

"Fly, Bartja, and remember the warning that the heavens themselves wrote in the stars for you."

Bartja, however, stood silent, shook his handsome head, waved his friends back, and answered: "I never ran away yet, and I mean to hold my ground to-day. Cowardice is worse than death in my opinion, and I would rather suffer wrong at the hands of others than disgrace myself. There are the soldiers! Well met, Bischen. You've come to arrest me, haven't you? Wait one moment, till I have said good-bye to my friends."

Bischen, the officer he spoke to, was one of Cyrus's old captains; he had given Bartja his first lessons in shooting and throwing the spear, had fought by his side in the war with the Tapuri, and loved him as if he were his own son. He interrupted him, saying: "There is no need to take leave of your friends, for the king, who is raging like a madman, ordered me not only to arrest you, but every one else who might be with you."

And then he added in a low voice: "The king is beside himself with rage and threatens to have your life. You must fly. My men will do what I tell them blind-fold; they will not pursue you; and I am so old that it would be little loss to Persia, if my head were the price of my disobedience."

"Thanks, thanks, my friend," said Bartja, giving him his hand; "but I cannot accept your offer, because I am innocent, and I know that though Cambyses is hasty, he is not unjust. Come friends, I think the king will give us a hearing to-day, late as it is."

CHAPTER III.

Two hours later Bartja and his friends were standing before the king. The gigantic man was seated on his golden throne; he was pale and his eyes looked sunken; two physicians stood waiting behind him with all kinds of instruments and vessels in their hands. Cambyses had, only a few minutes before, recovered consciousness, after lying for more than an hour in one of those awful fits, so destructive both to mind and body, which we call epileptic.

Since Nitetis' arrival he had been free from this illness; but it had seized him to-day with fearful violence, owing to the overpowering mental excitement he had gone through.¹⁴

If he had met Bartja a few hours before, he would have killed him with his own hand; but though the epileptic fit had not subdued his anger it had at least so far quieted it, that he was in a condition to hear what was to be said on both sides.

At the right hand of the throne stood Hystaspes, Darius's grey-haired father, Gobryas, his future father-in-law, the aged Intaphernes, the grandfather of that Phædime whose place in the king's favor had been given to Nitetis, Oropastes the high-priest, Croesus, and behind them Boges, the chief of the eunuchs. At its left Bartja, whose hands were heavily fettered, Araspes, Darius,

¹⁴ The dangerous disease to which Herodotus says Cambyses had been subject from his birth, and which was called "sacred" by some, can scarcely be other than epilepsy. See Herod. III. 33.

Zopyrus and Gyges. In the background stood some hundred officials and grandees.

After a long silence Cambyses raised his eyes, fixed a withering look on his fettered brother, and said in a dull hollow voice: "High-priest, tell us what awaits the man who deceives his brother, dishonors and offends his king, and darkens his own heart by black lies."

Oropastes came forward and answered: "As soon as such a one is proved guilty, a death full of torment awaits him in this world, and an awful sentence on the bridge Chinvat;¹⁵ for he has transgressed the highest commands, and, by committing three crimes, has forfeited the mercy of our law, which commands that his life shall be granted to the man who has sinned but once, even though he be only a slave."¹⁶

"Then Bartja has deserved death. Lead him away, guards, and strangle him! Take him away! Be silent, wretch! never will I listen to that smooth, hypocritical tongue again, or look at those treacherous eyes. They come from the Divs and delude every one with their wanton glances. Off with him, guards!"

Bischen, the captain, came up to obey the order, but in the same moment Cræsus threw himself at the king's feet, touched the floor with his forehead, raised

15. On the third day after death, at the rising of the bright sun, the souls are conducted by the Divs to the bridge Chinvat, where they are questioned as to their past lives and conduct. *Vendid*. Fargard. XIX. 93. On that spot the two supernatural powers fight for the soul. *Vendid* Farg. VII. 132. In this struggle the soul of the good, the odor of which is feared by the Divs as wolves by sheep, is helped by the *Yazatas* or pure spirits and enters heaven victorious, while the soul of the impure finds no help and is dragged down, bound, into hell by the Div Vizareshô. Different, and according to Rogge, more beautiful (?) conceptions of this idea are to be found in Tiele's *d. gods. v. Zarathustra* p. 251. This subject is admirably treated by Spiegel, *Ausland* 1872.

