaves were piling faggots and straw about the pole. Others were emptying great vats of water in a lake about the pile to prevent the fire leaping across the sands to the seats.

Thamyris sank from the upper bench, where he sat, a crumpled heap of blood-spattered blue silk with gold sash, to the stone space behind the next tier.

“Dead,” said the Roman standing behind him. “These Greeks are all soft at pith. Would Roman die of love for a mistress?”

The fanfare of trumpets was blowing again to drown cries of anguish; and in the crash of drum and bugle and trumpet, another crash was not heeded. The opal peaks no longer swam in silver moonlight. A black squall was coming down from the mountains and the commandant was seen signaling the attendants to hasten.

Oil was poured on the faggots and straw, and a torch held to the far edge near the pools of water. The flame shot up, illumining the dark bloodthirsty faces, tier on tier of seats to mid-heaven. Again the crash of trumpets! The white figure of the victim was seen to raise her hands as if to Heaven and whether from the flame or the lightning of the gathering storm, her face shone radiant and fearless as dawn. Clouds of dust and sand blew through the arena in a tornado. Neighbor could not see neighbor on the stone seats and all the assembly began drawing cloaks over heads to protect them from the stifle of dust till the gust had passed. There was a terrible and sudden lull, when sand and rain came down in a deluge. Then the lightning bolts came—came in forks, and spears, and javelins of dazzling blinding light.

There was a reverberating crash that rocked the templed columns of the theater as though they had been reeds in a wind. Women rose with screams. Men dashed up in panic. Was the earthquake feared more in the cities of the Roman Road than vengeance of God or man? A sharp ricocheting splintering as of the theater falling, and the lightning struck—struck the brass-tipped pole in the middle of the arena and the deluge burst from mid-heaven in rods of rain—torrential rains in a hurricane of wind and lightning. The pole fell. Some one shouted that the Lady Trefina had fainted. The Roman, who had stood above Thamyris’ dead body, saw an attendant run across the arena through the

flashes of lurid lightning, snatch an unconscious white prone figure from the pile of quenched faggots, and dash to the royal enclosure of the Lady Trefina with the naked Greek girl over his shoulder.

The rest was lost in the darkness and the deluge of rain.

When Iconium awakened to cloudless skies the next morning, the city of the Roman Road was again agog with gossip. Had the Greek maid perished of the lightning stroke, or the fire? Had any one seen her body? No one knew. The great fête had ended in fiasco, and the commandant was in testy mood not to be questioned. Certainly one rumor proved true—Thamyris was dead; but whether he had died of grief for the loss of his promised bride, or been stabbed in a brawl on the upper tier of seats, newsmongers did not know; for his body had been found all blood-spattered from blue jacket to silken breeches. Thecla's mother could not be seen; for she was ill abed of heartbreak. And certainly, the Lady Trefina from Rome had departed at day dawn ill pleased with the fête; for she had not waited for the caravan. She had gone ahead at break of day in a litter chair with no attendant but the Roman Commander, a Greek page boy, who looked like a girl, mounted on a fleet horse, and an old colored woman bent astride over a mule, hanging to the saddle pommel as though she were frightened out of her wits.

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The record of Thecla must now jump forward some twenty years.

The Roman Road on two sides of a square from Ephesus east to Antioch and from Antioch south to Jerusalem to this day has legends of what happened to her in these years. Some said she had escaped with the Lady Trefina dressed as a page boy. Others said she had joined Paul and Timothy at Derbe and Lystra. Others knew she had lived hidden in caves between Antioch and Daphne Gardens. About all that is authentic that can be gathered of this period is that the Lady Trefina adopted her in place of the dead daughter and left her a substantial fortune. Paul had gone to Rome, where Nero had beheaded him when he could not crucify a Roman citizen. Peter had come up from Babylon to take Paul's place in Rome, hurrying over the same Roman Road from the Desert of the East and had been crucified in Rome, because he was not a Roman citizen. Nero, himself, had suicided. From Antioch to Damascus and Jerusalem, the Roman Road was now yearly packed with Imperial troops, for Titus, the Emperor Vespasian's son, had taken the Holy City, and, except for the Herod Towers on the west, left not a stone standing of the Jewish capital. The Christian Sect, though hated by the Jews, had been driven by the war from Antioch to Ephesus, where they gathered strength each day; and in an era of universal persecution and massacre, Thecla was forgotten. She was now only one of countless martyrs to a despised faith; and the faith suffered less on the Roman Road than in the Imperial City or Judea, because these Greek trade

cities of Asia Minor had been granted independent laws, provided they kept fealty to Rome. The only danger to them was the Emperor worship, which Rome had set up in every Greek temple—statues of Roman conquerors, side by side with Greek deities for worship and homage to unify the Empire. Some philosophers declared openly this was the worship of the Beast foretold in prophecy of Greek sibyl and Hebrew seer. Others said the name in whispers and bided their time for Rome's fall from a pinnacle of intoxicated power.

Again it was the month of September. Grapes hung heavy on the vineyards lining the road. The olive groves alone shone brilliant green in the drought. The cactus hedges stood withered and gaunt, like ragged ghosts flinging wild arms out in the blue haze of late summer. On the broad Roman Road the dust was a yellow curse to man and beast, but at dusk and dawn it was a crimson glory against an amber skyline.

Two travelers coming up from Jerusalem to Antioch had been driven off their course by the press of troops going back to Rome after the fall of Jerusalem. One was mounted on a huge, grizzled camel in trappings of silver, with tassels and buckles of brass in the Roman eagle; but he was no Roman. He was a Greek Hebrew, clad all in white, with a sword to the gold cord round his neck, and he wore the long flowing white beard of philosopher, or doctor of the laws. The other rode a jaded horse and was a younger man, near the thirties or forties in age, pure Greek, with blue eyes and golden curled hair cut short to his neck. He, too, was clad in white cloak with sword scabbard hanging from the gold cord round his neck; and a pack of sumptuary mules and camels in charge of servants followed behind with tents and baggage. Failing to make way through the press of Roman legions on the road to Damascus, the travelers had skirted off to the left down by the sea path; but there, too, their progress was impeded by the departing troops. At Cæsarea, they could get quarters in neither khan nor inn, and had to camp outside the city wall. When they sought to take ship for Ephesus, they found decks and holds crammed, yes, crammed with the returning victorious legions; and the plunder every man carried was a king's ransom. There were priceless Damascus hangings woven in gold thread taken from the Temple. Some of the soldiers had cast off their hot metal armor and swathed themselves in these gorgeous curtains and tapestries, and reeled sodden drunk from the stone quay back and forward to the taverns. Others carried plunder of gold coin and gold ornaments rifled from the houses of the destroyed city openly in pouches round their waist, and could be seen in the port streets dicing their gold away at a cheaper rate than a pound of gold for a grain of wheat, or an ounce of silver for a roll of goat's cheese; and as it was the wine press season in Palestine and the new wine was heady and raw, the intoxicated soldiers drank more freely of the wine than the water, which had been poisoned by the bodies

of the dead thrown into wells and pools. Men could be seen draining a deep tankard at one quaff, then throwing away the gold or silver cup, which came from the Temple, and stretching themselves out to sleep off their debauch, by roadside or in city gutter.

The two travelers stood on the broad breakwater, that ran out in a circle to the sea, and watched the captive Hebrews embarking for Rome. There were seven hundred, all over seventeen in years and under thirty—in the prime of manhood's beauty, to grace the Triumph in the Imperial City. All other captives, men, women, children, were being sold into slavery to the Arabs and Egyptians for less than the price of a dog. A few thousand older than thirty were being kept for the gladiatorial combats that nightly entertained the Roman Legions in the hippodrome. Some women and aged men—it is recorded about two thousand—who could not bring a price as slaves—were being reserved to be thrown to the wild beasts between the acts of the gladiatorial fights.

The two Greek travelers stood watching the embarkation from the quay. Suddenly there was a great outcry of "Make way—make way—for King Agrippa"; and the last of the Herod line—a man in middle age—passed down the gangway, bent, broken, and gray of hair on his brow. He was accompanied by the Princess Bernice in litter chair or palanquin, but little did her pale face show the regal pride of the Herods, who had ruled Judea for a century. She lay back in her chair indifferent to the remarks of the gaping loungers, weary of life, with the cold hardness in her dark-ringed black eyes of one who has lost the prize and slain all hope in her soul.

The young Greek onlooker gave a start forward. The older bearded man laid a hand on his arm.

"Let the dead bury their dead—my Onesimus! If souls refuse rebirth into a new life and will remain in their own dungeons, they can but die! New wine in new bottles, son; for the new wine has burst the old bottles in the glad wine of a new life for the ages to come."

It was impossible to get passage by sea to Ephesus; so the next morning, they resumed their journey along the sea road toward Antioch. It is unnecessary to trace the progress forward of that journey. Every stopping place was sacred to the past and to the future for all time—Tyre and Sidon and Carmel, whose glories had departed with memories of Elijah and Jonah and Solomon and Christ; then Seleucia, the port leading through mountain pass to Antioch; but here, while war had not left desolation, so many of the Roman officers had come up to pass the winter in rest and pleasure that the Greek travelers were again forced to camp outside the city walls and send their beasts and servants into one of the public khans, where they would have shelter when the autumn rains broke.

The desert and mountain clans had done as they are doing to-day and have done since time began—as the snows and rains of the upper mountains began to fall, they had driven their herds down to the plains to pasture for the winter or find sale to the Roman buyers. A yellow tent city of woven camels' hair dotted the plains outside the city walls of white marble and gray stone.

Having left guard at their tent, the two Greek travelers entered the city gates to search for an evening meal at one of the public inns. They found themselves seated at table in the courtyard of an inn near the city gate, much frequented by the sheiks of the hill and desert tribes with the herds outside.

Motley rude fellows sat cheek by jowl with Arab sheiks and heads of mountain clans and the rough riff-raff element that lives by its wits in every great city.

The younger man had set down his tankard of goats' milk and turned to his aged companion: "My Apollos," he said, "why was I directed to leave Babylonia and to come on to Ephesus? I had taken up the work of Peter when he went to Rome."

His aged bearded companion gazed absently, as if far back and far forward.

"You have Peter's Epistles to the Greek Churches of Asia?" he asked.

"I have had them copied for all the Greek Churches of Asia."

"Recall you where he admonished—'Love the brotherhood—fear God—honor the King—for the time for me to lay aside my body is now rapidly drawing near?' He foreknew his own translation to the Upper Kingdom. Matthew and Luke and Mark have gone to Egypt. Thomas has passed to the beyond in Persia. John, only, is left among the Greeks and he is banished to Patmos. I have been forbidden Rome since Paul's death and must to Crete. On you must fall the joy of directing the Greek cities of the Roman Road. You must be bishop of Ephesus—"

"I—bishop? I am not even an elder. Have you forgotten all Grecian Asia knows I was a runaway slave?"

"Nay, Onesimus—I have not forgotten; and because of what the gracious help of God has done for you, would I see you bishop to encourage other youth to join our warfare. We are a brotherhood militant, and who but youth for fighting ranks! New wine in old bottles bursts the worn goatskins. New wine of life for new age, son, old heads for guidance and wisdom; but ours is the good news of youth and gladness; and when our bodies wax old as a garment, we must lay them off and move on to eternal youth in invisible realms."

There was a clink of wine jars from the adjoining table. A rough band of mountain bandits had come in and were drinking heavily with some Antioch merchants. A lewd oath followed by loud laugh came from the drunken group.

"She has ruined half the physicians of Antioch by her magic healing! She has interfered with the sale of silver images of Diana and Venus by our



silversmiths; and now with her religious house in the grottos and caves for the dancing girls of Daphne Gardens and half Rome here for winter pleasure, what is to become of our maids for the Love Temples?"

"How old is she?" asked a bearded fellow, who seemed to be leader of the bandit group.

"Old—that's it—that's her hold on these dancing girls! She keeps eternally young with her magic and has lured away half our daughters with her lies of a Christ, who can never die, and a love that is cheated of a young girl's dreams. I am a silversmith—I know what I say—we have not sold one image this year, where we used to sell ten thousand." The silversmith stroked his beard and displayed the bracelets and rings of his trade on his fat hand.

"And the Lady Trefina left her great store of Roman gold, you say?" asked the bandit eagerly. "Does she keep that gold in her caves?"

"Not she, she is too crafty. That's safe with the money changers here and supports her schools for girls. Besides, it buys protection from the Roman captain here. He, who harms her, would be impaled on the Roman wall here for the hawks to pick his skull—"

"But my band of wild boars could destroy a woman without harming her." It was then the bandit leader repeated the lewd oath that had first startled the two Greek Christians.

"But ply my young men with wine enough to-night, and we'll prove her a courtesan breaking the law without the red cord about her brow, which the law enacts. Once prove on oath we've spent a night in her cave—the laws of Antioch will do the rest. The Roman guard here would drive them out like swine and throw them to the wild beasts in the hippodrome. We'd have our dancing girls back in Daphne Gardens and no more of this folly of heifers thinking they lead the herd."

The heads of the group went together over the wine tankards of the table in lowered tone with ugly laugh on the part of the mountain bandits and oily smile from the Antioch merchants. The bandit chief rose. He whistled. Half a dozen young fellows from the mountain clans with long swords in sashes and dirks in slings dangling from the right wrist appeared in the portal of the patio as if by magic. The chief signaled them to join the table, and more wine and yet more wine was ordered, as old and young heads went together in undertones above the center of the table.

The two Greek Christians rose and passed out from the patio of the inn.

"Who is this woman teacher of the Christian faith they mean to attack to-night?" demanded the aged man, Apollos. "Said I not the new wine was bursting the old bottles—the spiritual is defeating the carnal, and we need youth in fighting rank to keep the faith clean as a Damascus sword? Who is this woman?"

“I know not, Apollos, unless one Thecla, a convert of Paul’s twenty years ago in Iconium, when I was youth and captured by these same bandits. She was said to have escaped to the caves near Antioch, where she set up schools for the maids, who run away from the Love Temples of Daphne Gardens. She toils so secretly few know how or where she dwells, except that a great Roman lady left her fortune enough to buy protection of Rome—”

“There is vile work afoot to-night, Onesimus. We must call the Roman guard and hasten up to protect her caves till they come. Do you instruct our tent men, while I see the Roman captain.”

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Up and up over circling trail they rode the rough mountain pass that led between the sea and Antioch. Larch, oak, fir and pine forest closed behind them darkening as they pushed their panting horses up the steep ascent. Mountain torrents rushed down to right and left in the sibilant hush of night slacking the thaw of upper snows. Narrower and narrower led the pass till the riders could have tossed a biscuit from side to side of the precipices closing in cañon cleft. Above tree line, the clouds enfolded them in a silken gauze cool as wind on hot face; and above the cloud line, they rode in a world of silver moonlight, with black shadows of the rock walls etched in ink and the howl of hyena and jackal reëchoing through the caves. The stars were lanterns hung in a lucent blue that seemed but a hand reach away from the two silent riders. Once, as they passed the dark mouth of a grotto in the rock wall washed by the tumbling cascade of waters over the precipice, they heard the roar of a lion that set all the mountains in echo. The precipices on either side of the pass now came together in overhanging arch not a lance length apart and, as they passed under the shadow, a mountain cataract leaped down—rainbow colored in the mist of moonlight, but the path seemed to be ending in a blind wall.

“She chose her hiding place well,” said Apollos.

“She would need to,” answered Onesimus.

“Where is her religious house?” asked the aged man, as they breathed their horses.

Onesimus was no longer presbyter and prospective bishop. He was mountain boy again as he had been twenty years ago before the bandits had captured him, and his eyes were searching the face of the rock cleft where only a silver bar showed open space, as an eagle might scout for its hidden nest. An eagle did at that very moment utter shrill warning of human intrusion.

“That,” answered Onesimus, “must be her sentry of danger; for she was mountain born as I am; and we always chose camp near an eagle’s nest for warning.”

The eagle uttered its woeful cry again to fore, and they passed through the arch. The rock walls here were pitted with grottos as they are to this day; and

we, who smile at the early Christians adopting monastic life to flee the world, the flesh and the devil in these early ages, should remember that it was often life in the grottos, or death by wild beasts in the hippodrome. In one place the silvered mossed rock seemed to have been stoned up in front. Past this place, tumbled another cataract. Dwellers in the grottos always chose sites with good drinking water inside. Onesimus pointed ahead, drew his sword and moved forward. To the side where the cataract gushed out was a door of long slabs so narrow a man must enter sideways. Onesimus knocked on the door. A wicket in the logs opened; and we, who laugh at wickets in the doors of monastic houses, would do well to recall how and why such wickets were first used. They were used to save the lives of those who kept the faith for us. A woman's face appeared in the wicket. It was a face in its late thirties, but it was a face that would always be young; for it had not a line of care or envy. Was it the moonlight; or was it a trick of Onesimus' own memories of Paul long ago in the prison hut of Rome; for the face wore the radiance that artists have vainly tried to portray in halo?

"We are disciples of Paul," he said in Greek.

The woman flung the door open and drew them in.

The grotto was empty but for a taper beneath a wooden cross, but at the far end was a cleft in the rock—the real end of the pass leading to grottos deeper in the mountain.

"And He shall hide His own in a cleft in the rock," said Apollos. "Go you within and tell the Lady Thecla why we are here. Keep your sword drawn at the cleft in the rock. If they break past my guard, strike as they go through yon crack in the wall. I would open the wicket when the rioters come."

There is no record of what the drunken rioters said, when the wicket opened on a white bearded face instead of woman's; but when they would have smashed the door and forced entrance, Apollos drew a sword with blade fine as Damascus razor and inquired calmly in tones too soft to be safe what he might do for them. How could he serve them best? They paused at that and fell back under the arch to confer. Came a thunder of iron hoofs echoing in rip-rap over the stone road and the drunken crew turned to flee pursuit of Roman guard; but flee—where? This road ended in the blind wall of a stoned up cavern. They dashed back for hiding in the caves lower down. There were echoes, oaths, clash of swords on metal armor, neigh and scream of terrified horses; and a Roman centurion galloped to the door.

"What did you do with your trapped beasts? Have you taken them prisoners?" demanded Apollos.

"We took no prisoners. Not one escaped. We drove them over the precipice. Yon eagle will have full crop for her nestlings to-morrow; and that lion below will not roar so loud in hunger."

And so Thecla lived to the great age of ninety years and her memory is kept sacred on September 24, to this day. Without dancing girls for the Love Temples of Daphne Gardens, all the beauty and lure of the place failed to hold the wintering pleasure seekers of Antioch. The very winter that Onesimus passed over the Roman Road to become Bishop of Ephesus, the great Love Temples of Venus were destroyed by fire. The Christians said they had been struck by lightning as a manifestation of God's vengeance for the attempt on the Thecla Community, even as lightning had once before delivered her from the Adversary. The merchants of Antioch, who yearly spent a hundred thousand talents to draw the pleasure seekers from Rome to winter in Daphne Gardens, said the Christians had set them on fire; but the lure of Daphne Gardens fell off from that year. To this day, you can find signs of the Cross and inscriptions by the early Christians in the grottos and caverns, between Antioch and the sea; but of Daphne Gardens, hardly enough remains to mark the site, did we not know it was ten miles in circumference, and five miles from the four hundred crumbling marble towers of Antioch. War and plunder broke the power of Antioch; and what war and plunder could not destroy, the earthquake threw down; but the Faith kept holy in the grotto is reënacted to-day wherever "the new wine bursts the old bottles" and the Loving Cup goes round to commemorate Him who first broke women's fetters.

## CHAPTER V

### “AND THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH”

The Bishop of Ephesus sat dreaming in the garden between his church and his house.

It was the glad season now known as Easter, some fifty years after the death and ascension of our Lord. The sunshine of the Ægean Sea was a luminous glory that clothed all the world of spring in garments of pure light. The city square swam in a transparent gold that dazzled the eye. Across the square, the aerial arches between the columns of the Great Temple to Diana gave glimpses of a sea that was by turns turquoise blue and emerald green, with a fret of snowy waves whose mermaid hair danced rainbows in the sunlight. Between the arcades of the Temple columns, the Bishop could catch hints of the surrounding circle of snowy mountains; and they, too, swam opal jewels in a mirage of morning light. The years had touched Onesimus lightly. He was stouter, stronger, more robust; but few silver hairs intermingled with his gold curls, though an austere strength now stamped face and figure, as of a man, whose shoulders had grown the broader for their load. But the gladness of the day brought back memories of his youth, this morning.

What wonder—he mused—the Greeks’ frieze across the top of the Temple columns represented their huntress Deity as driving the wild horses of the waves with the wind in their tossing manes out to the pasture grounds of the ocean deeps? The Bishop dreaming in the garden between his little Christian church and his house smiled; for though he was Christian, he was also Greek; and never the sun came over the snowy mountains in spring but he felt the wild lure of the huntress, Diana, with her silver horn winding through the woods and caves, leading youth captive in pursuit of the fleet-foot rainbow hours.

Something there was in the glad spring day of the beginning of time, “when the morning stars sang together and all the Sons of God shouted for joy.”

So sitting in the garden across the city square from the vast marble Temple to Diana, he could not but smile gently to himself. Spite of statue in silver like a spire to sky, and domes that vied in beauty the opals of the snowy peaks, and friezes that were the glory of Grecian art for two hundred years—not so many worshipers came from the seas and hills to the Great Diana’s Temple. Especially, not so many worshipers came to the Temple now that the Roman conqueror persisted in setting up images of the Emperors to be worshiped

equal with Diana. That very year, vestal virgins had suffered death for refusing to offer incense to the figure of the Roman Emperor—"Beast worship" it was now called among the Greeks; and after the martyrdom of these vestals, the young Christian Bishop reflected, his own little church had been crowded with new adherents to the new faith.

The three vestal virgins had been accused of breaking their girdle vows; but Onesimus knew the real cause of their death had been—they had laughed at the Goddess Roma set up beside the Great Diana; and when the Great Diana had failed to protect them, faith in her power had fallen off. The people knew the Temple was a cheat to barter gain for sacrifice and hold allegiance to Rome.

Books of Black Magic to the value of more than £2,000 had been burned at Ephesus after Paul's labors there; and what Paul had preached, Apollos had confirmed, speaking from the very shrine of Diana, herself. Truly what Paul "had planted, Apollos had watered, and God had given the increase." He thought of Ephesus, the third greatest city in the known world, with its theater holding fifty thousand pleasure seekers, where his little old half-blind, deformed Master, Paul, with the lion heart and sword of the spirit had conquered the Prince of the Powers of the Air—whether Black or White Magic, Onesimus did not know. He only knew the Invisible King had conquered.

Aquila and Priscilla had won Apollos, the Gnostic, to Christ, and had accompanied Paul to Ephesus; and when Paul had left Ephesus to go on to Rome, it was Apollos who had driven the Christ message home; so that now Ephesus, rather than Antioch, was the rallying point for the followers in Asia. The fall of Jerusalem had dispersed all followers there to the deserts of Asia and Egypt. The incursions of the victorious Roman Army had driven the Jews from Antioch. At Ephesus must be the final stand of the followers for the Christ against pagan god and Jewish legalism and the Black Magic of the sorcerers, now a scourge over all the world.

Was Apollos an Apostate, "a wandering star," as Peter and the others had feared? Certainly, he had failed to come to the rescue of Paul, in Corinth and Rome, when Paul's need had been sore; but then, he had defied the pagan gods in their own temples, while Paul always spoke from Jewish synagogue, or from market place; and John had reported the Master's words—that those not against Him, were for Him; and Apollos had one message and Paul another; and both led like Jacob's ladder to God.

Fewer and fewer animals from the mountain herds went to the Temple as sacrifices; and the trade in little silver images of Diana had fallen away so that the silversmiths had removed their booths from the Temple columns. The space, where the silversmiths' booths used to stand, now was taken up with

aged and infant ragged beggars, imploring alms from the worshipers by day and by night, huddling to sleep behind the shelter of the columns. He could see these poor shipwrecks of port life this morning, shaking off their drowsiness and tatters to begin another dull round of another dull day; and yet—and yet—the legend of Diana’s silver hunting horn winding divine music through the mountain passes to the sea was in the young Greek Bishop’s very soul.

The perfume of the morning flowers had no drugged night bloom. It was clean, dew-washed, elusive as light. Dewdrops still lay on the lips of the purple iris, the white narcissus, the voluptuous flaunting tulips. Spider webs spun with diamonds of light and dew hung in the acacia and oleander hedges. The great Easter lilies lifted royal spears of gold and cups of nectar to greet the rising sun—easterly always pointed the spears and cups to the sun god; and on the stone edge of the garden fountain, a bird with a dash of sapphire blue and ruby red on his throat was caroling love notes to burst his little palpitating heart.

The Bishop closed his eyes in a prayer that was an inarticulate gloria to the gladness of Life, and it was to the Glad Kingdom of Life in Newness that he had dedicated his life long ago, when he had rushed as a boy from pursuit of the kidnappers of Rome right into the prison hut of Paul, the Apostle of Christ, who had opened the doors of that Glad Kingdom. A bird’s wing almost brushed the Bishop’s face. He opened his eyes to one of those common tragedies of garden life, seen every day if we have eyes that see. Some insect of an early butterfly sort had come out of winter chrysalis pale, faint, trembling with the effect of casting off the dead body of its winter shell of skin, and was fanning moist wings dry in the morning sun, when the little feathered songster with a dart past the Bishop’s face, snatched away the dead shell body, while the pale nymph rose in giddy circles in the dazzling light.

The Bishop Onesimus gave a start. The nymph didn’t seem to realize that it had died to one form of life and risen to another. It had thrown aside what the Greeks called its “coat of skin” just as the beggars yonder under the Temple arches were folding up their night rags and coming out in the sun on the city square.

The little drama of the garden had enacted his very prayer; for what was the bird singing but a gloria to glad new life? And what was the nymph doing but casting off the body of death for rebirth to new life? And was not this the very thought that had been puzzling him this morning of the ascension of his Lord on what we to-day call Easter?

He had been reading John, the Beloved’s, last message to the Christian Churches of the Great Roman Road with warnings against the Beast Worship and foreflashes of things to come down the long ages. Of all the first messengers of the Glad News, John only, the disciple of Christ, and Apollos, the disciple of John the Baptist, remained on earth. Paul, beheaded in Rome!

Peter, crucified in Rome! Matthew, Mark, Luke lost to history in Egypt! James martyred in Jerusalem! Thomas buried in the Far East! Philip disappeared in Ethiopia!

All were what the world called—Dead!

Almost twenty years had passed since the Fall of the Holy City, when he and Apollos coming from Jordan Ford had passed through Antioch and rescued Thecla in the mountain caves.

Yet here was John's letter from banishment on Patmos Island, his last message to the Seven Christian Churches of the Great Roman Road, declaring "there shall be no more death," and here was Paul's letter to the Corinthians sent forward to be read to his own flock in Ephesus, declaring death was but a change of garment, an awakening from shadowy dreaming sleep to an effulgent intensest reality of life!

The Bishop strode back to his cloister. As he passed from his garden, he noticed the ragged horde of beggars coming out from the night shelter of Diana's Temple to range themselves in posture of mendicants whining for alms across the city square. There was a child—a little ragged Greek with no clothing but a torn belted shirt, with tousled head, bare of feet, not more than eight years old, with a baby in a sling on his back. The baby's eyes had been blinded and one arm broken—to arouse pity among passers-by. Onesimus had noticed these children before; and it made his mountain blood boil, for had not his Lord said—"Let little children come unto me?" And had not the prophets predicted: "A little child shall lead them?" And did this look as if the Shepherd of little children were protecting them; as if the spirit of the child were leading men back to God? It was as if a cloud of doubt suddenly obscured the gladness of the Easter morning. For a moment, he watched the byplay on the city square—the little Greek had stolen a flower from some city hedge. A tall angular spare woman clad all in black had come out of the Diana Temple from an all-night vigil. The child beggar was running along with the blind baby on his back wobbling its head from side to side, trying to sell her the stolen flower for a farthing. He made a clutch at the tall woman's skirts to try and force her attention. She turned on him with imperious gesture and snatched her skirt from his hand so roughly that the little beggar with the baby on his back fell face down on the Temple steps; then something seemed to clutch at the heart strings of the woman's own memories; for she paused, turned back and from the wallet in her pocket girdle, threw the child a handful of coins that flashed bronze and gold in the sun. It was as if the cloud of sadness that had obscured the gladness of the Easter morning had vanished like mist in sun.

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Onesimus entered the cloister off the side of his little Christian church. He was tall, thin and athletic from his active life and inheritance of mountain



blood. Religion was to him not the old-age anodyne to jaded physical sensations dying of the fungus that kills a fly in frost. It was the essence compounded of more Life and more Light.

“Growing old in the Kingdom is growing young,” he smiled. “What have we to fear from old wives’ fables of the dark?” and he flung himself in a stone chair below the cloister window and took up the letter of John to the Seven Churches of the Great Roman Road.

Progress had been rapid since he was a slave lad in Rome and Paul wrote on clay and wax tablets. Progress is always swift when we look back, but slow as a snail when we look forward; for John’s letters were on skin parchment.

The light came from the side of his church across from his cloister. He had to bend and strain his vision to decipher the penmanship of the aged disciple and it stabbed him to the quick, that message to his own little church at Ephesus—an oasis of faith in a pagan desert of whirling doubts—a message from his Unseen Lord through the hand of John: “I know your works, your toil, your patience . . . you have never grown weary . . . yet you no longer love Me as you did at first.”

Could that be true?

Did the Church no longer love Her Lord as at first?

Had she grown cold with habit? Or was it fear of death being the end-all that had chilled the fire of their first zeal? They had expected the King to return in a blaze of glory; and here was John’s message pointing to the glory as Kingdom Unseen, where spirits must clothe them in garments of light, where the building stones of the many mansions would be precious jewels of beautiful deeds, where the leaves from the Tree of Life would be for the healing of all nations—all nations, not just Jew and Greek—and where forgiveness would be a cup of forgetfulness to begin Life afresh in the Kingdom of Gladness.

Was it Doubt that had chilled love in Ephesus? For when he had come to that line—“And there shall be no more Death”—hadn’t he paused, staggered in belief, because he knew that all the apostles but Apollos and John were dead? At that very line had he not heard in memory the winding music of the huntress’ horn, when Diana’s horses came champing down the mountains to plunge in the pastures of the sea? If Death were end-all, better ride the wild horses of joy down to the eternal sea!

Was it Doubt that had chilled Love?

Onesimus sprang from his stone chair.

He would settle it once and for all. John, the Beloved, was on Patmos Isle; Apollos of John Baptist’s band on Crete—but a few hours’ sail in a spanking breeze from Ephesus. He would go and ask them if Death itself were slain, robbed of its victory, deadened of its pain.

Was it true “there was to be no more Death?” If true, Onesimus wanted to shout the glad news from the housetops. The very stones should cry out in joy, the leaves clap hands in rhythmic dance, and all the feathered songsters give voice in a gloria chant. Joy would be the voice of God in many laughing waters; and the human body would no longer be dogged by shadow, when Death, the spy, with skeleton face in the dark, was slain!

But as the young Bishop sprang up, a shadow fell athwart the morning light streaming in beams of gold across his church into his cloister. It was the shadow of the woman clad all in black; the woman he had noticed coming out from all-night vigil in the Temple of Diana and tossing the gold and bronze coins to the beggar child, whom her rough jerk had thrown down the marble steps. She stood in the shadow of the gold light gazing at him. She was not young. He knew by her hair and fair skin that like himself, she was Greek; but there was something almost sibylline in her tense silence. Her skin was pale as white wax. Her lips were parted and painted, showing teeth white as pearls; and in her great dark eyes were both the insolence and unfathomable sadness of a woman fleeing in vain from the skeleton clutch of age and catching in vain at the rainbow hours of youth. She was measuring the strength of an almost feline cunning against the strength of his clarity before she spoke; and there was that in her, which could bait cunning with flesh and set a man guessing of her past. She was richly clad and decked in jewels, from the pearls in her hair to the jade in the clasp of her sandals.

She smiled a slow smile with her lips, which had no reflex of joy in her eyes, than which is no sadder smile on earth—’twas like a mask on a death face.

“I wish you good morrow, Sirrah,” she said.

“Not—‘Sirrah,’ ” quietly answered the Bishop Onesimus in a silent rebuke to familiar approach, “nor much need to wish good morning when God gives free such day as this.”

She winced but did not retreat.

“How should I address you?” she asked smiling faintly.

“In sincerity and truth, as I shall answer you, Lady. If you speak truth to a liar, it conceals you best, for he takes all truth for lie. If you speak lie to a liar, it accomplishes nothing; for he regards all words as lies.”

She winced this time and glanced away.

“I wait for you to invite me to be seated,” she said.

“The empty chair has already invited you, Lady.” He waited.

She seated herself, but had lost her air of insolence and no longer baited her dark eyes with a flicker of dare to a man’s guess of her past. Into them had come the terrible pleading of a dumb brute for respite from unseen foe.

“What can I do for you, Lady?” asked the young Bishop.

Into her face came the wan wistful smile of a gambler's last cast of the dice. Her glance fell. She leaned forward across the table.

"I am not mad. Do not think me mad. You ask what can you do for me? I have both heard and seen your miracles from faith. Years ago, when I was a widow in Iconium, I saw your leader, Paul, work such miracles, but when I sent a magician out to bribe him to tell the secret of his tricks, I could learn nothing. Then he bewitched my only daughter, and she deserted her affianced husband, and joined the Christian sect and has kept house for what she calls her holy women in the hills on the Roman Road for over twenty years. I am an old woman, but she is"—the woman stammered—"she is eternally young. She wears a youth and radiance that grow with growing years, while I—I flee a skeleton called age that clutches me as I run; but she sits quiet while the death's head of age slips past, leaving her all untouched. You ask me what can you do for me? I prayed all night in Diana's Temple. I offered incense enough to redeem ten slaves. I am not mad. Do not think me mad. I would pay any price. Here is the gold. I gave a ragged beggar child gold enough to make his parents rich, but to be told which way you lived. I would buy from you your secret of eternal youth. How do you cheat age and death? Why are you happier as you grow older?"

The astounded Bishop fell back with a gasp. It was as if a dark shadow made of self in withered flesh had cast itself athwart the translucent gladness of the spring morning, and would hold the rainbow in its dead and greedy hands.

"Are you the Mother who cast her daughter out to the dogs of the midnight streets in Iconium years ago, because she would not marry the man to whom you sold her? Are you the Mother of Thecla, whom Paul converted?" he demanded.

The woman did not answer. She cowered like a dumb brute from a blow.

"God's mercy is long enough to reach down and pardon the meanest," he went on. "God wills not that anything He has created should perish, but even now, you think only of self; and self is the demon that locks you in your dungeon. When I saw you fling the beggar child down the stone steps and then relent and throw the coins after him, I thought it was repentance of your own hard heart; but now I know 'twas but another offering made to the god of self to find another temple where your prayer might be answered when you had failed with Diana. Even now, you think not of the fate that your cruelty brought on your daughter! You think only of saving yourself from skeleton age and death! Self is the vampire that sucks life and youth and radiance to dry shell. Cast self out and let the waters of life in. When you have pondered that, come back for admission to the Kingdom of Gladness; and your own daughter Thecla can open the door and give you the secret."

He strode from the cloister in the towering rage of a man who has seen a daughter thrown to the wild beasts by the selfishness of a mother. The woman's body rocked with paroxysm of self-pity in the stone chair of the cloister.

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The woman and her selfish request that would have made out of miracles a slave to self passed from the Bishop's mind like a cloud that darkens our path for a moment, then vanishes, leaving not the shadow of a substance. His quest was a shining light that eclipsed every other impression from his being. Before they could pass beyond his reach, he would go to his aged master, Apollos in Crete, and to John, the Beloved, in Patmos, and ask them in verity if that message in the letter to the Seven Churches of the Roman Road was to be taken in spiritual parable, or in letter truth—that there was to be no more Death. If the Kingdom were here and now, then like the insect nymph on the fountain stone, Death was but the change of a worn out fleshy garment for a vesture of light. Being still in his prime, Onesimus, the Bishop, did not realize that his quest was the self-same search as that of the aged woman, bent and broken under sin at the end of the road where there is no turning. All he realized was that if the Christ's ascension meant no more Death, then this springtime anniversary marked a gladness of earth and air and sea, that created a New Heaven and a New Earth.

As the Bishop stood at the prow watching the carved eagle's head noiselessly cut the calm seas between Ephesus and Crete, his soul was wrapped in the deep calm of the beauty of the night. The silver moon above hung silver in the water below. Only a cat's-paw of wind was in the canvas. The rowers below plied their oars as one man, keeping time to some old rhythmic chant that was like the croon of the wind. The Christian Bishop was Greek and the hypnotic rune carried his racial memories back—back—back to the minstrelsy of hill clan and seaman, to myths of the Isles of Greece—Minotaur—Bull-God—to whom the maidens were offered; Mammon—God of Gold—to whom the youths were offered; and raids over the mountain and sea to steal the victims.