16. Herod. I. 137.

his hands and cried: "May thy days and years bring nought but happiness and prosperity; may Auramazda pour down all the blessings of this life upon thee, and the Amescha çpenta¹⁷ be the guardians of thy throne! Do not close thine ear to the words of the aged, but remember that thy father Cyrus appointed me to be thy counsellor. Thou art about to slay thy brother; but I say unto thee, do not indulge anger; strive to control it. It is the duty of kings and of the wise, not to act without due enquiry. Beware of shedding a brother's blood; the smoke thereof will rise to heaven and become a cloud that must darken the days of the murderer, and at last cast down the lightnings of vengeance on his head. But I know that thou desirest justice, not murder. Act then as those who have to pronounce a sentence, and hear both sides before deciding. When this has been done, if the criminal is proved guilty and confesses his crime, the smoke of his blood will rise to heaven as a friendly shadow, instead of a darkening cloud, and thou wilt have earned the fame of a just judge instead of deserving the divine judgments."

Cambyses listened in silence, made a sign to Bischen to retire, and commanded Boges to repeat his accusation.

The eunuch made an obeisance, and began: "I was ill and obliged to leave the Egyptian and the hanging-gardens in the care of my colleague Kandaules, who has paid for his negligence with his life. Finding myself better towards evening, I went up to the hanging-gardens to see if everything was in order there, and also to look

17. The *Amescha çpenta*, "holy immortal ones," may be compared to the archangels of the Hebrews: They surround the throne of Auramazda and symbolize the highest virtues. Later we find their number fixed at six.

at the rare flower which was to blossom in the night. The king, (Auramazda grant him victory!) had commanded that the Egyptian should be more strictly watched than usual, because she had dared to send the noble Bartja"

"Be silent," interrupted the king "and keep to the matter in hand."

"Just as the Tistar-star was rising, I came into the garden, and staid some time there with these noble Achæmenidæ, the high-priest and the king Cræsus, looking at the blue lily, which was marvellously beautiful. I then called my colleague Kandaules and asked him, in the presence of these noble witnesses, if everything was in order. He affirmed that this was the case and added, that he had just come from Nitetis, that she had wept the whole day, and neither tasted food nor drink. Feeling anxious lest my noble mistress should become worse, I commissioned Kandaules to fetch a physican, and was just on the point of leaving the noble Achæmenidæ, in order in person to ascertain my mistress's state of health, when I saw in the moonlight the figure of a man. I was so ill and weak, that I could hardly stand and had no one near to help me, except the gardener.

"My men were on guard at the different entrances, some distance from us.

"I clapped my hands to call some of them, but, as they did not come, I went nearer to the house myself, under the protection of these noblemen. The man was standing by the window of the Egyptian Princess's apartment, and uttered a low whistle when he heard us coming up. Another figure appeared directly—clearly recognizable in the bright moonlight—sprang out of the

sleeping-room window and came towards us with her companion.

"I could hardly believe my eyes on discovering that the intruder was no other than the noble Bartja. A fig-tree concealed *us* from the fugitives, but we could distinctly see *them*, as they passed us at a distance of not more than four steps. While I was thinking whether I should be justified in arresting a son of Cyrus, Cræsus called to Bartja, and the two figures suddenly disappeared behind a cypress. No one but your brother himself can possibly explain the strange way in which he disappeared. I went at once to search the house, and found the Egyptian lying unconscious on the couch in her sleeping-room."

Every one listened to this story in the greatest suspense. Cambyses ground his teeth and asked in a voice of great emotion: "Can you testify to the words of the eunuch, Hystaspes?"

"Yes."

"Why did you not lay hands on the offender?"

"We are soldiers, not policemen."

"Or rather you care for every knave more than for your king."

"We honor our king, and abhor the criminal just as we formerly loved the innocent son of Cyrus."

"Did you recognize Bartja distinctly?"

"Yes."

"And you, Cræsus,—can you too give no other answer?"

"No! I fancied I saw your brother in the moonlight then, as clearly as I see him now; but I believe we must have been deceived by some remarkable likeness."

Boges grew pale at these words; Cambyses, how-

ever, shook his head as if the idea did not please him, and said: "Whom am I to believe then, if the eyes of my best warriors fail them? and who would wish to be a judge, if testimony such as yours is not to be considered valid?"

"Evidence quite as weighty as ours, will prove that we must have been in error."

"Will any one dare to give evidence in favor of such an outrageous criminal?" asked Cambyses, springing up and stamping his foot.

"We will," "I," "we," shouted Araspes, Darius, Gyges and Zopyrus with one voice.

"Traitors, knaves!" cried the king. But as he caught sight of Croesus' warning eye fixed upon him, he lowered his voice, and said: "What have you to bring forward in favor of this fellow? Take care what you say, and consider well what punishment awaits perjurers."

"We know that well enough," said Araspes, "and yet we are ready to swear by Mithras, that we have not left Bartja or his garden one moment since we came back from hunting."

"As for me," said Darius, "I, the son of Hystaspes, have especially convincing evidence to give in favor of your brother's innocence; I watched the rising of the Tistar-star with him; and this, according to Boges, was the very star that shone on his flight."

Hystaspes gazed on his son in astonishment and doubt at hearing these words, and Cambyses turned a scrutinizing eye first on the one and then on the other party of these strange witnesses, who wished so much, and yet found it so impossible, to believe one another, himself unable to come to a decision.

Bartja, who till now had remained perfectly silent, looking down sadly at his chained hands, took advantage of the silence to say, making at the same time a deep obeisance: "May I be allowed to speak a few words, my King?"

"Speak!"

"From our father we learnt to strive after that which was pure and good only; so up to this time my life has been unstained. If you have ever known me take part in an evil deed, you have a right not to believe me, but if you find no fault in me then trust to what I say, and remember that a son of Cyrus would rather die than tell a lie. I confess that no judge was ever placed in such a perplexing position. The best men in your kingdom testify against one another, friend against friend, father against son. But I tell you that were the entire Persian nation to rise up against you, and swear that Cambyses had committed this or that evil deed, and you were to say, 'I did not commit it,' I, Bartja, would give all Persia the lie and exclaim, 'Ye are all false witnesses; sooner could the sea cast up fire than a son of Cyrus allow his mouth to deal in lies.' No, Cambyses, you and I are so high-born that no one but yourself can bear evidence against me; and you can only be judged out of your own mouth."

Cambyses' looks grew a little milder on hearing these words, and his brother went on: "So I swear to you by Mithras, and by all pure spirits, that I am innocent. May my life become extinct and my race perish from off the earth, if I tell you a lie, when I say that I have not once set foot in the hanging-gardens since my return!"

Bartja's voice was so firm and his tone so full of

assurance, as he uttered this oath that Cambyses ordered his chains to be loosened, and, after a few moments' thought, said: "I should like to believe you, for I cannot bear to imagine you the worst and most abandoned of men. To-morrow we will summon the astrologers, soothsayers and priests. Perhaps they may be able to discover the truth. Can you see any light in this darkness, Oropastes?"

"Thy servant supposes, that a Div has taken upon him the form of Bartja, in order to ruin the king's brother and stain thine own royal soul with the blood of thy father's son."

Cambyses and every one present nodded their assent to this proposition, and the king was just going to offer his hand to Bartja, when a staff-bearer came in and gave the king a dagger. A eunuch had found it under the windows of Nitetis' sleeping-apartment.

Cambyses examined the weapon carefully. Its costly hilt was thickly set with rubies and turquoises. As he looked he turned pale, and dashed the dagger on the ground before Bartja with such violence, that the stones fell out of their setting.