To Onesimus, standing musing, the real world had become a dream world, when a sailor at the prow spoke to him in Greek:

“Know you this coin, Master? Is it gold or bronze?”

The seaman was clad only in trunks and loose shirt, with bare feet and bare head. He had a capstan bar over his left shoulder, but between the forefinger and thumb of his right hand he held a rudely minted coin with roughly stamped insignia, which glittered yellow in the moonlight.

“It is gold. It is a very old coin. How did you come by it?”

Onesimus had taken the coin and was turning it over and over in his hand.

The seaman's apple cheeks and gray beard curled in a smile. "My son, he sleeps under the steps of the Temple. Some rich merchant wife from the Roman Road spends the night, night after night, praying to Diana in the Temple. Diana does not give her what she asks; so then she comes out angry in the morning and asks the way to the Temple of your new God, and my son, he show her the way, and she throw him a handful of coin. I think, my master, she make mistake. All the rest was bronze. My son, he said she had a hard stiff face—you know its value, Master?"

Onesimus had handed back the coin. He was hardly hearing the seaman's words. He was thinking of the scene in the morning, when he had doubted the value of a child to the Kingdom; and now he knew that the beggar child with the maimed baby on its back had led Thecla's mother to the door of the Kingdom, and he had clashed the door in her face because of past sin.

"Know you its value, Master?" repeated the seaman. "Will it buy my freedom and my daughter's, too? She is a slave girl in the Temples of Crete and is wasting of a consumption. I would take her back to a good woman in the hills off the Roman Road—a Grecian woman called Thecla. Know you her?"

Onesimus came awake to pressing duties, like a dreamer out of selfish trance.

"Yes, its value is three times the value of a slave; and I will now give you six times its value in Roman coin to countervail my sin of this very morning." He had opened the leather wallet in his sash and was counting six coins out for the seaman's one, when a thought arrested him.

"Who mutilated the infant on your beggar-boy's back? Is this girl child also yours?"

"Nay, my Master," the Greek seaman's countenance saddened. "I sink not so low. The little child is daughter of the Roman guard at Patmos; but I am slave seaman for debt; and the witch, the fortune teller, at the Temple steps, who keeps my son and forces him to beg, she it was who maimed the infant. She feeds the children who are leased, and forces them to earn bread. The infant was only a female and will be knocked on the head; so the witch blinded her and broke her arm—"

Gone were the Bishop's dreams of a world of Light and Life and Love! Gone were his memories of Diana and her hunting horn winding divine music through the caves and grottoes of the Isles of Greece. He was down to earth with his feet on the ground, a warrior again for righteousness in a world of crime. What mattered the coward fear of Death? His duty as a soldier of His Lord was to fight for right in Life, and let Death take care of itself, as the nymph insect that morning had discarded its coat of skin to the winds.

He added another coin to the six he was counting out to the seaman.

"See you redeem the infant as well, and take them all to the hospice of the

woman Thecla in the mountains,” he commanded. “I will stand bail for your good citizenship when you get your pass of freedom from the Roman Governor.”

When the cusps of the mountains of Crete were sighted, and the great canvas came clattering down, and the ship warped up to the quay, the burly seaman—no longer slave but free—came to Onesimus with a capstan bar over his shoulder.

“You will need me, Master,” he said. “There are riots in Crete. One Apollos proclaims the downfall of the old Temples. They threaten to kill him to-night if he break in on the service. For me, I see not why they should kill him. He is old—they say he is a hundred years—he will die anyway; and he preaches— ‘There is no Death.’ ” The big seaman exploded in a bluff laugh through his beard that was like the burst of a squall through a mountain pass; and the two went shouldering up through the dock rabble towards the temple.

“They say,” went on the seaman with the new-found tongue of a slave suddenly free, “this Apollos kept silent for five whole years in the Lodges of India. Silent—not a word—only signs; but he learned their magic and can fight the demons of air. ’Twas he gave my girl in the Temple a cup of forgetfulness and bade her seek healing with the Greek woman, Thecla, in the mountain caves off the Roman Road. He preaches Gladness like you, Master, and always Light—Light—Light—a path up to the dwellings of the gods,” the seaman laughed again. He was not sure whether his garrulous babble were passing through the Bishop’s outer ear.

“What does he teach?” asked Onesimus, curious to learn a slave’s views of the Glad News.

“If we have no wants, we’ll seek few possessions,” continued the seaman. “The winds are spirits—light is a garment—prayers are the smell of flowers—incense is their seed—and he speaks only in the Temple at night because he says men will remember his words in their sleep—”

“Why, then, should the Temple priests threaten to kill him?” asked the Bishop.

The seaman paused in his march, shouldering through the crowds. He evidently could not do two things at once—walk and talk.

“How do I know, my Master?” The burly fellow thought. “He is rich. He needs no money. He tells the people to give no money to the priests—”

“Go on,” ordered the Bishop.

The seaman lowered the capstan bar from his shoulder and began poking a pass through the throngs. So great was the press at the main entrance to the Temple that the seaman turned aside and wedged a way through the flanking crowd into the darkened cloisters down each side of the vast edifice to the Sun. The Temple was roofless. On the main central floor knelt thousands in

worship. Censer lights hung on chains across the front of the altar and beneath the lights chanted the priests in full-chested chorus, old as time, to the moon and sun deities, while the voice of the vestal virgins and the boy choristers rose shrill and clear from the galleries above the cloisters.

“Go redeem your daughter in the galleries from the priests while I find the Apostle Apollos,” directed Onesimus, “then meet me at the ship!”

But to find the Apostle Apollos was no easy matter in this dim light clouded with incense and mist blowing in from the sea. The sailor went clambering the stone stairs to the upper galleries, while Onesimus picked his way past the prostrate worshipers towards the altar, where Apollos would be likely to appear if he dared to try to speak after the singing. Then, he caught sight of the venerable Apostle.

There was no mistaking that aged and beautiful figure—dressed in pure white, with cork sandals, with hair and beard as white as washed silk, and brow as lineless and radiant as the snowy mountain peaks—standing calmly against one of the Temple pillars to the side of the high smoke-clouded altar; but when Onesimus would have pressed forward to him, he found the way through the last cloister stopped by a half-dozen bloodhounds tied to the Temple columns to prevent the rescue of Apollos by his followers; and one glance told Onesimus that Apollos stood so motionless because he was bound by ankles and wrists to the upright column.

“Bah,” said a bearded Roman guard clad in armor to his eyes, who was standing behind the leashed bloodhounds, “he saved others; let him save himself! He raised others from death by his magic tricks. Now he’s dead man himself under this wolf pack if he budge a hair, where he stands. Give me the leashes. I’ll let the line out to close on him, when the singing stops,” and suiting the act to the word, the Roman took the leash ends of the bloodhounds and gave them line to creep up within touch of the bound man if he but stirred a hair’s breadth.

Onesimus moved up cautiously behind the Roman. He had the short dirk in his belt that all Greeks wore, and from the gold cord round his neck hung the usual traveler’s sword.

He was of two minds—whether to trip the Roman guard and snatch the bloodhounds’ leash, or jump forward in the gathering cloud of mist and incense, cut Apollos’ bonds and himself divert the attack of the bloodhounds—when he noticed something with his keen mountaineer eye that the Roman guard did not see. Apollos’ wrists and ankles had been bound to the pillar by deer thongs. The hounds had sniffed forward and were licking at the deer thongs; and through the dark, Apollos’ gleaming black eyes were boring to Onesimus’ very soul with unspoken message. They forbade word or move for his rescue. They seemed to redirect the younger man’s glance back to the

bloodhounds. The blood hounds were licking the deer thongs and the raw hide was stretching as it always stretches when wet, and Apollos had let it slip down over his hands from his wrists to the floor, where the dogs, in growling and snarling to snatch at it, had bitten through the thongs binding his ankles.

The Apostle did not move by a hair's breadth. His brow was radiant with a glowing light and his hair shone like fuller's white.

The cymbals clashed. The silver trumpets blew. The lines of chanting priests had seized bells to ring in rhythm and fans to send up the clouds of incense. And there was heard the hunting horn of Diana coming down from the fleecy meadows of mid-heaven to pasture her stallions and mares in the ocean deeps—the vestal virgins' high clear soprano gave back refrain to the chant of the priests—when a blast of wind from the tidal waves of Diana's stallions and mares champing out to sea, blew through the Temple pillars, sending the clouds of incense and mist back over the worshipers.

Onesimus saw Apollos leap from the pillar to the altar stairs; and when the Roman guard would have unleashed the hounds to tear him down, an unseen foot tripped the soldier to his face on the tessellated floor of the Temple, and the hounds were upon the fellow in a savage attack that called the attention of the priests. Taking quick advantage of the diversion and the back-blown cloud of sea mist and incense smoke, Onesimus with a bound followed his Master, who had passed swiftly to the stairs behind the altar, that led both to the vestal virgins' galleries above and to the famous underground labyrinths of Crete.

"Follow me not, beloved! Farewell," Apollos had turned. "Escape back to the ship with your seaman and his daughter! Take them to Thecla in the caves! Seek me not! Farewell for a little time—"

Again the cymbals clashed. Again the silver trumpets blew. Again the bells rang in rhythm to the chant of the priests and refrain of vestals. Again the fans sent back the cloud of incense above the altar. Again was heard Diana's hunting horn coming down from the fleecy meadows of mid-heaven to pasture her stallions and mares in the ocean deeps; but of Apollos was nought to be seen.

"Bah," said a Roman guard standing near the astounded Bishop of Ephesus, "'twas but a trick of levitation, which all these Eastern magic fellows play. The fellow has lifted himself up by his sandal straps and disappeared through the clouds of smoke, as he did when he was tried before our Emperor Domitian for tearing a boy's entrails out. Wasn't I there? Didn't I see him? Didn't he defy our Emperor to his face? They could prove nothing against the scoundrel—he wraps himself in his cloak like this"—the guard imitated a man hiding his face in his cape— "I see him plain as I see you, we all see him, the Emperor was about to have him seized and burned as all these Greeks and Jewish sorcerers ought to be burned—and there, as we look, the knave



disappears from our very eyes and reappears down in a cave among his followers by the sea, where he takes ship and flees for Asia again. If I'd been Emperor, I'd have had him seized where found and burned on the spot. 'Tis only a trick of levitation—holding the breath, mumbling a hocus-pocus, and up they go—”

“Simpler than that, Friend Roman,” responded a Greek priest of the Temple, whose head was shaved like a billiard ball and whose face wore the baffled look of one stunned by anger and fear. “There are thirty thousand secret chambers in the old Minos Temples 'neath the Island here, where all the Black Magic books of old have been hidden for a thousand years. The knave must have known the secret passage to these hidden underground caves, where 'tis like he hides now with all his followers and rocks this Isle. 'Tis known the Isle always rocks in the spring and autumn storms—and the old Greeks say 'tis from the Black Magic of the Masters in the Caves. The man wrought Black Magic against our Goddess. He ought to have been burned.”

“I notice,” said another, “that he had no shadow. These demons have no shadow—'tis how we Greeks know demons in human form; and he always wore a ring with a mystic stone got from the Magicians of India to protect him.”

“A plague on these cursed Gnostics and Essenes and Nazarenes,” gritted a Jew, joining the amazed group. “They are turning the whole world upside down. Feed them to the beasts, I say, as they did in the mad Nero's day.”

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Onesimus came out to the star-silvered night, dazed and dumb. Was there “no more Death”? He could not answer. He stood by the rocky coast of the calm painted sea with the Greek freed seaman and his daughter rescued from the Temple service. Snow was falling in a white mantle on the upper peaks of the opaline mountains. Was it “the Angel of the Snows” of which Apollos and Enoch taught? Hoar frost seemed to be lining the upper forested evergreens in the glint of jewels. Was it the Angel of the Hoar Frost? Mist was rising from the sea to meet the mist from the mountains in ghostly curtains. Was it the Spirit of the Mist wrapping its vesture around the departed Apostle? And the winds began to chant a mystic rune where the sea and rock met in the white fret of the night tide. Was it the Angel of the Winds, which, Apollos had taught, come out to gather earth thoughts for the weal or woe of earth?

The Bishop of Ephesus fell to his knees and spent the rest of the night on the shore in prayer.

And so the Bishop on his way home to Ephesus, accompanied by the slave seaman freed and the daughter redeemed from Temple service in Crete on their voyage to Thecla's hospice on the Roman Road—paused at Patmos, the rocky desert isle, where John, the Beloved, lived in banishment and dreamed.

The vessel beached at dawn and while the sailors took on a fresh cargo of fish, Onesimus asked the way to the hut of John, the exile.

The Roman guard was father of the infant girl, whom the Greek sorceress at Ephesus had leased and maimed to beg; and when the soldier heard from the seaman of the coin which would ransom six slaves redeeming his little daughter, the guard told Onesimus how John's banishment had been revoked and the aged Disciple had gone to Ephesus by the previous day's boat.

"Yonder," said the Roman guard, "is his prison hut; and yonder, where you hear the roaring seas, is his Vision Cave—there is the voice of many waters there—go not too far in—the maids of spray and rainbow hair"—and the man laughed awkwardly at his own superstition.

The little white stone hut stood on the wave-fretted rocks facing the burst of sunrise over the green isles of Greece in the blue morning sea. While the sailors loaded freight, the Bishop wandered up to the prison hut of the last of the Disciples. It was such a prison hut as Paul had occupied at Rome—but in a quieter cleaner haven, where the dawn came over sea and peak in a Jacob's Ladder to sleeping and waking dreams, up and down which the Angels might pass from Heaven to men's souls. Blue and primrose were the skies above. Emerald and white were the seas below. Yellow and gold were the spears of the sun, and opal were the peaks of far mountains swimming between heaven and earth.

The cave was a haven for a seer to dream or commune with God for the wind played the harp in the gaunt trees growing from the bare rocks; and the voice of many waters sounded day and night without ceasing, where wave fret beat in the hollow resounding caverns of rock and landlocked inlet; and the trickle of receding tides through the fine sands was as the tinkling of myriad little bells.

Onesimus drew from his traveler's case a parchment; and here is what he read, as in a trance between life and death:

"And the sea gave up the dead, which were in it . . . and death and the grave delivered up the dead, which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works . . . and I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away . . . and I heard a great voice out of the heavens saying— Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them and be their God . . . and shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. . . . Behold I make all things new. . . . Write; for these words are true and faithful . . . I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely . . . and there shall be no night . . . for the Lord God giveth light . . . and the Spirit and the bride say—come; And let him that heareth say come! And let

him that is athirst come! And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. . . .” When he had finished reading, the Bishop was no longer in trance. He was in ecstasy. It was as if the golden light of day dawn had photographed the last message of the Last Disciple in letters of celestial fire across the firmament of heaven and earth to all time in a rainbow of eternal hope.

What matter whether his resurrection were a physical body, a soul body, a spiritual body? Paul, himself, had said, when wrapped away in vision to a Third Heaven not made of hands, that he knew not whether he was in “terrestrial” or “celestial” body. Onesimus now knew that neither matter nor spirit could perish—but only change, and He who had created both would govern what form they must take in the New Heaven and the New Earth; and Christ would give that cup of forgetfulness of sin from the Book of Remembrance, which the pagan Greeks promised from drink of their sacred spring. Then suddenly, as if in a glimpse of cosmic consciousness, he knew the veil was very thin—thinner in every cycle of ages—as the Old crashed down, the New grew up in its place—till the New became a New Heaven and a New Earth, a New Heaven on Earth; and he heard the voice of many waters, “not only as the rite of baptism for the turning from sin,” but as a river of living waters flowing from the throne of God, to carry mankind to the destiny of the Sons of God. He knew the crucifixion of his Master had marked the end of a cycle, and all His followers were the Torch Bearers of the Glad News to future ages.

The ship anchored at Ephesus too late for the Bishop to get carriage up from the water front to the city square. As far as one can judge from the configuration of sands and ruins, the distance was six or seven miles. Accompanied by the Greek seaman, and the redeemed Temple vestal, he walked the distance from tide water to city square, where his own little church and dwelling stood across from the Great Temple to Diana Artemis. Opposite the pagan Temple, the three left him to rouse the little beggar boy, who commonly slept under the marble steps. The Bishop’s intention was to prepare a cloister for these travelers on the way to Thecla’s hospice to sleep; then snatch a few moments of sleep, himself, before presenting himself at his own home where the aged John would be housed and resting.

The silver colossus of the Goddess stood an unearthly wraith in the pale dawn of the city square. The morning mist came in a long ghostly beam across his own church into the cloisters on the garden side. Some bird awakened in the garden and stabbed the morning silence with a threnody of unutterable beauty. The fountain in the garden fell with the tinkle of tiny bells as though the flowers rang out their morning hymn, besides which was no sound but the padded footfall of his own sandals across the misty church.

He stooped, steadying his hand on a stone bench and loosed the sandals

from his own feet, nor quite knew why he had done it, when a spear of sunlight struck through the beam of mist aslant his church; and there on the cot in his own prayer cell lay the figure of the aged Disciple, John, in a deep sleep motionless and peaceful as death.

Then Onesimus started back in an amaze that was neither fear nor horror. It was as if his own doubts lay before him slain; for the figure of the woman, clad all in black, was on her knees, bent over the feet of the Disciple, sobbing. The air was heavy with the spring hyacinth odor for the dead, and the weeping woman was breaking and pouring an alabaster jar of perfumed ointment over the feet of the Beloved and wiping them with her fallen hair. As she caught glimpse of the Bishop standing in the half dark of the cell arch, she rose and whispered—

“He is not dead. He only sleeps. There is no Death.”

It was Thecla’s mother.

“He hath but changed his vesture of flesh for vesture of Light,” said the Bishop softly. “He hath gone to the New Heaven and the New Earth of his Vision. He is not far away. He has fallen asleep to awaken in the Garden of God.”

So “fell asleep” John, the last of the Disciples.

When the Bishop and the woman rose from prayer, the freed Greek seaman, and the redeemed Temple maid and the two beggar children stood in the cloister arch, waiting to be directed to the Thecla hospice of the Roman Road.

The Bishop placed his hands on the heads of the beggar children.

“Suffer little children to come unto Him and forbid them not,” he said, “for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, for our youth shall lead the whole redeemed world.”