"This is your dagger, you wretch!" he shrieked, seized by the same violent passion as before. "This very morning you used it to give the last thrust to the wild boar, that I had mortally wounded. Croesus, you ought to know it too, for my father brought it from your treasure-house at Sardis. At last you are really convicted, you liar!—you impostor! The Divs require no weapons, and such a dagger as this is not to be picked up everywhere. Ah, ha! you are feeling in your girdle! You may well turn pale; your dagger is gone!"

"Yes, it is gone. I must have lost it, and some enemy . . ."

"Seize him, Bischen, put on his fetters! Take him to prison—the traitor, the perjurer! He shall be strangled to-morrow. Death is the penalty of perjury. Your heads for theirs, you guards, if they escape. Not one word more will I hear; away with you, you perjured villains! Boges, go at once to the hanging-gardens and bring the Egyptian to me. Yet no, I won't see that serpent again. It is very near dawn now, and at noon she shall be flogged through the streets. Then I'll . . ."

But here he was stopped by another fit of epilepsy, and sank down on to the marble floor in convulsions.

At this fearful moment Kassandane was led into the hall by the old general Megabyzus. The news of what had happened had found its way to her solitary apartments, and, notwithstanding the hour, she had risen in order to try and discover the truth and warn her son against pronouncing a too hasty decision. She believed firmly that Bartja and Nitetis were innocent, though she could not explain to herself what had happened. Several times she had tried to put herself in communication with Nitetis, but without avail. At last she had been herself to the hanging-gardens, but the guards had actually had the hardihood to refuse her admission.

Croesus went at once to meet her, told her what had happened, suppressing as many painful details as possible, confirmed her in her belief of the innocence of the accused, and then took her to the bedside of the king.

The convulsions had not lasted long this time. He lay on his golden bed under purple silk coverlets, pale and exhausted. His blind mother seated herself at his

side, Crœsus and Oropastes took their station at the foot of the bed, and in another part of the room, four physicians¹⁸ discussed the patient's condition in low whispers.

Kassandane was very gentle with her son; she begged him not to yield to passionate anger, and to remember what a sad effect every such outburst had on his health.

"Yes, mother, you are right," answered the king, smiling bitterly; "I see that I must get rid of everything that rouses my anger. The Egyptian must die, and my perfidious brother shall follow his mistress."

Kassandane used all her eloquence to convince him of the innocence of the accused, and to pacify his anger, but neither prayers, tears, nor her motherly exhortations, could in the least alter his resolution to rid himself of these murderers of his happiness and peace.

At last he interrupted her lamentations by saying: "I feel fearfully exhausted; I cannot bear these sobs and lamentations any longer. Nitetis has been proved guilty. A man was seen to leave her sleeping-apartment

18. It was natural, that medicine should be carefully studied among a people who set such a high value upon life as did the Persians. Pliny indeed, (XXX. 1.) maintains, that the whole of Zoroaster's religion was founded on the science of medicine, and it is true that there are a great many medical directions to be found in the Avesta. In the *Vendidad*, Farg. VII. there is a detailed list of medical fees. "The physician shall treat a priest for a pious blessing or spell, the master of a house for a small draught animal, etc., the lord of a district for a team of four oxen. If the physician cures the mistress of the house, a female ass shall be his fee, etc., etc." We read in the same Fargard, that the physician had to pass a kind of examination. If he had operated thrice successfully on bad men, on whose bodies he had been permitted to try his skill, he was pronounced "capable for ever." If, on the other hand, three evil *Dâevayaçna* (worshippers of the Divs) died under his hands, he was pronounced "incapable of healing for evermore." Pliny enumerates a multitude of strange Magian prescriptions. The *Vendidad* mentions the art of healing as the highest attribute of Thrita, a celebrated mythical hero, not unknown to the inhabitants of India. XX. Fargard. 11.

in the night, and that man was not a thief, but the handsomest man in Persia, and one to whom she had dared to send a letter yesterday evening."

"Do you know the contents of that letter?" asked Crœsus, coming up to the bed.

"No; it was written in Greek. The faithless creature made use of characters, which no one at this court can read."

"Will you permit me to translate the letter?"

Cambyses pointed to a small ivory box in which the ominous piece of writing lay, saying: "There it is; read it; but do not hide or alter a single word, for to-morrow I shall have it read over again by one of the merchants from Sinope."

Crœsus' hopes revived; he seemed to breathe again as he took the paper. But when he had read it over, his eyes filled with tears and he murmured: "The fable of Pandora is only too true; I dare not be angry any longer with those poets who have written severely against women.* Alas, they are all false and faithless! O Kassandane, how the Gods deceive us! they grant us the gift of old age, only to strip us bare like trees in winter, and show us that all our fancied gold was dross and all our pleasant and refreshing drinks poison!"

Kassandane wept aloud and tore her costly robes; but Cambyses clenched his fist while Crœsus was reading the following words:

"Nitetis, daughter of Amasis of Egypt, to Bartja, son of the great Cyrus:

"I have something important to tell you; I can tell it to no one but yourself. To-morrow I hope I shall meet you in your mother's apartments. It lies in your

* See vol. 1. note 155.

power to comfort a sad and loving heart, and to give it one happy moment before death. I have a great deal to tell you, and some very sad news; I repeat that I must see you soon."

The desperate laughter, which burst from her son cut his mother to the heart. She stooped down and was going to kiss him, but Cambyses resisted her caresses, saying: "It is rather a doubtful honor, mother, to be one of your favorites. Bartja did not wait to be sent for twice by that treacherous woman, and has disgraced himself by swearing falsely. His friends, the flower of our young men, have covered themselves with indelible infamy for his sake; and through him, your best beloved daughter . . . but no! Bartja had no share in the corruption of that fiend in Peri's form. Her life was made up of hypocrisy and deceit, and her death shall prove that I know how to punish. Now leave me, for I must be alone."

They had scarcely left the room, when he sprang up and paced backwards and forwards like a madman, till the first crow of the sacred bird Parôdar.* When the sun had risen, he threw himself on his bed again, and fell into a sleep that was like a swoon.

Meanwhile Bartja had written Sappho a farewell letter, and was sitting over the wine with his fellow-prisoners and their elder friend Araspes. "Let us be merry," said Zopyrus, "for I believe it will soon be up with all our merriment. I would lay my life, that we are all of us dead by to-morrow. Pity that men haven't got more than one neck; if we'd two, I would not mind

* See note 9.

wagering a gold piece or two on the chance of our remaining alive."

"Zopyrus is quite right," said Araspes; "we will make merry and keep our eyes open; who knows how soon they may be closed for ever?"

"No one need be sad who goes to his death as innocently as we do," said Gyges. "Here, cup-bearer, fill my goblet!"

"Ah! Bartja and Darius!" cried Zopyrus, seeing the two speaking in a low voice together, "there you are at your secrets again. Come to us and pass the wine-cup. By Mithras, I can truly say I never wished for death, but now I quite look forward to the black Azis,¹⁹ because he is going to take us all together. Zopyrus would rather die with his friends, than live without them."

"But the great point is to try and explain what has really happened," said Darius.

"It's all the same to me," said Zopyrus, whether I die with or without an explanation, so long as I know I am innocent and have not deserved the punishment of perjury. Try and get us some golden goblets, Bischen; the wine has no flavor out of these miserable brass mugs. Cambyses surely would not wish us to suffer from poverty in our last hours, though he does forbid our fathers and friends to visit us."

"It's not the metal that the cup is made of," said Bartja, "but the wormwood of death, that gives the wine its bitter taste."

"No, really, you're quite out there," exclaimed Zopyrus. "Why I had nearly forgotten that strangling

¹⁹ An evil spirit who brings death to men. *Vendid.* XVIII. 45. "Azis, who was created by the Daevas may come to me. He appears in order to snatch me from the world."

generally causes death." As he said this, he touched Gyges and whispered: "Be as cheerful as you can! don't you see that it's very hard for Bartja to take leave of this world? What were you saying, Darius?"