## FOREWORD TO APPENDIX

As a child and later a student, I recall intensely disliking Paul. I wasn't quite sure he was a "crazy fanatic and self-hypnotized epileptic and self-deceived, unconscious fakir," which I have heard teachers of youth in our colleges call him; terrible views for a child to hold about a saintly character—I only set them down to show how wrong teaching can color our version of the Bible—but I regarded him as fanatical, narrow, crabbed, sour, domineering, eager to dragoon men into believing as he did, whether by fear of Hell-fire, which seemed to me a cowardly fire-insurance policy against retribution or by sheer force of will, I had not decided. I distinctly disliked saints, whose milk of human kindness had turned sour. Later, years later, when I came back to read his life in the sacred records, as I would read with unprejudiced eyes in the search for facts which we carry to the reading of an ordinary life, I was amazed and staggered to find he was a small man, frail of body, short-sighted, suffering some physical ailment from the persecutions to which he had been subjected, fearless as a lion where the faith was concerned, humble and simple as a child in other matters, generous in money matters—see the loan to Philemon—so independent that while he collected funds for famine in Jerusalem, he would never touch those funds himself, but supported himself by the making of tents, for which there was great demand owing to caravan travel being universal, and so great of heart that his tenderness extended to a little slave boy, who came to him in Rome and who ultimately became the youngest bishop in the Christian Church in the third largest city of the Roman Empire.

About this time I began reading the Bible as I would any other book, or a newspaper editorial, critically but shorn of early beliefs and prejudices. I read ignoring chapter divisions and verse divisions, which too often have provided controversialists with bullets for sharp-shooting in ambush by wresting sentences from context and meaning, and using them as "the Devil quotes Scripture" for his own purposes; and I can conceive of nothing that will restore belief quicker than to read the Bible as a historical record of the birth and growth of a great redemptive force for humanity—using redemption as a force in present-day life, not in a far-away, vague shadowy Kingdom of the Hereafter.

About this time, too, I realized what one of the greatest American theologians has frankly admitted—that the worst foes of Christianity are not its enemies but "the friends in its own house," and those foes are sometimes medieval inheritances of superstitious interpretations, of which we are unconscious; scraps of misapplied, ignorant Sunday-School teaching. In fact, I

have often wondered, if secular teaching were given with as colossal ignorance of historic data as sacred teaching is given, how many pupils could pass even a primary examination? How much would be known of applied science, or even our own secular historic development? For instance, how many Bible teachers know that Christ and John and Paul all quote from the Book of Enoch, which is variously dated as from 200 to 120 B.C.? How many know that “the camel and the eye of a needle” was an Arab expression used to this day? How many know that many of the expressions precious to the whole world were quoted by the writers from ancient masters sacred and secular—such as the reference to “principalities and powers” separating us from the love of God? How many realize that “oil out of the flinty rock” was not a metaphor, but a fact—such a fact, that modern drillers for petroleum have found oil in that very spot? How many know that the fiery furnace recorded in the book of Daniel to destroy the three young Hebrews is corroborated by references in the Maccabees and other ancient books to naphtha waters which burned with a flame to consume all towards whom the wind blew, but which had a funneling air center inside, which left the furnace harmless in the middle? How many know that tiles and statuary dug out of the ruins of Babylon show a man lying unharmed under a lion in the lion’s den of the king’s royal gardens? We ridicule the story of Jonah and the whale; yet from the belly of a stuffed sacred alligator in Egypt amid scraps of waste paper were taken precious lost records of the sayings of Christ.

The Bible is not much longer than seven short novels. The most of people read seven novels in a year. The ordinary modern magazine has the same number of words as a short novel. A great many people read a magazine from cover to cover once a week. If the Bible were read in the same free spirit, unclouded by inherited prejudice or taint of “creeds,” the return to belief among youth would be a thing to astound the world.

Why isn’t it so read?

To quote the theologian—because “the literalists” insist that in the reading, youth shall read into the context what they dictate rather than what youth finds of everyday usable livable truths; and to-day, youth will not be dragooned. He is going to follow the light of truth as he finds the light of truth and proves the truth. He isn’t going to accept one set of opinions on Sunday, which he finds won’t work out in everyday life on Monday. Christianity has to be a workable scheme for every day in the week, or youth is going to leave the church pews empty and crowd to “the movies,” to the theater, to the anarchist lectures, to the wild abandon of joy in the rhythmic emotional dance; and—youth is right. With unfettered feet and wings of dawn to its soul, it faces always the new day. It never looks backwards. It rejoices in Life; and Christianity must be put in terms of youth, or preach to emptier and emptier pews. Paul never ceased

reiterating “Rejoice—rejoice and again I say—rejoice.” Too often we have clothed a glad and glorious message in habiliments of age and woe, which are really the consciousness of past sins and failures. The Communion is not a Doleful Supper commemorating a death. It is a Loving Cup commemorating a wonderful and glad new birth. The Kingdom of Heaven is not to-morrow. It is now; or else it is never. And yet, let us not blame the Middle Age interpretations shadowy with crime and sorrow. In a carnival of lust and crime and rapine and sword, the Middle Age Church preserved and conserved for humanity, like an oasis of the spirit in a desert of materialism, all that has helped humanity most, and this in spite of the fact it foolishly punished astronomers, who proved the earth round and burned men who differed by a hair’s breadth from its “credo.” While it was guilty of these tragical mistakes of obeying the letter rather than the spirit—as the Pharisees who crucified Christ, had done before it—the Middle Age Church kept the faith for us, inspired and conserved art, science, letters, in a wilderness of barbarism. Who encouraged almost sublime architecture? Who produced paintings that have never been equaled to this day? Where did Roger Bacon work out his great, though concealed, truths of science? In the safety, though it was the imprisonment, of a friar’s cell. Roger Bacon (1214-1294), the friar at Oxford, wrote these words. Were they clairvoyant foresight, or the superior knowledge of a scientist from facts? “Ships will go without rowers and with only a single man to guide them. Carriages without horses will travel with incredible speed. Machines for flying can be made in which a man sits. Machines will raise infinitely great weights. Bridges will span rivers without supports.” His superior knowledge was ascribed by his superiors to Black Magic; but Pope Clement IV supported him and ordered his knowledge set forth in books, of which he wrote three in eighteen months without secretary; but his own immediate superiors ascribed his marvelous knowledge to communications from the Devil, and had him imprisoned for fourteen years. After seven hundred years, the light of that cell comes out to the world: yet, the men who suppressed him thought they were protecting God’s word from assault. It can only be added that the history of ignorance repeats itself with surprising persistence. The good men of his day were simply trying to tie truth down to the dead line of their own ignorance. With a charity and a clarity infinite as the love of God, let us be careful we do not do the same thing.

Rather than condemn the mistakes of the Middle Age Church from whose darkened and superstitious interpretations we yet suffer, let us beware we do not repeat their mistakes by shutting out the new light of history and archæology and science, where we should welcome it.

Christianity does not need to apologize for itself, or beg the question. When it does that, he who excuses accuses. When it does that, it is off the

carpet in the modern world. It can stand on the solid foundation of its own truth. If that foundation cracks, it will fall as the Holy City fell before a New Order. Rather than repel attack, we should welcome it. Attack is the storm wind that strengthens the hold of the roots on the eternal rocks. It is the wind that causes the corn stalk to put out guy ropes above its roots to hold fast to sure foundation. I love to read attacks on Christian truth if they are sincere and not cheap, cynical, ignorant sneers, which never get anywhere. They force examination of the certainty of the facts beneath our faith.

To take but one example of what muddy thinking has done to stir up shallow waters to make them look deep—consider the furious and foolish controversy in the modern church over “miracles.” “We believe in miracles,” shouts one section of the Church, “and if you don’t, we’ll see that you are put out of the church and prove that you are damned.” “We don’t believe in miracles and we defy you to put us out of the church; or we’ll pull down the pillars of youth like Samson as we go out,” shouts back the other section; and neither stops to ask in simple clarity:

What is a miracle?

Is it God breaking, or intervening to prevent, the effect of His own laws?

We have no such phenomena in natural life, and shy back from answering that question in as bold terms as it is asked.

Or is it the working of a higher law overruling and annulling a lower law? There are cases of that in nature, as when the effect of a warm and constant ocean current is annulled by a cold wind from the north; but in this case, neither law is abrogated. We are getting the effects of each; but the effect of one is stronger than the other. That might be the meaning of “a miracle”; but the explanation is so obscure and the workings so complex and in the unknown, that if that be the conception of “miracle” we had better not split the church over it. We are dealing with too many unknown quantities to postulate with mathematical certainty what we do know and what we don’t of fact, or to exclude from fellowship on the grounds of what is unknown.

Or is a miracle a superior knowledge of all laws and the use of that knowledge to get certain effects, such as the knowledge of Roger Bacon, who was seven hundred years in advance of his time? If that be “miracle,” the controversy vanishes in thin air.

A century ago, if any man had told us we could see through a man’s flesh and count his ribs and the joints in his backbone, we would have called him an unconscious fakir, or a conscious liar. Yet X-rays have worked that “miracle.”

Fifty years ago, if any one had told us we could go round the world under the sea like Jonah in the whale’s belly, we would have answered him in the language of Missouri, “Show me.” Yet the submarine has worked that “miracle.”



Twenty-five years ago, if any one had predicted we would course the skies in winged chariots of which you can read a description in the First Chapter of Ezekiel, we would have told him a comic legend about Darius Green and his flying machine. Yet the aeroplane has worked that “miracle.”

Ten years ago, if some one had told us soberly and expecting belief that he could talk without wire or letter from New York with a friend in Honolulu, we would have had him examined for his sanity. Yet wireless has worked that “miracle.”

The impossibility of yesterday is the wonder of to-day and the commonplace of to-morrow. The laws of the X-ray, of under-sea navigation in submarine, of air travel in aeroplane, of wireless communication, existed just as much and the same in the days of Christ as they exist to-day; but men did not know those laws and did not know how to use them. “Greater works than these shall ye do,” said the Master. We didn’t believe Him, though we thought we did; and we witness the fulfillment of the prophecy. We are heirs to the fulfillment of the prophecy by the greatest Master in foresight the world has ever known, by One who did more to set the human soul free of the shackles of ignorance and prejudice than any other leader of all humanity.

He, who postulates to-day on what is, or is not, miraculous, simply writes himself down an ignorant muddied-brained thinker, stirring up shallow waters to make them look deep. The “literalist” in this case simply tries to bind youth down to “old wives’ fables” and to nursery beliefs. He tries to level Christian truth down to the dead line of the most ignorant.

And so of nearly all the disputes in the Christian Church—“the resurrection,” “the descent into Hell,” “the Immaculate Conception,” “the letter inerrancy of the Scriptures.” Ask definitely what the controversialist means by his own terms, and whether agnostic or fundamentalist, instead of answering you, he backs against the wall of his “rightness” and hurls thunder bolts of damnation and excommunication from fellowship at you; and Youth still goes on its way in laughter and gladness; and I thank God that it does. It would be terrible if Christianity ever became as static and dead as the faith of the Pharisee, who crucified Christ because He would not conform to the letter of the law instead of the spirit.

We should remember the simple words, “He will not wrangle.” All Christianity asks is—“prove all things.” If they don’t prove up, don’t take them.

Not long ago, a friend had an experience that illustrates this. For twenty years, she had practically never read the Bible. She had been taught the Bible wrong and when the Bob Ingersoll era came on, ridiculing these vulnerable teachings, she had quit reading the Bible. As a professor, who teaches teachers in the largest teachers’ institution in America, once said to me: “Really I envy

you your naïve beliefs! I envy any one who can believe that old stuff”; she had discarded the Bible as a book of myths and fairy tales. She said once “I can’t read it. I simply can’t read it. I read into it the old impossible prejudices and creeds I was taught when I was a girl; and now I know they are not true.” To overcome that mental habit of reading into the Bible what isn’t in it, I suggested Weymouth’s translation in modern phraseology with strictest adherence to linguistic scholarship. We miss some of the old and beautiful phrases in this translation, but we get a translation free of the old controversial doubtful implied interpretations. She began re-reading the Bible as she would any other authentic historic record. In her enthusiasm, she carried her new treasure to a devout elderly saintly friend of the old school. The friend sat up in horror. How dare any one suggest there could be any improvement in the translation of the Bible. The good friend was evidently in devout and blissful self-righteous ignorance of the sources of the Bible. She evidently did not know that the Tindale Bible of 1555 was improved in the King James Version of 1611, and the King James Version was improved in the 1888 version; and there are still phrases and words which linguistic research is improving. And recall that, in old texts from which the Bible is taken, some of the old manuscripts did not use the vowel but left the vowel to be guessed. The good friend—and she was sincere—mistook the pebbles and the small rocks of the trail up the slopes of light for the main foundation and the light ahead; and promptly began hurling those rocks and pebbles at a true seeker after light.

It was a case of a saint’s shadow darkening a seeker’s trail.

## APPENDIX A

### CONCERNING PAUL'S MISSIONARY TOURS AND DISPUTED POINTS

“The Christian religion takes its stand upon the ground of history,” says Malden in his *Problems of the New Testament*; “but there is now a feeling abroad that the authority of the New Testament has been severely shaken by recent studies, if it is not in danger of being destroyed outright.”

Fifteen years ago, such a statement would have been acknowledged as voicing general sentiment, not to be denied; and the liberal wing of scholars would have regarded the statement as grounds for relegating the New Testament in history to the junk heap of picturesque myths, in which there was, of course, some dim reflex of events that had happened, but so embroidered by superstition as to be utterly untrustworthy as a basis for belief founded on facts; while the literalists would have regarded the same general sentiment as grounds for blind belief, for dogmas to embody their blind belief, to which all Christians must subscribe, or be cast out. Indeed, the most excited and least informed of the literalists would have gone even farther as late as 1922—they would have passed laws prohibiting free speech, free thought, the teaching of any brand of belief but their own. The panic reiteration of dogma was a sad evidence of lack of faith in the truth beneath their own beliefs.

Truth needs no bludgeon of civil law or religious threat of exclusion. All it needs is to be put forth with its proofs. He who seeks to establish his own beliefs by disproving some one else's—is wasting precious time. Truth needs only that its torch be held high aloft lighting the way, and humanity will follow; and the dark illusion called error will vanish as darkness always disperses before light.

But with the War has come a subtle change. The change of front is something deeper than a complete collapse of the scheme on which our civilization seemed founded. It is a something deeper than the fear of death that took such awful toll in the War. It is deeper than a panic stampede from the impasse of our own former conclusions.

It is a determination to get at basic truths and with them rebuild a better civilization. Even if we have to proceed slowly step by step as up a steep trail of rolling stones to higher outlook, we are determined to eliminate error and get at truth, on which we'll found our faith for the morrow.

The War only hastened a tendency that had been ripening for half a

century. It opened doors long closed in the East to linguistic scholars, to archæologist's spade, to such purely secular scientific expeditions as the American expedition to the deserts of Tartary and Mongolia to find if the original home of mankind and prehistoric life were really in Asia.

Men and women back from the horrors of War somehow vaguely realized that dogmatic religion had not prevented a hideous throwback of civilization to the practices of barbarism. They discovered with horror civilization was only skin deep; and while some came back with hopeless fears that science, in submarine and aeroplane and poisonous gases and armaments of long-range devilish powers undreamed as possible, seemed to have created a monster that would devour civilization, like the destruction of the fabled Atlantis, others came back with a deeper insight. While science had created the monsters of destruction, it had also discovered the angels of mercy in surgery, in aeroplane, in wireless, that seemed almost to rend the veil into the unseen.

So humanity came back from the War seeking foundations for belief in truth facts—sifting error from truth, proving all things, and holding fast only to what it could prove and use; and neither science nor religion asks any other criterion—"Try it; if it works, take it: if it doesn't, don't"; and the latest scholarship declares bluntly Christianity takes its stand on the ground of history.

The story of Onesimus will be found in outline in the letter to Philemon. Though Rome had neither Titus' Triumphant Arch, nor Vespasian's magnificent colosseum, when Paul was prisoner in the hut near the Three Taverns, one can reconstruct from Josephus and from the Roman historians of the period the character of the Rome in which the young Phrygian slave found himself enmeshed, and how Paul lived with the radiance of a quenchless diamond amid the cesspool slime of a great imperial city in the first stages of its moral decay. How great and hideous was that moral decay could not be told in a book going through the mails. Hints of it can be found in Philostratus' *Apollonius* (Oxford, 1912). The references to Nero need no proof. They are well-known history; and if space permitted, the letters, true or false, of Paul and Seneca could be given. These letters can be found in the Apocryphal Books of the New Testament, on which Malden (Oxford), Turner (Oxford), Sir William Ramsay and Bishop Lightfoot have given the latest best views. At first, my impression was Onesimus might have been a colored slave like the Apostle later known as "Niger," but on looking up the past history of the Phrygian mountain clans, it was easy to see how the constant raids of robber bands from upper Galilee to kidnap the mountain boys and girls and sell them as slaves in the cities of the Roman Road, might have produced a character like Onesimus, and that he was pure Greek. To this day, the Druse descendants of these mountain clans have resisted all enslavement. If captured and reduced to

servitude, they become fanatic demons of crime. If left free, they preserve a peculiarly pure form of Christian belief, though primitive and superstitious. Felix's part in clearing out the robber bands of Galilee is also history and can be found fully given in Josephus though too often when he rescued the kidnapped victims, it was to resell them to enrich himself. The jealousy between the sisters—Drusilla and Bernice—is also given in Josephus. The fact that Felix, who had once been slave himself, rose to marry the royal and proud line of the Herods attests a character of peculiar force. The scene in the Cæsarean Judgment Hall will be found given in the *Acts*, and still more fully in Josephus. Of later authorities on Paul, besides Malden and Lightfoot, are Robinson of Cambridge, Rendell Harris in his volumes of 1893 and 1911, Parry of Cambridge, 1920, Smith, 1919, and Kersopp Lake in 1916. Students wishing to trace back these modern authorities to the ancients and nearer contemporaries of Paul will find the references in these volumes leading them back to Clement and Ignatius and Iræneus and hosts of others. The name of Paul's custodian on the ship wrecked en route to Rome is variously spelled, but I have followed the spelling of the *Acts*. The same name is again found in the fall of the Holy City.