"That I thought Oropastes' idea the only admissible one,—that a Div had taken the likeness of Bartja and visited the Egyptian in order to ruin us."

"Folly! I don't believe in such things."

"But don't you remember the legend of the Div, who took the beautiful form of a minstrel and appeared before king Kawus?"

"Of course," cried Araspes. "Cyrus had this legend so often recited at the banquets, that I know it by heart. Would you like to hear it?"

"Yes, yes, let us hear it!" cried the young men. Araspes thought a moment, and then began, half singing, half reciting:

When Kawus sat upon his father's throne,
The whole world subject unto him alone,
And countless treasures heaped around him saw,
While vassals trembled at his glance for awe,
Beheld the chains of gold, the jewels bright,
The steeds of Thasir, matchless in their might,
The strings of pearls, the crown of gems so rare,
It seemed no mortal could with him compare.
One day, in golden arbor, 'neath a vine
Of roses sweet, he quaffed the ruby wine.

A Div, concealed beneath the beauteous guise
Of wand'ring minstrel, to a courtier hies,
With Kawus speech he sought. Thus he began:
"I am a singer from Masenderan;²⁰
If it doth please the gracious Shah to hear
My voice, let me unto his throne draw near."

20. Mazenderan, (probably more correct than the Masenderan of Schack), a district in the northern borders of Iran, is, on the one hand, praised in the legends of the heroes for its fertility, but on the other,

Quoth Kawus: "Entrance to the singer give
And 'mid my band of minstrels him receive!"
The Div then struck his lyre, and began
To chant the praises of Masenderan. *

"Do you want to hear the song of Masenderan?" asked Araspes.

"Yes, yes; go on."

"My lovely land Masenderan, all hail!
How laughs with plenty each fair mead and vale,
Fresh roses in thy gardens ever bloom,
Anemones and tulips bright, find room
Upon thy hills, their beauty to display.
Within thy borders reigns eternal May,
A spring alike unmarred by frost or heat.
Thy breezes all are pure, thy fields aye greet
The eye with changeless green. Thy woods resound
With songs of nightingales; deer gaily bound
Thy dales and hill-sides o'er; thy streams all flow
With fragrant waters; perfumed breezes blow;
Colors of every hue delight the eye.
Through Bahman, Ader, Ferwerdin and Di **
The tulips bloom; throughout the circling year,
The hunter finds the falcon ever near.
Far as the confines of thy land extend,
The gleam of silks, the flash of jewels blend;
Thy priests are decked with diadems of gold,
And golden girdles wear thy nobles bold;
Whoe'er within thy blest domain doth live
Hath found the highest joy this earth can give."^{21 ***}

is spoken of as the abode of evil spirits. To this day the district is blessed with an almost tropical vegetation, and its nobles are proud of calling themselves "Divs." See Ritter, *Erdkunde*, VIII. 425.

21. These words are taken from a beautiful song in Firdusi's *Book of Kings*, which has been very well translated into German by v. Schack. Firdusi was born about 940 A. D. Ancient Persian history is the subject of his immortal epic poems. The Kai Kawus, who was lured to Mazenderan by the Divs, belonged to the family of the Kajanidæ which must not, as some scholars suppose, be placed on a level with the Achæmenidæ, but must be regarded either as purely mythical,

** May, March, July and April.

* *** Translated by Miss M. J. Safford.

"And Kai Kawus hearkened to the words of the disguised Div and went to Masenderan, and was beaten there by the Divs and deprived of his eyesight."

"But," broke in Darius, "Rustem, the great hero, came and conquered Erscheng and the other bad spirits, freed the captives and restored sight to the blind, by dropping the blood of the slaughtered Divs into their eyes. And so it will be with us, my friends! We shall be set free, and the eyes of Cambyses and of our blind and infatuated fathers will be opened to see our innocence. Listen, Bischen; if we really should be executed, go to the Magi, the Chaldæans, and Nebenchari the Egyptian, and tell them they had better not study the stars any longer, for that those very stars had proved themselves liars and deceivers to Darius."