Church historians have been very severe on Bernice, who became a character famous or infamous—as you will—in Titus' day in Rome. Her angling to ensnare the Emperor, who was a young general at the time, became a joke in the Roman theaters, but would judgments be so severe, I wonder, if censors looked up the age at which this child was married to her first husband, and then to silence evil gossip about the affection between herself and her brother, was married to a second aged husband whom she at once left? She could not have been more than seventeen or eighteen, when married to the second husband. All the Herods notoriously married off their daughters and sisters to strengthen their own insecure thrones. Women were a pawn for empire; and I, for one, would hate to cast a stone at a girl of eighteen, who when she found herself a pawn between lust and power, if she had to pawn herself, aimed at the highest bidder. The name of Bernice's second husband from whom she fled—Polemo or Polemon—should be noted carefully; for it comes again in the story of Thecla. The royal Roman lady, a relative of the Emperor, was either wife or daughter of this ancient satyr, and her sympathy for Thecla may have arisen from her own similar experiences. *Apollonius' Life* gives the brand of the man's vices. Young Agrippa, the last of the Herod line, while too weak to master circumstances and rule with the iron ruthless hand of Herod the Great, was undoubtedly the most decent of all the evil Herods, and his character as portrayed by Josephus, hardly bears out the evil insinuations of the Jews, who mobbed and would have murdered both him and his sister. Paul's opinion of the young man, we get in the *Acts*, and Agrippa's reaction to

that appeal does not bear out proof of a degenerate youth. “Almost,” says the boyish prince, he could not have been much over twenty, “you would make me a Christian.” All that is merely hinted here of the Daphne Gardens is mild compared to the truth that can be found in any Roman record of the day. The lure of the Daphne Gardens drew many Romans to spend the winter at Antioch, with fatal results to the morale of officers and governors; and after the fall of Jerusalem compelled the change of the headquarters of the Christian church from Antioch to Ephesus. The best testimony to the influence of the new faith in counteracting the evil of those Gardens is found in the charges and countercharges when the temples were destroyed, that the Christians had burned them. It was not with earthly fires they had burned them but with the divine fires of the faith.

In one secular account of the return of the Roman troops after the sack of Jerusalem will be found mention of a shipwreck almost similar to that which overtook Paul on his journey to Rome; and in early Grecian statuary and pottery will be found ships “trussed” or “frapped” by ropes to keep the timbers from going to pieces just as recorded in the *Acts*. Lucian’s history describes the corn ships of the period; and Josephus’ account of a wreck is an exact parallel of Paul’s experiences, except that Josephus’ ship carried six hundred passengers. “Corn,” it need hardly be told here, was not our modern corn but such grains as wheat and barley. Palestine is now known to have been the original area of the first wheat cultivated in the world.

One very pointed question occurs here. Where Josephus refers to Christ, his words are: “*Now there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it is lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works . . . he was the Christ . . . and when Pilate . . . had condemned him to the cross . . . he appeared alive again the third day. . . .*”<sup>[3]</sup>

[3] By some scholars, this paragraph is regarded as a forgery.

And he hints that the destruction of Jerusalem was divine chastisement for the murder of James, the disciple. His words are: “The brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James . . . he (Herod) delivered to be stoned.” Luke’s account of this in the *Acts* is: “Herod the king stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the church; and killed James, the brother of John, with the sword.” The two accounts do not seem to agree, but recall all men wore swords in these days, even the disciples—see the cutting of Malchus’ servant’s ear—and in a rabble stoning a man to death both accounts may be true. That being Josephus’ belief, why did he not refer more frankly to Christ as the Messiah of Jewish expectation? That has been a puzzling question that has cast discredit on Josephus as historian of the Roman era. Yet it would not

cast discredit on him if one paused to examine the circumstances under which his history was written. He had been a Pharisee of the Pharisees, in the best sense, and a Zealot of the Zealots for the defence of Hebrew rights; but when he saw that Judea had not a chance on earth against Roman power—that Rome could give order and law where the Hebrews, themselves, could not, like Isaiah before him, he counseled coöperation with the strong power rather than the opposition that would inevitably end in national extinction. In the siege of Jerusalem, like Agrippa, he went over to the Roman side against the lawless robber bands, who held and plundered the Holy City. He did everything in his power to save the city from total destruction by imploring its surrender till he was stoned away by the fighters on the walls. When the Holy City was conquered and totally destroyed but for the Herod Towers on the west, he was taken to Rome and given quarters in the royal palace, and wrote his record of the Roman era in Palestine for Titus and Vespasian, as their guest and pensioner. As historian in an era when emperor worship was being set up by Rome throughout the Empire, he could hardly issue an official history under Roman approval that acknowledged Pilate, the Roman governor, had crucified, at the behest of the Jews, the unacknowledged Messiah. We wish for his own sake he had frankly given record of the Christ, whose career he must have known in detail in a land not much larger than Vermont, or say, about a hundred and seventy-five miles long by sixty broad, which was the area of the Jewish Palestine in his day. He gives full record of all the High Priests and the Sanhedrim to the cutting of their throats in the Aqueduct twenty-five years after Christ's death. He was in and about Jerusalem during the most of Christ's life. Familiar with every foot of Palestine, that life he must have known; but he is silent because he was the pensioner of the government that had consented to Christ's death.

That Paul and Josephus and Apollos must have known one another is self-evident. Each was a great student of the law and of philosophy. Each was familiar with the studies of the great philosophies of Alexandria. Paul quotes from them continually. Paul and Josephus had both studied in Jerusalem. Paul and Apollos had both spent their boyhood in Tarsus. Apollos seems to have been the richest of the three, and a traveled gnostic. Josephus was soldier till he laid down arms in Jerusalem to become historian in Rome, and he was a liberal Pharisee. Paul was fanatical student of the Hebrew law till he became follower of Christ. That Paul was tentmaker did not place a social chasm between him and the other two; for every Hebrew boy had to learn a trade to forefend against want in perilous times.

Solely because it would require a library of books to give the corroborative data of Paul's life in Rome and in Cæsarea, the data bearing on Onesimus's story must here be condensed to notes for reference.

The Spring Festival in the Roman Empire occurred at almost the same period of the year as the Jewish Passover and the Christian crucifixion; so that the tortures inflicted on Christ and the later Christian martyrs at this period were really to glut the lust for blood that was part of the old pagan worship. Free gifts for charity to the mob had degenerated into a bribe to the populace in place of justice. Rome was no longer Roman. It was a composite of the known world. Though Rome gave her Empire good laws and stable government, as Apollonius, the sage, pointed out to the General, Vespasian, she could not ensure the execution of those laws for two reasons: if she appointed local governors or kings, like the Herods, to hold loyalty, she could not prevent them exacting extortionate taxes for their own wealth; if she appointed Roman governors like Pilate, they could not speak the languages of the far-flung provinces and had to depend on underlings of native birth, who perverted Roman justice. The Roman Empire was falling to pieces from over-extension. Democracy was degenerating to mobocracy and mobocracy to the tyranny of the Army.

Would the old Idumean guard have been executed for the loss of his prisoner in the shipwreck? He most certainly would; for Rome was as ruthless to her own, as to her provincials.

The object in kidnapping a beautiful slave can be found in the four lives that have been written of Apollonius. We sometimes despair of the world because religion seems to have done so little to change men. The despair is the voice of unbelief. Read the old records. The tortures of Thecla were mild compared to the martyrdom of many a Christian in the pleasure gardens of Nero, where the victims were dipped in oil and then tied to stakes, as torches, in ridicule of the claim that they were the torch bearers of light and glad news.

Rome standing for irresistible brute power, was ever jealous of the cultured Greeks; and the Greeks returned scorn for scorn—which would explain why Onesimus, a Greek runaway, was friendless in Rome.

By the time of Paul's first imprisonment, 63-64 A.D., Nero's madness was acknowledged in Rome. The great fire, of which Paul and Seneca corresponded, took place in 64 A.D., but Rome, rolling in wealth and luxury, did not want to upset prosperity by destroying good times; and only after Nero's suicide and three years of turbulence, when the Army loomed as a terrible menace, was Vespasian, the strong general, called to become Emperor.

Regarding the Three Taverns, all through the Empire at this time, the keepers of the wine shops were women; and in the East, they were called Rahabs—a name with evil import to us to-day; but all the Rahabs were not harpies—as witness the Rahab of Jericho in Joshua's day.

Fuller details of the equinoctial gales at Crete will be given on the chapter on Apollos and John.



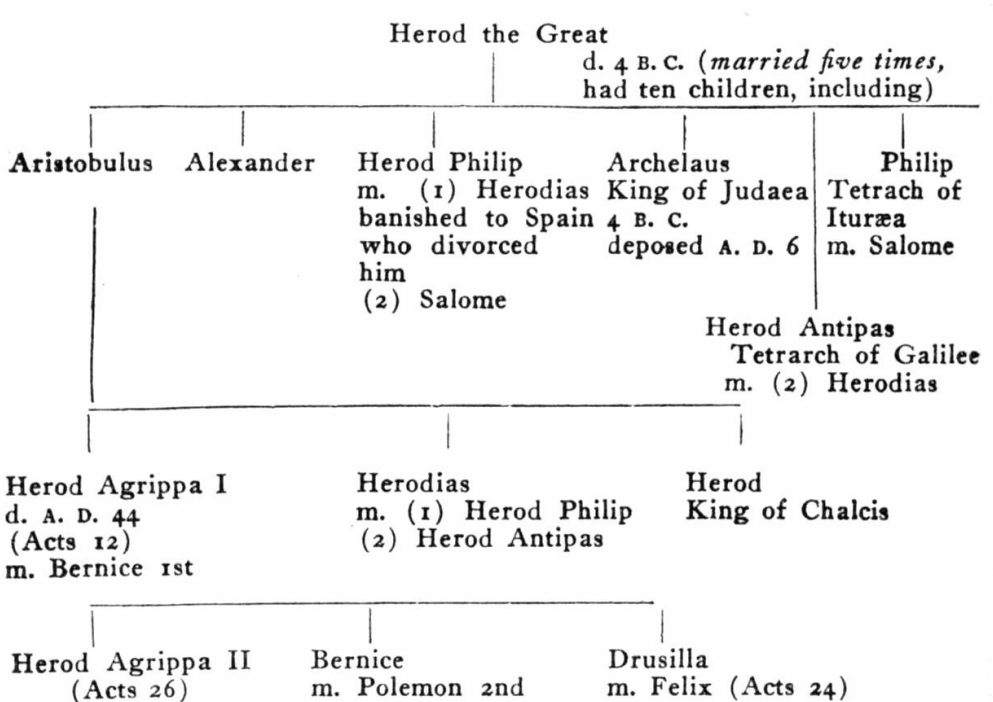
In Malta, or Melita, is St. Paul's Bay, to this day commemorating the site of his landing and shipwreck, just as Lud gave London its name, and the myth of Lud points back to a personality behind the myth.

The songs of the Arabs are the same to-day as in Paul's time and can be found in Newman's *Babylon and Nineveh*.

The whole story of the gladiatorial combat in Cæsarea, to which old Julius refers, will be found in Josephus. Both sides fought till the arena swam in blood to the ankles, and of one side not a man was left alive. Other victor slaves were given their freedom.

Felix, like Herod the Great, tried to clean out the robber bands from the caves of Galilee; but Felix was charged with selling the rescued victims as slaves to accumulate a fortune for himself, though he had, himself, been slave. This can all be found in Josephus with the full story of the Herod family and their perplexing intermarriages and repudiations of marriages. Bernice's flight from her old husband was by pretense a religious vow, but openly in the theater of Rome, she was twitted with taking the vow to escape her spouse.

## THE FAMILY OF HEROD THE GREAT



Titus, Vespasian's son, not yet thirty, will be more fully described in the

chapter on the fall of Jerusalem. Keep him distinct in your mind from Titus, the Greek evangelist of Crete, who became Bishop.

Philemon, the merchant of Colossé, Paul's friend, was converted to the new faith in Corinth or Athens.

Who were "the friends in Cæsar's household" of whom Paul wrote? Bishop Lightfoot shows of the forty-three Christianized Jews and Greeks, who met Paul when he reached Rome, and whose names may be found in the letter to the Romans; many were in Roman governmental positions of trust. Their names can be found scattered through the *Acts* and the apostolic letters to Rome and Asia.

There seems almost no reason to doubt that the great Epaphroditus, the Greek lover of learning, to whom Josephus dedicated his volume, was the same benevolent Greek of Philippi who supplied Paul with money for his needs in Rome, and who carried Paul's letter to the Philippians, and who seems to have been under surveillance with Paul in Rome; for in Rome, even if his eyesight would have permitted Paul to follow his mechanical means of supporting himself by tentmaking, there was not the same demand as in the East for tents for desert travel, or in Greece for maritime sailcloth. Aquila and Priscilla, who came later in the Apollos story, like Paul, were tentmakers. Paul's knowledge of seafaring was gained as sailcloth maker.

Always when religious faith wanes, necromancy, clairvoyance, sorcery thrive. The Old World with its dying faiths both Roman and Grecian, was now overrun with sorcerers of every description, practising wonder-working and miracles by methods variously known as Black Magic and White Magic. The knowledge of the methods underlying these powers was undoubtedly drawn from India and Persia. Some workers were good and some were bad. Some miracles were fraudulent and some were undoubtedly genuine—using the word "miracle" in the sense of wonder-working; only the Christians, the Essenes, the Gnostics, the Nazarenes refused to work these wonders for profit. For some reason or other, probably because they had lost faith in God, and learned magic from the Persians and the Babylonians, the Jews had become great sorcerers in Paul's day. More will be given of this in the chapter on Apollos. It is given also in the *Acts*.

The reference of Onesimus to the luminous look, or radiance round Paul in the half dark, and the old Idumean's legend of Antioch's invading soldiers finding nothing in the Holy of Holies of the Temple between the Cherubim and Seraphim but a little thin blue flame, would have been laughed out of any court of evidence by science ten years ago. Not so to-day. The study of wireless waves is opening the door to the wonder-world of these waves.

The caution to Timothy as the old soldier put it, "to beware the widows," and Paul's somewhat severe injunctions regarding women to the churches of

Ephesus and Corinth arose from great trouble from the activities of two women called Euodias and Syntyche, of whom nothing more is known than that they were quarreling in the church of Clement at Philippi, who wrote some of the finest and most universally accepted Epistles, which are *not* in the New Testament. Clement will be quoted later. He was Bishop of Rome about the time John “fell asleep.” Turner, one of the most critical of the higher critics, in his studies on *Early Church History*, explains why Clement’s *Letters* are not in our New Testament. They were not disinterred from Alexandria till 1628, when they were sent in a present to Charles I, which was seventeen years after the *King James Version* came out. Any one who wants to follow up how desperately dissatisfied the King James translators felt with their work, should read the *Journals of Evelyn*, a most devout churchman, on his conversation with the survivors among the translators. Such letters as Clement’s should be in supplementary readers in every Sunday School and Church in the land.

While Paul seems to have been prisoner in Rome for certainly two years, and before coming to Rome, prisoner in Cæsarea for at least as long, he was not without friends in both places. Philip’s four daughters, who were prophetesses or teachers, resided in Cæsarea; and Paul seems to have had great latitude in seeing his friends. This was because he was not only a Jew but a Roman citizen.

The tendency of modern scholarship is to regard Luke, the physician, as “the man from Macedonia,” who begged for help. The Greek scholar is supposed to have accompanied Paul as medical helper.

When Onesimus left Rome carrying the personal letter to Philemon, in 64 A.D. or thereabouts, he also carried along with one Tychicus the circular letter to the Colossians. These facts can be found in the postscript to the Epistles, which ought rather to be called simply Letters with advice for the guidance of the Christians.

In the *Philemon Letter*, I have followed the Weymouth translation, rather than the *King James Version*, or the *Revised Version*. In fact, I had read Philemon in the old versions many times before I saw its beauty. Then one day, I happened to read it in Spanish, and the old message in a new language of peculiarly graphic imagery shocked me into a visualization of the picture—the old fighter down and out in chains awaiting death, the slave running to him for safety, and the crippled prisoner pleading for, not his own, but the boy’s freedom. Then, I hunted up the best modern translation I could get—which was Weymouth’s; and the picture struck me as one of the most pathetic and beautiful recorded in the *New Testament*. No longer I saw Paul as the hunter of heretics, the fanatical convert, the tireless preacher of a new creed, but as a little old man in chains waiting for the headsman’s axe and writing to Timothy: “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have

fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” This was before his second trial. Then there follow the sad brave lines, “Demas hath forsaken me . . . only Luke is with me . . . At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me . . . the Lord stood with me and strengthened me . . . I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” In other words, they could not throw Paul to the wild beasts because he claimed his Roman citizenship; so they slew him with the headsman’s axe.

How do we know Onesimus was a mere boy, when with Paul in Rome? This question will be answered fully in the chapter on John and Apollos. Suffice to say, Rome had such a surplus of slaves from conquest—there were more than 30,000 Jews enslaved after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.—that only those between the ages of eighteen and thirty were considered of the slightest monetary value. Past thirty, they had either won their freedom in war, in gladiatorial combat, by purchase, or had been “worked out” and relegated to the mines, or the farm plantations, or the galley ships, to die. Onesimus would not have been worth passage money back to Philemon, if he had been old. The value of a slave had fallen to \$18 of modern money at this time. Human life was the cheapest and least sacred thing in the world market. Slavery was the dry rot eating away the underpinnings of the Roman Empire; for while, of a population of a million and a half in Rome at this time, a tenth of the people rolled in a luxury undreamed before or since, that tenth lived by sapping the life blood of the slave hordes, who numbered in Rome alone, almost a million of the populace.

The theater and judgment hall at Cæsarea, where Paul pleaded his case before the young Herod rulers, are fully described in Josephus, or in such modern works as have already been mentioned, or in Dr. Taylor’s *Paul* (1881). The city, itself, was reputed to have a population of 200,000; but it was detested by the Jews and chiefly peopled by Greeks, Phœnicians, Romans, and the riff-raff of Rome’s Asiatic world. Jerusalem was to the Jew the Holy City but Cæsarea was the city of the conqueror. Here were held the carnivals, the free feasts, the races where the chariot wheels wore grooves in the stones, the gladiatorial combats, the torture of prisoners, the wild-beast combats, and all the hippodrome exhibitions by which Rome tried to hold the populace loyal. Josephus gives a description of the Herod here who had caused the death of James, the great scene in the judgment hall, when the Herod, who was Bernice’s first husband, appeared in coat of silver mail; how the owl flying in was observed as an omen of ill; and the King fell in a fit of apoplexy either from overeating or intestinal troubles.

By the time Paul and Peter perished in Rome, more than nine Christian bishops had been tortured in the public forums and relegated as broken wrecks to the mines. All these details will be found in the authorities already quoted.

## APPENDIX B

### OLD DOCUMENTS AND MODERN VIEWS ON THE HEROD FAMILY

The many disputed points preceding the fall of the Holy City do not enter into this story; but as many students may care to follow up the history for themselves, the facts of the case with the pros and cons may be set forth.

Was the Apollos of Paul's letters the same as Apollonius the great sage of Asia Minor, variously known as a reformer, a gnostic, a mystic, but refusing to ally himself with any government or any church? The early Fathers' antagonism to the Gnostics was so bitter that a record of it would fill many volumes.

The New Testament references to Apollos may be counted on one hand. We hear of him first in the *Acts*, date about 54 A.D., "And a certain Jew named Apollos born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue; whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: for he mightily convinced the Jews and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ. And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus." These words are written by Luke.

We next find Paul writing to the Corinthians from Philippi about 59 A.D., "Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. . . . For while one saith, I am of Paul and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed? . . . I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. . . . Therefore let no man glory in men . . . whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas . . . and these things . . . I have transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes. . . . As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren; but his will was not to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time." Then in a letter to Titus, now Bishop of Crete, about 65 A.D., Paul begs Titus to bring "Zenas the

lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.” Titus, it should be added, was a Greek.

This is practically all that is said of Apollos, Paul’s coworker, in the *New Testament*, except that in one of the early Luke manuscripts on the *Acts*, Apollos is given as Apollonius; see Turner’s *Early Church History*.

In Ignatius’ letter to the Magnesians, there is a reference to Apollonius as a presbyter in the Asiatic Greek Church.

Many authorities, among them Luther, considered that this Apollos wrote the *Hebrews*.

As to Apollonius, the Gnostic and Sage of Cappadocia, he shunned fame and the populace to such an extent, though a temple was built and named after him by a collateral descendant of the same family as rescued Thecla, no authentic life of Apollonius was written till many years after his activities had ceased. It is his misfortune that the legends of his life and letters, which had passed into the hands of the Emperor Hadrian, were handled by a supercilious court hanger-on, a Greek writer, who knew nothing of the Gnostics and less of the Christians, and would have considered either beneath his notice if he had known. Apollonius’ biographer was Philostratus; and though there are constant references to him in early writings as a reformer, a revivalist, a miracle or magic-worker, no other authoritative life of him has been given than Philostratus’, drawn from notes compiled by Damis, Apollonius’ secretary. He seemed to have aroused as violent controversies in his lifetime as since his death. His learning and piety, no one disputed. His purity of life was known from India to Rome. He was born rich and deeded his property over to his brother and his poor relatives. Yet so great was the veneration of the populace and royalty for him, wherever he went he lacked naught and traveled in great estate. He was born at Tyana sometime just before or after the birth of Christ; but like Paul born at Tarsus, he might still have been a Grecian Jew; and having studied in Egypt, when young, his birthplace might easily have been confused as Alexandria. By one class he was regarded as “a sorcerer,” “a quack,” “a bonesetter in religion”; by another class, as a miracle-worker and great revivalist; but we must not forget that the Greeks first called Paul “a beggarly babbler.” He had the gift of clairvoyance or prophecy, and foretold the famine mentioned in the *Acts*, the murder of Domitian, and many other events of the period. In his public addresses, he quoted repeatedly the language of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul—in fact, nine such phrases can be picked out of Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius*—to my mind one of the most striking being where he speaks of “seeing through a glass darkly”—which his enemies called the superstition of crystal gazing. Origen thought him a sorcerer. Eusebius called him a philosopher, and in legend he became in Greek-Asia a sort of St. George, or St. Patrick. He was known to have been in

Ephesus, Corinth and Crete from 60 to 65 A.D. Like Paul, he had studied in Tarsus. At sixteen, he became a vegetarian or wandering evangelist, like the Essenes. He undoubtedly possessed the power of healing and refused all gifts for it. At Daphne Gardens, he incurred enmity by calling the men “brute beasts.” His lodging was always in the temples. He seemed to prefer to preach in the pagan temples, either because he would be sure of a large audience, or secure from interruption, or to find people whose spirits were blindly reaching for God. He studied in Egypt, Ethiopia, India and Persia.

Of translations of his life there have been many, Berwick’s one of the earliest English, Phillimore’s, Mead’s and Flinders Petrie’s, the best of the latest. Phillimore’s is bitter towards other translators. Mead’s would, of course, be biased as both Gnostic and Theosophic; but Flinders Petrie’s can hardly be accused of any bias but scholarship. Thanks to Flinders Petrie, the details of Apollonius’ life are now known more fully than any other Apostle except Paul. There are still differences as to certain dates, but roughly, I think the following dates are accepted by the majority of scholars. Please compare with Paul’s letters.

Born 4 or 6 B.C.

Tarsus 11 A.D. as a student.

16 to 21 A.D. under the discipline of speechless silence traveling through Asia Minor and the East.

23 to 43 A.D. teaching, preaching, studying in Antioch.

43 to 45 A.D. India and Persia.

45 to 46 A.D. Crete, Sparta, Athens, Corinth.

46 to 59 A.D. unknown.

59 to 65 A.D. Corinth, Ephesus, Crete, Greek Asia.

66 to 68 A.D. Greece, Rome, Spain, Africa, Sicily.

69 A.D. Egypt and Alexandria and Phœnicia and Antioch and the East.

83 A.D. Ephesus and Crete.

Somewhere here he suffered trial for disrespect to Emperors; a most dramatic story as given by Phillimore.

83 to 96 A.D. preaching and teaching in Ephesus and Crete.

When he had reached the age of a century, he disappeared in Crete as told in a later chapter.

Where Paul went out for the Gentiles to call sinners to repentance, and Peter seems to have gone among the dispersed Jews of the Euphrates and Rome, Apollos went forth to call “the righteous” to repentance; and from the records of the times, the call to the sod-bound “righteous” seemed as badly needed as the call to the sinners.

Now whether Apollos were Apollonius, I do not know. They lived in the period in the same places. For fiction purposes to throw the flashlight on the

conditions under which the Apostles labored, it does not matter; but granted he may have been, isn't there a dilemma in having him East of the Dead Sea, on his way back from the Far East?

Didn't Apollonius, according to the legendary life of him, come back from India by the Red Sea to Egypt? Didn't he meet Vespasian in Alexandria; and wasn't he sent by Vespasian on an errand to Tarsus, North of Palestine? How then, would he go East of the Dead Sea towards Damascus? Fiction could brush these questions aside as immaterial in a story; but it does not need to. From 66 to 70, every port in Egypt, Palestine and Grecian Asia was packed with the Roman Armies hurrying to crush Jerusalem. Christians had already hurried east of the Jordan and Dead Sea to hide in the caves of the desert as Christ had warned them to do, when he foretold the destruction of the Holy City. Travelers from the Far East to Grecian Asia had to follow the Damascus Road; for they could not safely venture in the war zone of the Coast and Jerusalem.

How do we know Peter was in Babylonia? Because he says so in one of his letters. Critics say the Babylonia he mentions is really Rome. I leave that dispute wide open. There is no proof Paul and Peter were together in Rome, when the former was executed. Paul's death is given variously as between 67 and 69 A.D. Note John's references in the *Apocalypse* to "the two witnesses" in the other world! If Peter hastened from the Euphrates to take up the work of Paul's dispersed followers in Rome—and there is no proof of Peter being elsewhere in these years—he must have hastened for Rome almost contemporaneous with the revolt that ended in the overthrow of Jerusalem; for his death by crucifixion took place soon after Paul's. Onesimus' trip to Peter in the East is, of course, pure fiction, for Peter's first round-robin letter to the churches of Asia was sent by Silvanus, a friend of Paul; and very few details are known of the second letter. They are dated 60 to 66 A.D. The Vatican books in this period are invaluable to all students of early Christianity. They reject ruthlessly all fabulous stories. See "Pope's Aids to the Bible," Vol. II; and Fouard's "St. Peter."

How do I infer that in the siege of Jerusalem the Herod women were sent for safety to the Herod Fort east of the Dead Sea instead of west? First, because the Herod Fort on the west side of the Dead Sea was in the hands of the rabble zealots and bandits, and was therefore against Rome and the Herods. It was one of the first forts to be reduced after Jerusalem. Second, because the Herod Fort east of the Dead Sea was always an arsenal of defence against revolt and against the invasion of Arab and Idumean from the east. Here, the Herods had their family country place in distinction from the Palace in Jerusalem and from the public buildings in Cæsarea on the sea. Here, Herod the Great entertained Cleopatra and spurned her blandishments. Here, the



Herods retired with their families for family conference and often for the most terrible crimes known in family history. It was a secret fort. Here were the sulphur baths. Near Jericho were their pleasure gardens. Here, it is now almost universally agreed, John Baptist was imprisoned and executed; and Herod the Great passed the hideous days preceding his hideous death. I can't prove it was where they were kept for safety during the siege of Jerusalem; but it does not seem to me there was any other place where they could have been safely kept; for Cæsarea was in wild disorder. Bernice had gone down to Jerusalem from her old spouse in Syria to lay her plans for Titus, the Roman general; but as far as we know until the end, she was not in the siege. Agrippa was with the Roman forces throughout. Herodias' madness and remorse can be found in her banished husband's letters. The final fate of the last of the Herods beneath Vesuvius' eruption can be found in Josephus.

Letters from Pilate to Herod, from Herod to Pilate, give the data as to Herodias' blindness. In these letters, Herodias' daughter is referred to as a younger Herodias, not as Salome. Therefore I left Salome out of these stories. The fiction woven about Salome's name in modern literature seems to me the most perfect example of sensualizing and degrading biblical records that could be devised. The most cursory glance at the Herod family tree show she must have been little more than a baby at the time of the Baptist's death—certainly under eight or ten. When you consider the colossal pyramid of unclean modern literature and music built on Salome's name, it isn't much of a testimony to the modern heart being much cleaner than the Herod heart which we condemn.

The superstition of the flower foretelling the lovers' fate, which has come down to our own day in the petals of the field daisy, dates back to the very lotus flower worship of India and Egypt.

The legendary "Ardath, the Field of Flowers" is, of course, from the Persian and will be found in the *Book of Esdras*. In fact, to understand this whole era, no student should fail to read *Esdras* and *Enoch*, which are parallel in writing and sentiment to *Daniel* and *Revelation*. Pilate's fate and letters will be found in the *Apocryphal New Testament*.

Malden thinks from Paul's letters to the people of Thessaly 54 A.D. that, up to the assault on Jerusalem in 69-70, many of the Christians still looked for Christ's second coming in glory and majesty and power; but in the letter to Cornith, when Paul had drawn his immortal picture of "the celestial body," it is evident the Christians knew they were working for and in an Invisible Kingdom such as Onesimus described. Malden gives the correct chronology in which the books of the New Testament were written; so that one can follow the fuller and higher and closer outlook the workers were attaining of their own mission.

Details on the trails down to the Jordan at this time can be found in

Josephus, or Thomson's famous *Land and the Book*. There is a full description of Machærus Fort in Thomson also.

It is interesting to note that the Roman Consul, who befriended Paul at Corinth in the days of his work with Apollos, was Junius Galleo, a relative of Seneca's, which seems to bear out that Paul and Seneca knew each other in Rome. In this period before Paul's death, Burrhus, Nero's handy man, was sent again and again on messages from the Jews of Cæsarea and Ephesus to Rome.

Where was Mariamne, Herod the Great's proud wife, murdered by him? Her tomb has recently been discovered near Jerusalem; but it was in the Fort east of the Dead Sea that Herod went mad with remorse over his crime against her.

## APPENDIX C

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FALL OF JERUSALEM AND THE BREAKING UP OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The fall of Jerusalem was of deeper, subtler significance than the surrender of any one of the countless cities which were subject to Rome.

Rome had passed through a few years of terrible turbulence after Nero's suicide in 68. When Vespasian, the steady-headed general with the Army's strength and loyalty behind him, surged to the crest of the turbulence as Emperor in 69, Rome realized in order to stabilize her entire Empire, she must crush rebellion or revolution wherever found. If one city like Jerusalem, or one little province like Judea not much larger than Vermont or New Hampshire, could defy Roman power, all the Eastern provinces would flame in revolt; and there were certain considerations that particularly embittered the Romans towards the Jews. From at least thirty or forty years before the birth of Christ, the Jews of Jerusalem had been granted special privileges by the Roman Senate. They were allowed freely to exercise their own peculiar religious rites. Their huge temple revenues from Jews in every part of the world were left untouched by Rome. Though a head tax had been imposed from the days of the census in Christ's boyhood—supposed not to have exceeded from fifty to sixty cents of modern money—the Jews paid no other tributary taxes to Rome. Certain seaport towns, from the borders of Egypt in the south to Asia Minor on the north, seemed to have paid some sort of municipal tax in excise, which went to the members of the local rulers like the Herod family as a personal revenue or bride's dowry; and yet all local rulers amassed colossal fortunes. How did they do it? By the perversion of justice. While the Jews had their own courts dominated by high priests, these court decisions were subject to appeal to Rome; and as evident in the case of Paul and Felix and Festus at Cæsarea, a bribe could buy freedom or friendship. Paul could have had his liberty if he had paid a bribe. He would not and was held for two years. Then, while the Roman generals cleaned out the robber bands and kidnappers of the desert and Galilee and Dead Sea caves, they too often, like Felix, sold both defeated brigands and brigand prisoners as slaves for immediate profit.

Now the Roman in religion was all things to all men. He set up the goddess Roma in the temples with the features of whatever emperor happened to be ruling, not because he believed his own ruler a god, but because he saw that

the great diversity of gods in the East split the Empire up into warring factions; and Rome aimed to unify her Empire by religion, and doubtless winked cynically at neglect to worship the goddess Roma, as long as no disrespect was offered the statue; but statue, image, picture, painting—all were abhorrent to the Jew, who regarded all outside the pale of the chosen people as cursed by God; so the Jews abominated the conqueror Romans; and the Romans despised the Jews as bigots, fanatics, stiff-necked factionists.

What added gall to bitterness with the Jews was that, from the time of the captivity in Babylon and Persia, from five to seven centuries before Christ, they had not known a national, safe, stable government of their own. There were more Jews in Egypt and Asia Minor than in Palestine. Faction had followed faction; revolution had followed revolution till the Chosen People were the prey to any conqueror from Egypt to Persia; and so there grew up the hope of a Redeemer, a Messiah, a royal son of the line of David, to throw off the conqueror's yoke and lead them to victory. Such a Messiah, the prophets and the scrolls of the prophets foretold. A Sadducee might be a bigoted sceptical materialist, but when he heard the scrolls of the seers of 500 to 700 B.C. read, predicting exactly what had happened to Babylonia and Assyria and Persia and Greece, the agnostic Sadducee was not prepared to deny there might be a Messiah. Somehow, in the modern mind, the Pharisee is held in lower esteem than the Sadducee. The Pharisee was a gentle and, it might be, attudinizing self-conscious poseur; but he was a scholar, and he was liberal, and he was a gentleman. The Sadducee was a hard, ignorant, materialistic bigot. He swore by Moses, but denied a future life and set himself to grasp all the good things of this life within reach, and had at the time of Christ's death captured the best sinecures among the offices of the high priests and council of seventy. He hated the Roman with a bigoted, materialistic hatred, though he played politics with him for his own job. The disappointment of both Sadducees and Pharisees at a poor Nazarene named Jesus, calling himself the Messiah and gaining an enormous following, flamed into delirious fanatic frenzy; and just then rose the Zealots and Sicarii (short sword fighters) shouting "freedom at any cost" and rallying all Jews in the Passover of spring—when more than two million pilgrims visited the Holy City—to rise and throw off the Roman yoke. The city gates were shut. The citizens inside had no choice but to join the rebels, or let themselves down by ropes from the walls at night and flee for the desert; but many citizens, knowing the power of Rome and having all their means invested in Jerusalem, tried to compromise. They were plundered, tortured, murdered. Women and children were held for ransom, or hostages for the loyalty of the waverers; and the rebellion that had flamed up in the name of "freedom" presently ran lawless riot under an ægis better named "folly"; and for seven months the Holy City was ruled by brute-

beast crime and anarchy. If the Sadducees and the Pharisees had intrigued with the rebellion at first, they were now trapped in their own intrigue, for they saw their temple chests rifled of the revenues of almost a century, the gold sheathing ripped from the great pillars and colonnades, the holy wine brought from vault and cellar and poured out, mingled with human blood, in a deluge of frenzied debauch that lasted from spring till autumn—seven long months. Famine only rendered the conditions more desperate. If the Zealots surrendered now, they knew they would be put to the sword and lose the loot hidden in the secret aqueduct under the Temple; so they fought with the maniacal frenzy of cornered beasts. The Pharisees and Sadducees of the Sanhedrim would now have surrendered to Rome; but the Zealots pursued them into the Holy of Holies and either stabbed them there and threw their bodies in the aqueduct below, or pursued them into the very aqueduct, where they were slain.

Keep in mind the configuration of the Holy City at this time—the Herod Palaces to the west, the great Temple to the east, the whole city like an eagle’s nest on the flat top of a lofty rock. Between the Temple and the Palaces lay the main body of the cramped, crowded city thoroughfares. This central city lay in a slight depression. Between the Temple east and the Palaces west ran an overhead bridge. Below ran a very large underground aqueduct, which supplied water to the Temple. The water supplies came from pools and cisterns used at the Palaces and were sluiced on during the great yearly sacrifices through the aqueduct to run under the Temple and carry off the refuse to the precipice to the east or south of the Temple. When the sacrifices were over, the water was turned off the aqueduct and presumably used for the Royal Palace enclosures.

The best description of ancient Jerusalem is in Josephus covering hundreds of pages; of modern Jerusalem is in Thomson’s *Land and Book*; but until the transfer of control of the Holy City from Turkish power, it has been impossible to examine the underground passages beneath the city of which there are many, or the lines of the old Herod walls. Within fifty years of Christ’s death, the site of the Temple was plowed and a shrine set up to a pagan Venus.

Whichever way the war befell, the Herod regime was doomed. By rebellion, the Jews had forfeited their privileges. There could be no royal revenues for the Herods through local governments. If the Zealots had triumphed, then Roman protection would no longer hold the Herod throne secure; and the Herods were hated by the populace.