"Yes," interrupted Araspes, "I always said that dreams were the only real prophecies. Before Abradatas fell in the battle of Sardis, the peerless Panthea dreamt that she saw him pierced by a Lydian arrow."

"You cruel fellow!" exclaimed Zopyrus. "Why do you remind us, that it is much more glorious to die in battle than to have our necks wrung off."

"Quite right," answered the elder man; "I confess that I have seen many a death, which I should prefer to our own,—indeed to life itself. Ah, boys, there was a time when things went better than they do now."

"Tell us something about those times."

or at least as having reigned earlier than the Achæmenidæ. We have ventured to introduce the words of a poet who lived so long after the date of our story, because his poems are strictly founded on the ancient Persian traditions and are thoroughly Persian. Besides, we think the quotation possesses sufficient poetical beauty, to reconcile our readers to the anachronism.

"And tell us why you never married. It won't matter to you in the next world, if we do let out your secret."

"There's no secret; any of your own fathers could tell you what you want to hear from me. Listen then. When I was young,²² I used to amuse myself with women, but I laughed at the idea of love. It occurred, however, that Panthea, the most beautiful of all women, fell into our hands, and Cyrus gave her into my charge, because I had always boasted that my heart was invulnerable. I saw her every day, and learnt, my friends, that love is stronger than a man's will. However, she refused all my offers, induced Cyrus to remove me from my office near her, and to accept her husband Abradatas as an ally. When her handsome husband went out to the war, this high-minded, faithful woman decked him out with all her own jewels and told him that the noble conduct of Cyrus, in treating her like a sister, when she was his captive, could only be repaid by the most devoted friendship and heroic courage. Abradatas agreed with her, fought for Cyrus like a lion, and fell. Panthea killed herself by his dead body. Her servants, on hearing of this, put an end to their own lives too at the grave of this best of mistresses. Cyrus shed tears over this noble pair, and had a stone set up to their memory, which you can see near Sardis. On it are the simple words: 'To Panthea, Abradatas, and the most faithful of servants.' You see, children, the man who had loved such a woman could never care for another."

²² The story of Panthea, Abradatas, and Araspes, is given by Xenophon in his *Cyropaedia* with a strong Greek coloring. He probably invented this romance in honor of his hero, Cyrus. *Xenoph. Cyrop.* V.

The young men listened in silence, and remained some time after Araspes had finished, without uttering a word. At last Bartja raised his hands to heaven and cried: "O thou great Auramazda! why dost thou not grant us a glorious end like Abradatas? Why must we die a shameful death like murderers?"

As he said this Cræsus came in, fettered and led by whip-bearers. The friends rushed to him with a storm of questions, and Bartja too went up to embrace the man who had been so long his tutor and guide. But the old man's cheerful face was severe and serious, and his eyes, generally so mild, had a gloomy, almost threatening, expression. He waved the prince coldly back, saying, in a voice which trembled with pain and reproach: "Let my hand go, you infatuated boy! you are not worth all the love I have hitherto felt for you. You have deceived your brother in a fourfold manner, duped your friends, betrayed that poor child who is waiting for you in Naukratis, and poisoned the heart of Amasis' unhappy daughter."

Bartja listened calmly till he heard the word "deceived"; then his hand clenched, and stamping his foot, he cried: "But for your age and infirmities, and the gratitude I owe you, old man, these slanderous words would be your last."

Cræsus heard this outbreak of just indignation unmoved, and answered: "This foolish rage proves that you and Cambyses have the same blood in your veins. It would become you much better to repent of your crimes, and beg your old friend's forgiveness, instead of adding ingratitude to the unheard-of baseness of your other deeds."

At these words Bartja's anger gave way. His

clenched hands sank down powerless at his side, and his cheeks became pale as death.