Up to the final truce portrayed in the story of the fall of the Holy City, Titus, the commanding Roman general, had exercised great clemency and forbearance. He had permitted refugees from the beleaguered city to pass through his lines untouched, to the desert beyond Jordan. He had sent emissary

after emissary to the more intelligent section of rulers to advise them to save themselves by surrender; but each peace mission had met with treachery and insult. Twice in sorties of semipeace messengers, Titus had been cut off from his own soldiers and almost slain; so it was necessary to call to the aid of the regular Roman Army, the Macedonian Mercenaries; and from that moment, Jerusalem was doomed, for the Mercenaries were paid in plunder.

Titus was at this time not yet Emperor; but among the Jewish writers, all rulers from Rome are referred to as Cæsar, or Emperor, or King. The Herods were really only deputies; but they were always called Kings. Titus was still a very young man and his leading general, Trajan, could not have been very much past his early twenties. In the most scandal-loving age Rome ever knew, very little has come down in history against Vespasian and his son Titus. Both men were essentially soldiers and cared little for the empty noise of triumph and kingship, though to keep the populace loyal Titus erected the Great Arch, under which more than 30,000 Jewish captives passed and on one side of which the Jewish Tables of the Law were represented. Vespasian and Titus built the Temple of Peace to celebrate the victory; but if you read Josephus carefully, it will be found this was more in concession to mob politics than to glory in triumph. It was to impress the seething East with fear of Rome's power.

The attempt of the Nazarenes and the scribes to save the sacred scrolls is history, not fiction. Many old Hebrew scrolls mentioned in the Old Testament were lost forever at this time. There were the *Book of the Covenant*, the *Book of the Law*, the *Book of the Wars*, *Acts of David*, *Samuel the Seer*, the *Book of Gad*, *David's Seer*—and seven other volumes not embodied by Ezra in Scripture, but known to the Jews. Among the lost scrolls there is a story told of the *Book of Jasher* of which an 1840 translation lies before me. This book is mentioned in the David wars, and several forgeries of *Jasher* appeared. It is said the genuine *Jasher* was brought from Jerusalem by Titus. When his officers went to plunder the city, one *Sidrûs* found in a secret wall chamber in an ancient scribe's house, a library of books among which sat the old scribe reading. Somehow, *Jasher* was carried by the Army officers to Seville and in 1613 it was printed in Venice.

That many old scrolls were carried to Spain either by the dispersed Jews, or by the Roman Army, there is no doubt; for after the expulsion of the Moors from Granada centuries later, thousands of such Hebrew volumes were burned in mistake for pagan Arabic. Intolerance and fanatic ignorance are dangerous weapons, whether ancient or modern.

As to the interpretation given to the Zodiac and to the prophecies by the Nazarenes in the Herod Tower the night of the fall of the Holy City—this is fiction; and had to be, for Gnostics, Essenes, Nazarenes, Sadducees, Pharisees,

Theosophists, Ethiopian, Egyptian and Hindoo scholars all disagreed violently on what the signs of the Zodiac portended, or how the events proclaimed by the seers of old should be fulfilled. There isn't any doubt at all that the prophecy of Jeremiah was being fulfilled literally before the very eyes of the watchers in the Herod Towers; but when you come to the winged chariots with wheels in Ezekiel—where the Eastern mystic would see the wheels as symbols of planetary chains, the western literalist would see a modern aeroplane coursing the clouds.

On one thing Eastern mystics and Western literalists would agree—the fall of Jerusalem marked the crash of the Old and the birth of the New. One Order had died. A New Order was born; and the old seeress voiced the expectation which is so rife even to-day that the sword will yet give place to the plowshare; that humanity shall pass to and is working towards a more spiritual sphere, where we may have what the scientists call a sixth cosmic sense and command the powers of water and air. Wireless waves give us the first inkling of this power.

The statement that “Israel burnt her children on the walls” to the Fire God is not fiction. It is true. It is to be found in the Bible; and within the last ten years jars have been dug up in Palestine where the bodies of cremated infants were so offered.

Space does not permit going into the mystic sign of a virgin in the Zodiac. We have only to remember the Zodiac came from the Far East; and so did the Persian magi to Christ's manger. Another point worth noting; the Apostles, now grown aged, knew the Messiah's kingdom was not to be an earthly kingship. They learned this very slowly, but the fall of the Holy City must have clenched forever the convictions.

There is another very interesting point here, which will be discussed more fully in the last chapter. The cry of the maniac on the walls is not fiction. It is fact. It will be found in Josephus. It is almost the very wording of the cries of despair in John's *Apocalypse*. In John's Vision are two references to the Temple as still standing; and this brings up the question, was the *Apocalypse* written long before John's death and not somewhere round 90 A.D.?

Please note—there were bad earth tremors all over the world from 66 to 68, 69, 70 and 79, from Vesuvius to the Dead Sea. It was the last great eruption that took the lives of the three Herod descendants on Naples Bay; just as it was doubtless one of the earlier tremors that threw the great Temple door to the east open during the siege. This door was opened only once a year at the Passover.

There was a record that though Matthew passed through Cæsarea, where Philip's prophet daughters dwelt, and through Jerusalem on to Egypt, a copy of his Gospel in Hebrew was first found in Cæsarea. This is discussed fully in the

volumes already named on the apostolic days.

Was “the son of one Lazarus of Bethany,” the son of Christ’s friend? The dates would seem to prove the possibility. On the other hand, though Bethany was a very small village, the name Lazarus was a very common one. The story of this escape from the city is found in Josephus.

That Herodias’ husband had been banished from Palestine to the Danube and from the Danube to Spain will be found in the *Herod Letters* already quoted.

The location of the Antonia Tower was exactly as given in the story—a bastioned high Tower ascended by circular steps inside, with the east wall joining the roof and upper galleries of the Temple, the west side of the Tower running along the parapet of the North Jerusalem Wall to the Herod Towers of the Palaces on the west side of the city.



## APPENDIX D

### THE DISPUTES AS TO THECLA IN LEGEND AND HISTORY

Concerning the story of Paul and Thecla, there are fortunately very few controversial questions that cannot be answered definitely and simply.

Was there ever any real Thecla?

If so, how much of her story is legend, and how much history?

And of the known history, how closely have the facts been followed in the story?

Many of the Paul and Thecla legends must be ascribed to folklore of the Roman Road, much of it wildly exaggerated; but beneath the legends is the fact of some young woman martyr converted by him in Iconium, Derbe or Lystra, escaping the ordeal of wild beasts and fire, whether in Antioch or Iconium, and leaving a tradition of having retired to the caves, where she established one of the first monastic houses among the Greeks, and drew away the Daphne dancing girls from sensual pagan rites of the Temples to such an extent that the merchants of Antioch were so maddened at the fall off in trade of sacrificial beasts, images and incense to pleasure seekers and winterers from Rome that they plotted against the lives of the Christian refugees hiding in the mountain caves.

How much of her story is legend, and how much history?

Tertullian says her story, as given in the *Apocryphal* New Testament, was forged by a writer of Asia. Yet Eusebius, Gregory and a dozen others before the fourth century refer to Thecla as having been a genuine character, whom legend had obscured and magnified as mist hides and exaggerates real figures in real life. Basil of Seleucia wrote her life in verse. Another Scholastic reports how an emperor had visions of her. The original version of her life on which this story is written is now in a Greek manuscript in the Bodleian Library and was regarded by Middle Age biblical students as largely legendary, but a picture of the status of woman in the first century in Greek Asia. The references to the names of Paul's associates and the apostates from the faith are the same as in the *Acts*, but whether Thecla is to be regarded as "the half wit," who followed Paul, or one of "the honorable women" won to the faith, it is impossible to tell. It is disappointing here to have to record that while the Catholic, Armenian and secular writers acknowledge Thecla as a fact, the great Presbyterian divines nearly all ignore her, though they quote in full the

descriptions of Paul, from the life of Thecla. This strikes me as not exactly according to the rules of good sport. If the Thecla account of Paul is true, why isn't the account of Thecla true? It is interesting to add there is a biblical manuscript in the British Museum, presented to Charles I, 1628, said to have been copied by Thecla, the Martyr. It includes the Epistles of St. Clement. The Vatican "Aid to Bible Students" wisely rejects the fables of Thecla's Life; but all scholars accept the fact there was a Thecla, Martyr.

Iconium itself, or Konieh of to-day, was a city of 30,000 people, noted for its wool and leather, carpet and tent industries. It was a sort of halfway house for the Greeks from the Isles of the Sea and the desert travelers of Persia and Babylonia. The church where Paul preached at Iconium has been found by modern archaeologists.

What do modern scholars such as Ramsay and Turner say of Thecla?

I quote from Turner's review of Ramsay's *Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170*: "The Acts of Paul and Thecla do not . . . come to us . . . in the best of company . . . and contain all the marks which characterize this whole class of forgeries." He then refers to mistakes in the place names of the Bodleian copy and the belittling of marriage which betrays the author of this manuscript as a Gnostic or Essene; "and yet . . . the details have probability . . . and it is doubtful . . . how far it is possible to disentangle the original matter from . . . recasts." It was on Paul's first missionary journey (Acts XIII, 51). He was following the Roman Road of Augustus and branched to Iconium. He is described as "small, bald and bow-legged, with close-meeting eyebrows and long nose, but graceful, gracious and radiant." Ramsay accepts this description of Paul in the Thecla legends. At Iconium, his host was the Onesiphorus, mentioned in his letters, and he was pestered by the frantic jealousy of the Demas and Hermogenes, also mentioned in his letters. Paul was accused of causing friction between man and woman; and he was scourged and expelled from the city. There follows the story much as I have given it here, with long details and repetitions and embellishments left out. When Nero used the bodies of Christians as torches for his pleasure gardens and a Herod daughter had to flee from an old satyr, whom her dowry had bought—it is a pretty sound inference without any legendary exaggeration that a young girl, who joined the despised Christians and refused to marry her lover, would be treated without mercy in an age so sensual that sex had become an untellable part of religious worship.

And now we come to one of the proofs that Thecla was more than legend. The *grande dame* who adopted her is variously named Trifina, Trefina, Tryphæna of the house of Polemon (date of reign 37 B.C. to 63 A.D.). It was to one of the Kings of the house that Bernice was the second time married and from whom she fled to Jerusalem. He was a converted pagan to the Jewish

faith, probably to get Bernice's dowry. The Herod daughters were half Arab, but they were also half of the Jewish high-priest blood; and union with what one historian calls "these half-breed brutes" proved too strong for even Herod blood. Trefina was daughter of a Polemon from 44 A.D. to 63 A.D. This Polemon's wife had been a first cousin to the Emperor Claudius and ruled over Pontus jointly with her son till about 40 A.D., when she retired. Her daughter had died, and the query is—was her son the man who married Bernice; or had Trefina's husband discarded her and married Bernice? Her son was reigning at the time she passed through Iconium. Her dead daughter's name is given as Falconilla, the same as in the legend of Thecla. To know the type of the vice of this house one must read Apollonius' *Life*.

Practically the verdict of Ramsay and Turner on Thecla is, "the *Acts of Thecla* . . . expand the hints of St. Luke and throw a welcome light on the social conditions." Luke refers to "many women" attending Paul's services in the house of Onesiphorus. In other words, Thecla was a personality, but her real history is lost in legend.

Of the legend, how closely have the facts been followed in this story? Modern decency would not permit all the details of the insults to Thecla, so these are shortened in the story here. She was exposed not only in the arena of Iconium but in the arena of Antioch for repulsing the lewd advances of the city magistrate, who in one of the fêtes represented the god Roma and proceeded to claim her as a vestal virgin. All these details have been omitted or shortened in the story, and her experiences have been centered at Iconium.

For the rest, the story conforms to the facts of the age. The Greeks were the rich trader class despised by the soldierly Romans. Men were addicted to effeminacy, jealousy, self-adornment; and the Greek matrons chased their daughters into early marriages to avoid having evidence of age in their family. Paul was called a "Jewish babbler" here as he was in Greece. Girls who would neither marry nor become temple vestals were thrust in the streets as courtesans. The red cord of the courtesan marked the difference between the temple virgins consecrated to the god and the temple girl kept as a bait for lust and revenue, of which one Aphrodite Temple had a colossal revenue. Gnostics will deny that the names of "the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost" were used in baptism before the fourth century. I refuse to discuss the controversy—it is nonessential to the true picture of conditions set forth in the story.

There is one interesting minor point for the argumentative to worry over. Paul refers again and again to the man with shaved hair, the woman with unshaved and covered head, both references really advising the Christian away from the temple vices which becurled men and women with short red-corded hair symbolized. There is a reference to Paul taking a vow, himself, that carried him to Jerusalem. (Acts xviii, 18). He had his head shaved. Now, the

Thecla legend describes Paul as “bald,” like a man who, Roman fashion, had always worn his hair short. Yet the most of the pictures of Paul and the other early saints represent them with hair like a thatch, beards like Druids, and expressions about as cheerful as an inverted tablespoon, though their evangel was called “the Glad News,” and the keynote of Paul’s life was—“Rejoice.”

## APPENDIX E

### CONCERNING THE EARLY GNOSTICS AND APOLLOS AND APOLLONIUS AND JOHN

With the bitter and raging disputes, regarding the writing of the *Apocalypse*; whether John followed the Gnostics or the Gnostics followed John; whether John was the son of Zebedee, whose mother once pleaded that he might sit at the right hand of Christ throned in his earthly kingdom, or whether this John was a younger man; whether the Gospel was written before or after the *Apocalypse*; whether the “Beast” symbolized a dragon of approaching universal anarchy, or Rome’s brute power, or the goddess Roma in the Temple; whether Onesimus, the runaway slave, was Onesimus, the young bishop of Ephesus; whether the passing of Apollos is legend or fact; why a man like Apollos, of whom the contemporary literature of the day is full of references, was so completely ignored by all the early writers of the church except three or four, the last story of this volume as fiction has nothing to do.

The object has been to shun controversy as a smoke screen concealing facts under prejudice and ignorance, and use the story only to throw a flashlight on early conditions; but for students, who wish to come to their own conclusions and not have other people’s conclusions rammed down their throats, a few references will be given, which can be followed up.

First, it was self-evident to all the Christian communities by the last quarter of the first century A.D.—in which the story is timed—that Christ had not come to set up a glorified earth kingship. Rather, he had come to transmute the earth kingdom into a régime so in harmony with His own Unseen Kingdom that it would transmute the world into a New Heaven and a New Earth. This was the Christian’s job, first in getting himself cleansed of sin, second in working for humanity, and it was now apparent it was a long job stretching down the centuries; so the writings of John, instead of being “close ups” as the movies would put it, are telescopic flashes back to the night of time and creation and telescopic flashes forward to the eternity of soul and universe; and the pivot of the telescope is the little flash between past and future called “now”; and the eye looking through the telescope to past and future is John’s.

Here are a few historic facts as guide posts.

The fall of Jerusalem had driven the Christians from Antioch to Ephesus, for reasons already given—Antioch was overrun with the Army. While Ephesus was not a great commercial center like Corinth, it was the third city of

the civilized world as a center of learning, worship, culture, wealth. Rome ranked first. Athens came next, Ephesus and Alexandria next.

From the time the goddess Roma was set up, the temples began to be deserted; and this infuriated Rome, who hoped to see the new deity unify her crumbling empire in a new cohesion. The Nero persecutions of 64 to 68, which had been the diversion of a cruel madman, now became the set policy of the Empire under Domitian, and ran a terrible course from 81 to 96 A.D. The Christians were dispersed, but they were not immune. Again and again we find that Demetrius, the silversmith, who gave Paul such trouble as related in the *Acts*, called to confer in Rome as to the restoration of the old religions. See the *Life of Apollonius*. The falling away from the temples not only alarmed the Empire, but dislocated trade. It hurt the silversmith's trade from Ephesus to Damascus and cut off an enormous yearly market for the cattle and sheep of sacrifice. The pocket nerve was touched; and the cruelty of an acute anger was mingled with the most diabolical obscene falsehoods to destroy the new Christian cult.

Nothing disloyal could be proved against John; so his banishment to Patmos was revoked. Frightful volcanic fires could be seen from Patmos during John's stay there, and the whole Mediterranean rang with the horror of the Vesuvius eruption. We may find tinges of this in his *Apocalypse*. See Peters' *Bible and Spade*, Beckwith's *Apocalypse*, Turner's *Early Church History*, Malden's *New Testament*, and the other authorities mentioned in former supplementary chapters. Irenæus says John settled and lived in Ephesus till the reign of Trajan. He is supposed to have come back from Patmos to Ephesus and helped in a training school for Christian workers there. Ephesus was the very center of Platonic and Gnostic learning at this time; and the Gnostic beliefs of the "Logos" or "Word" run all through John's writings. There is a curious difference in John's attitude to Rome in the Gospel and in the *Apocalypse*. The former seems to counsel rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; in the latter, the Seven Hilled City is a Beast. Why? The only answer is a guess that hardly needs to be given. The martyrdom of the Christians had begun. Clement refers to the recall of John from Patmos after Domitian's death. Nor could anything disloyal be proved against Apollonius. Though he openly said that he detested "tyrants," no king need put that cap on unless it fitted; but as he frequented the temples and ignored the goddess Roma, he was considered dangerous and so was tried on the charge of having torn a boy's entrails out for the purposes of divination. The charge was ridiculous and could not be proved, and Apollonius came back to Ephesus and frequented Crete, where Titus, the Greek and youthful Christian, had become Christian bishop by 65 A.D. The fact that the young Titus would work in the Christian Church and the aged Apollonius in the pagan temples may explain

the hostility or silence of some of the church fathers to the Eastern Sage. This seems to me a more rational explanation than the Theosophists' charge that the Christians were jealous of Apollonius as a rival in the eyes of the populace to Christ. Apollonius is never spoken of as "a rival to Christ." He is spoken of as a worker of miracles, which could not be denied, and as a clairvoyant "see-er" of events which came to pass, like the reign of Vespasian, the deterioration of Domitian and the assassination of the tyrant. If Apollos be Apollonius—and I decline to give even an opinion on that dispute, in spite of dates, abbreviations and events pointing to only one "Apollos" sage in this era—Paul settled the matter when he said one "planted" and the other "watered" and "God gave the increase." The rivalry was rather between Paul and Apollos—and it was a rivalry of fanatic followers, not leaders. Let us not blame the followers too harshly. Paul had made it his life work that Christianity should not be an offshoot of Judaism but an all-embracing world religion. Apollos still preached in the pagan temples and the Christians may have feared dilutions of the pure truths with such errors as the fleshy Nicolaitans, whom John denounced; if the flesh was only a garment, then it didn't matter much what sins stained the garment—you could lay it off. Therefore liberty ran riot in the libertine and visions ran to medium frenzies. Some of these trance frenzies were of such a nature as cannot be told. In one, the initiate to the mysteries was placed naked and drugged under a high altar, on which was slain a bull. The aspirant to enter the mysteries had to open his mouth and drink of the hot blood as it poured down on him—an almost parallel ceremony with the Ancient Aztecs, where the blood was human.

To revert to the historic facts on Ephesus—it was a dream city of inexpressible beauty, basking in a wonderful sunlight between mountain and sea, with white alabaster colonnades—one hundred and twenty columns there were across the face of the Diana Temple, which was over four hundred feet long and two hundred broad—at the entrance to the Temple, to the great hippodrome reported to seat 50,000 people, to the public square park in the heart of the city, to the baths, to the circus, to the fountains. The city occupied an area of five by three miles. Coming out of the Mediterranean, ships ascended the dredged Cayster River, to a square basin landlocked and surrounded by a magnificent stone parapet. On one side were the wharfs and docks; on the other the broad steps up to Diana's Temple. The city proper, with its public park, faced the end of the basin of the sea through more magnificent elaborate colonnades. In fact, it might be said there was neither an ungraceful nor inartistic architectural line in all Ephesus. The city might have been dedicated and consecrated to beauty. The Diana goddess was not the huntress as told in the story. The huntress had been degraded first into an Eastern Astarte presiding over the productive powers of the earth, and finally

still farther degraded to the sensuous rites, which at this time were running a sort of delirious frenzied riot in the world. Cressets of naphtha petroleum oils, and asbestos soap or oils may be used to explain much of the apparent magic of altar fires that never went out and priests who could handle flame without harm; and all the magic was concentrated on the materialistic aim of obtaining revenues from the enormous traffic that passed through Ephesus to and from Asia to Rome; and the great Diana festivals were at Ephesus in spring. Earthquake and war demolished ancient Ephesus. The Diana statue was carried off to France. The stones of the beautiful Ionic columns went to build churches in Sienna and Rome. The ruins of Ephesus by 1888, when the archæologist's spade had been busy, were a melancholy epic in crumbling stone.

Half a century ago, the legends of underground chambers in Crete were regarded as myths. To-day, we know those myths were founded on historic fact and the spade has dug up ancient Crete culture. Phillimore ridicules Flinders Petrie for accepting the story of the earthquake and storms on the night of Apollonius' passing from human ken in the Temple at Cydonia, Crete. Yet there is not a sailor of the Mediterranean, who does not know the superstition of all Cretans at the time of the spring and fall equinoctial gales. The Island trembles and vibrates to the storms. Cretans say to this day—and there are 300,000 of them believe it—that Crete was created by a volcanic blow-up—a remnant of the submerged Atlantis—and is very delicately balanced on subterranean rocks. When the gales come, it trembles on this balance. Knossus marks the ruins of the Palace of Minos of 3000 B.C. Greek hermits still frequent the mountains of the Island and live the tranquil life of the ancient contemplative Gnostic.

Of Patmos, little is to be said except that it is not so large as the length and breadth of New York City, and was a very short run by sail from Ephesus, ships usually pausing to and from Crete. In the story, Onesimus paused on his way back. The ecstasy of the *Revelation* on Patmos would to-day be called “a glimpse of cosmic consciousness”; and there is no use going into the dispute whether the vision covered only the few months John was exile on Patmos, or a series of years beginning at the fall of the Holy City and extending down to the reign of Domitian, when persecution compelled the Christians to use cypher in many of their communications; and “the Beast” may have been symbolized with emperor worship, or the impending anarchy.

The story takes for granted that Onesimus, the runaway slave, was Onesimus, the young bishop. This is a disputed point. I don't care to take up the dispute. It is nonessential to the aim of the story; but if the question of his age be asked it is easily answered. If Onesimus were a young man of twenty with Paul in Rome in 64 to 68, then by 86 to 96 A.D., when John is supposed “to have fallen asleep in Ephesus,” he would still be a young man in his forties



to preside over the destinies of Christianity at the very pivotal point in Grecian Asia.

For those who like to worry disputes out as a dog worries a cat, or a cat worries a mouse, the references of the early fathers to Onesimus may be quoted:

In Ignatius' *Letters to the Ephesians*, which Archbishop Usher of Oxford, 1644 (see *Evelyn's Journals*), issued, and later scholars regarded as authentic letters, though corrupted in texts—when Ignatius himself was on his way to martyrdom in Rome, are found the words—"I received, therefore, in the name of God, your whole multitude in Onesimus . . . who, according to the flesh is your bishop . . . whom I beseech you . . . that you strive to be like unto him . . . and blessed be God . . . you are worthy . . . enjoy such an excellent bishop." Then he goes on to speak of "Burrhus," who was a handy man for Nero in the days Onesimus was in Rome, and Paul and Luke wrote of "friends in Cæsar's household." Again, he couples the names of Onesimus and Burrhus in the seventh verse of the first chapter. Again, he congratulates them on their Bishop in Chapter II, who commends their "good order" to Ignatius on his way to Rome in bonds. In his letter to the Magnesians he refers to Onesimus and Apollonius as working together and begs them not to use their "bishop too familiarly, owing to his youth." Though "to appearance young, he must be obeyed, because he presides in the place of God." In his letter from Smyrna to the Trallians, he refers to the faith having got inside the Palace at Rome; and his letter to the Philadelphians is written by "Burrhus sent from Ephesus"; and Ignatius of Antioch, to quote Turner of Oxford, "was a trusted and responsible leader." The martyrdom of Ignatius is no longer placed as late as 107 A.D., so the discrepancy in dates here is still unsettled. (See Bishop Lightfoot.) To show how widely and wildly scholars vary in their dates, take your New Testament, note the dates of the letters at the heads of the Epistles, and compare to these dates given in Turner—Peter visits Rome 42 A.D. (See date 60 to 66 A.D. of Peter's letters from Babylon.) Peter and Paul martyred in Rome 57 or 58 A.D. (Note the dates of Paul's Epistles from 59 to 64 A.D.) Suicide Nero, 67 or 68 A.D. (Yet Paul's second trial was towards the end of Nero's life.) Death Domitian 95 or 96. (Note date of Apollonius' prediction in Ephesus.) I give these wide variations in authorities solely to show how picayune and childish and nonessential to the picture as a whole are the minor points over which scholars have wrangled; while youth grew bored and slipped away from teachers, who wrangled instead of teaching.

All these references are not proofs, but they throw the burden of disproof on those who call Paul's servant a "bell hop" and declare the Onesimus of Ephesus another Greek. Onesimus was the carrier of Paul's letter to the Ephesians; and Apollos was the great Gnostic leader in Ephesus at this time.

The passing of Apollonius in Crete is too long a story to be repeated here. I have followed Flinders Petrie, though those who want to jump into the controversy over Apollonius would do well to read Phillimore's acrid comments and the Theosophists' who are a modern and divided edition of the ancient Gnostics. The Theosophists say Apollonius is the riddle of riddles of the first century. "No one knows where he came from or where he went." By Empire and Church, "every means were used to sweep his memory from men's minds," because he would conform to neither Empire nor Church. Whether he died in Crete, or Ephesus, about 96 A.D., the modern Gnostics do not say. He remained always the aristocrat, the scorner of all outward show of piety or power. The churches of Asia actually prayed to Apollonius after his death, so one sees another reason why the church discouraged his cult, just as Paul had to stop Asiatic Greeks from worshiping him. He was lecturing in Ephesus at the time Domitian was murdered in Rome—and suddenly stopped in the middle of his lectures and described the far-off crime in the Imperial City, crying out to the assassins to strike home to the tyrant's heart. Then he described the wild joy in the Roman city streets over the news of Domitian's death. A descendant of Trefina's of the Thecla legend built him a fane in Asia Minor. In those days, they called it a Temple to a new god, Apollonius. In our day, we would probably call it a memorial church.

With these hints, any one feeling it a personal mission to settle the disputes on which the flashlight has been cast by the five stories of the apostolic ages—can do the settling for his own conscience and let his fellow readers do the same.

The day has passed when youth will be bludgeoned into belief. It wants facts, or as close as it can get to facts—then it will do its own believing or disbelieving; and as Malden says, Christianity takes its stand on the ground of historic truth. Let us get the flashlight on the essential truths.

## FINALE

At a time when our own modern world seems to be passing through a welter similar to the apostolic ages, it may not be amiss to close by quoting from Bishop Solomon at Lake Van, Armenia, who officiated between the Tigris and Euphrates about 1222 A.D. His *Book of the Bee*, translated by Wallis Budge, the great orientalist, in 1886 (Oxford), reflects many of the ancient church traditions among the religious communities founded by the Apostles.

The old scholar gives his work the name of *the Bee* because the bee culls its pure honey from all flowers; and so he attempts to cull the best from the old records of the early church.

He begins with the creation as told in Genesis and interprets that record partly as a mystic race record according to the Gnostics and Theosophists, and partly as a record of fact; but he sets down both interpretations side by side, and forces no conclusions. You get the sense that the old scholar knows he is dealing with an epic; but whether that epic is a myth reflecting a fact on the clouds, or a fact obscured by myth—you must decide for yourself; for “Know, O brother,” he says, “where there is true love, there is no fear; and where there is freedom of speech, there is no dread . . . on subjects beyond the capacity of our simple understanding . . . do not enquire too closely into the divine words.”

And the advice is as good for our day as for his own.

The first thirty chapters have an amazing similarity to *Genesis*, the *Book of Enoch*, the *Book of Jasher*, *Revelation*; and should be read parallel with *Ezekiel* and *Daniel*. They carry the human mind back to the very dawn of time.

It is where the record comes down to apostolic days that it throws a flashlight on the historic personages in the fiction of this volume.

I make no comment but set down in brief the old writer’s contributions to historic data.

He says that Mary, the Mother of the Messiah, was brought up among the Temple virgins. The Salome, who was the midwife at Christ’s birth, resembles the Salome of the Gnostics’ *Pistis Sophia*. Whether the star followed by the Magi were a star of vision, or a constellation of the Zodiac—he does not know. He does not think the massacre of the infants followed immediately after the visit to the manger, but within two years. The legends of the Magi’s gifts are given very fully. He says it was the father of Nathaniel who saved John the Baptist’s life, when Zechariah was murdered before the altar of the Temple. This refers to Christ’s recognition of Nathaniel later with Philip. He says Christ met Lazarus first in Egypt, when Lazarus befriended the exiles, Joseph

and Mary. The Herodias episode is given very fully as recorded in Chapter II here. Machærus is given as the place of John's imprisonment and murder. Abgar, King of Edessa, who wrote letters to Christ, finally bought Christ's woven seamless garment over which the soldiers cast dice. Joseph of Arimathea, he calls a Senator. He says Mary died between her fifty-eighth and sixty-first year. He gives very fully the ten occasions on which Christ was seen in vision or in body—the last time by Stephen and Paul. The upper chamber of the Last Supper had been prepared by Lazarus to whom it belonged, by Simon the Cyrenian, who helped to carry the cross, by Joseph, the Senator, and by Nicodemus.

His notes on the Apostles are invaluable. Peter preached in Antioch and in Rome, where Nero crucified him, head downwards. Andrew, his brother, went to the wild Scythians of the North. John, the son of Zebedee, the hero of the fifth story in this volume—over whom the higher critics have waged such bootless battle—preached in Ephesus, was exiled to Patmos, came back to Ephesus, built a church and taught there with Ignatius, till he “fell asleep.” John Second, a young disciple of John the Apostle, became Bishop of Ephesus and wrote the *Revelation* as told him word for word by John, the friend of Christ. This brings up a dispute hoary with age. Was the youth beloved of Christ, the first John or the second? I cannot answer that question. The dispute as to the death of James is unconsciously explained by the author of the *Book of the Bee*. James was cast down from a pinnacle of the Temple. The rabble that pursued, slew him with sword and stone. He was slain by order of Herod, Bernice's first husband. Philip left his prophetess daughters in Cæsarea and worked in Phrygia, Onesimus' home country. Thomas went from Jerusalem to Persia and India, where he was stabbed to death for baptizing the daughter of a great ruler. No modern scholar needs to be told there are remnants of Thomas' early followers yet in India. Matthew found refuge from the Jews in Tyre and Sidon and Antioch. The *Book of the Bee* says nothing of his mission to Egypt. Bartholomew worked in Armenia; Jude in Laodicea, the city of wealth and apathy; Simon Zelotes, inward from Aleppo; James, son of Alphæus, in Tadmor—Palmyra, the glorious; Matthias, successor to Judas, in Sicily.

In Rome, Paul sought the Gentiles; Peter, the dispersed Jews. There are disputes here, I don't care to go into. I have already touched on them. Peter gave his record to Mark; Paul, his to Luke—which jibes remarkably with the verdict of higher critics.

Luke had been the physician, who attended Lazarus—a not improbable thing if Lazarus were in Egypt as Luke's writings are full of reference to the Greek culture of Alexandria, Egypt. Mark is given as a stepson of Peter; and Rhoda was his sister. Zacchæus, the publican, was slain, while preaching. Joseph, the Senator, transferred his labors to the ten Greek cities of Decapolis.

Nicodemus and his brother, Gamaliel, the great philosophers, became open professors of the faith. Nathaniel was stoned to death. Simon, son of Cleopas, became a bishop in Jerusalem. Cephas (Peter) taught in Baalbec—the wonder of the Old World; Barnabas in Italy; Titus in Crete; Justus in Cæsarea; Hermas, the shepherd, in Antioch; and others of the seventy dispersed to all parts of the known world.

Of Onesimus, the *Book of the Bee* says “his legs were broken in Rome.” Whether this was when he fled for protection to Paul—in which case, the story is much more dramatic and illustrative of the beauty of Paul’s character than I have given—or after his return from distributing Paul’s letters to the Greeks of Asia—the record does not say. It is probably this reference that gave rise to the young Onesimus, who became bishop, being distinct from the young Onesimus, whom Paul sent back to Asia Minor. The record does not say he suffered martyrdom in Rome—simply that “his legs were broken.” Apollos, the *Book of the Bee* says, was “burnt with fire.” I have no comment to make on that. If Apollos were Apollonius, his fate could be ascribed to death by fire; but if Apollos were not Apollonius, then the lack of all reference to Apollonius, so famous from Rome to India, by a writer of the legends of the apostolic days, is very remarkable; for Apollonius had a temple named after him in Asia Minor and had been a great figure in his day in Babylonia. Timothy taught and died in Ephesus. Candace’s Eunuch established missions in Ethiopia. The foster brother of Herod is called Manæel, not Manæn.

The names of those followers, who fell away in persecution, are much as given in Paul’s letters and early church history—Judas, Simon, Levi, Hymenæus, Demas—of the riots in Asia Minor. The *Book of the Bee* says Philip had three daughters, who were see-ers, or prophetesses; *the Acts* say four. The *Book of the Bee* says each of the Twelve and of the Seventy jotted down memories of Christ, but to avoid confusion, confided their memories—the Twelve to Matthew and John; the Seventy to Luke and Mark—and this, too, sustains the shots in the dark of the higher critics.

The child, of whom Christ said, “except ye become as children,” the *Book of the Bee* says, grew up to be Ignatius. The children on whom Christ laid his hands were Timothy and Titus. The Marys of the Gospel were—Mary, the Mother of the Messiah; Mary, the mother of Cleopas; Mary, the wife of Peter and mother of Mark; Mary, the sister of Lazarus. Was Mary, the sinner, the Mary of Magdala out of whom were cast the demons? The *Book of the Bee* says frankly the early church did not know. They know she was healed and became a holy woman. Thecla, the *Book of the Bee* refers to as “the Blessed”; so that I cannot regard the legend as a fiction.

I cannot close better than to quote the prophecies of the old sage of 1200 A.D. Keep in mind exactly what has happened in Asia Minor between 1914

and 1924, and then decide for yourself whether all see-ers are “self-hypnotized fakirs,” or “deluded epileptics having fits”—which I have heard them called by teachers of youth. At all events, give this old seer the same fair hearing you do to the prophecies of Roger Bacon, the friar, who was almost contemporary, imprisoned in another part of the world for predicting what science would accomplish; and when you have done that fairly and squarely, lay the book down and ask yourself what you believe. As the prophecies cover nearly twenty pages, I condense: “the children of Ishmael will go forth from this wilderness . . . and the fat ones of the kingdom of the Greeks . . . shall be destroyed by Ishmael, the wild ass of the desert . . . it shall be a merciless chastisement . . . for the sin of the Christians . . . mad with drunkenness, anger, shameless lasciviousness . . . hence God will deliver them over to the impurity of the Barbarians.” There follows just what happened in the late War, the murder of men, the pollution of women, the death of the children, the robbery of all property, the sale into slavery of harem and desert bandit, the oppression of the poor. “They will mock at those who frame laws. The little shall be esteemed as the great, the despised as the honorable, from sea to sea, from east to west, from north to south . . . hungering and thirsting and torture in bonds . . . infants torn from their mothers’ bosoms . . . priests and deacons slain . . . clothes for their horses out of holy vestments . . . cattle in the churches . . . famine . . . dead bodies without any to bury them . . . while the tyrants shall boast—‘the Christians have neither a God, nor a deliverer.’” There follows the victory of the Greeks and a terrible slaughter. “Egypt ravaged, Arabia burnt, Hebron laid waste.” . . . Then shall follow “a great peace . . . joy on earth . . . churches reopened . . . great cities rebuilt . . . for the gates of the North” shall be opened. Twenty-two kingdoms shall come through the gates of the North. In the plains of Joppa, the great battle will be fought. The leader of destruction will fight there and be overthrown by a leader of the cross from the land of Ethiopia. The leader of destruction will delude many with “phantoms.” Hosts of the Indians will ally themselves with him. Then will come a second Elijah (or Elias) and lead to the great victory of the cross.

There follows the passing of the Old Order like a garment discarded for the New when a light shall burst over humanity with the effulgent radiance of the very heavens; when those, who are asleep shall awake clothed in light, eternally young; when each shall treasure his eternal light and fire in his own spirit; when the only grief shall be the grief for transgression of laws man can never break, but which break man; when the love of God shall extend to the meanest and poorest of all creatures; when justice will exact “to the uttermost farthing” of repentance for sin; when those barred from light will be those only who persist in barring light from their spirit.

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Here, let us close the old seer's prophecy, be it trance or dream; for his hope is the hope of all humanity with all its creeds for all time, now as then.

THE END

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## Transcriber's Notes

Minor changes have been made silently to spelling and punctuation to achieve consistency.

[The end of *The Quenchless Light* by Agnes C. Laut]