These signs of sorrow softened the old man's indignation. His love was strong enough to embrace the guilty as well as the innocent Bartja, and taking the young man's right hand in both his own, he looked at him as a father would who finds his son, wounded on the battle-field, and said: "Tell me, my poor, infatuated boy, how was it that your pure heart fell away so quickly to the evil powers?"

Bartja shuddered. The blood came back to his face, but these words cut him to the heart. For the first time in his life his belief in the justice of the gods forsook him.

He called himself the victim of a cruel, inexorable fate, and felt like a hunted animal driven to its last gasp and hearing the dogs and sportsmen fast coming nearer. He had a sensitive, childlike nature, which did not yet know how to meet the hard strokes of fate. His body and his physical courage had been hardened against bodily and physical enemies; but his teachers had never told him how to meet a hard lot in life; for Cambyses and Bartja seemed destined only to drink out of the cup of happiness and joy.

Zopyrus could not bear to see his friend in tears. He reproached the old man angrily with being unjust and severe. Gyges' looks were full of entreaty, and Araspes stationed himself between the old man and the youth, as if to ward off the blame of the elder from cutting deeper into the sad and grieved heart of the younger man. Darius, however, after having watched them for some time, came up with quiet deliberation to Cræsus, and said: "You continue to distress and offend one

another, and yet the accused does not seem to know with what offence he is charged, nor will the accuser hearken to his defence. Tell us, Cræsus, by the friendship which has subsisted between us up to this day, what has induced you to judge Bartja so harshly, when only a short time ago you believed in his innocence?"

The old man told at once what Darius desired to know—that he had seen a letter, written in Nitetis' own hand, in which she made a direct confession of her love to Bartja and asked him to meet her alone. The testimony of his own eyes and of the first men in the realm, nay, even the dagger found under Nitetis' windows, had not been able to convince him that his favorite was guilty; but this letter had gone like a burning flash into his heart and destroyed the last remnant of his belief in the virtue and purity of woman.

"I left the king," he concluded, "perfectly convinced that a sinful intimacy must subsist between your friend and the Egyptian Princess, whose heart I had believed to be a mirror for goodness and beauty alone. Can you find fault with me for blaming him who so shamefully stained this clear mirror, and with it his own not less spotless soul?"

"But how can I prove my innocence?" cried Bartja, wringing his hands. "If you loved me you would believe me; if you really cared for me . . ."

"My boy! in trying to save your life only a few minutes ago, I forfeited my own. When I heard that Cambyses had really resolved on your death, I hastened to him with a storm of entreaties; but these were of no avail, and then I was presumptuous enough to reproach him bitterly in his irritated state of mind. The weak thread of his patience broke, and in a fearful passion he

commanded the guards to behead me at once. I was seized directly by Giv, one of the whip-bearers; but as the man is under obligations to me, he granted me my life until this morning, and promised to conceal the postponement of the execution. I am glad, my sons, that I shall not outlive you, and shall die an innocent man by the side of the guilty."

These last words roused another storm of contradiction.

Again Darius remained calm and quiet in the midst of the tumult. He repeated once more the story of the whole evening exactly, to prove that it was impossible Bartja could have committed the crime laid to his charge. He then called on the accused himself to answer the charge of disloyalty and perfidy. Bartja rejected the idea of an understanding with Nitetis in such short, decided, and convincing words, and confirmed his assertion with such a fearful oath, that Cræsus' persuasion of his guilt first wavered, then vanished, and when Bartja had ended, he drew a deep breath, like a man delivered from a heavy burden, and clasped him in his arms.

But with all their efforts they could come to no explanation of what had really happened. In one thing, however, they were all agreed: that Nitetis loved Bartja and had written the letter with a wrong intention.

"No one who saw her," cried Darius, "when Cambyses announced that Bartja had chosen a wife, could doubt for a moment that she was in love with him. When she let the goblet fall, I heard Phædime's father say that the Egyptian women seemed to take a great interest in the affairs of their brothers-in-law."

While they were talking, the sun rose and shone pleasantly into the prisoners' room.