

Cambyses stood by, pale and rigid, following the physician's slightest movements, and Atossa bathed her friend's forehead with her tears.

"Let some milk be brought," cried Nebenchari, "and my large medicine-chest; and let attendants be called to carry her away, for quiet is necessary, above all things."

Atossa hastened into the adjoining room; and Cambyses said to the physician, but without looking into his face: "Is there no hope?"

"The poison which she has taken results in certain death."

On hearing this the king pushed Nebenchari away from the sick girl, exclaiming: "She *shall* live. It is my will. Here, eunuch! summon all the physicians in Babylon—assemble the priests and Mobeds!³⁴ She is not to die; do you hear? she must live, I am the king, and I command it."

Nitētis opened her eyes as if endeavoring to obey her lord. Her face was turned towards the window, and the bird of paradise with the gold chain on its foot, was still there, perched on the cypress-tree. Her eyes fell first on her lover, who had sunk down at her side and was pressing his burning lips to her right hand. She murmured with a smile: "O, this great happiness!" Then she saw the bird, and pointed to it with her left hand, crying: "Look, look, there is the Phoenix, the bird of Ra!"

After saying this she closed her eyes and was soon seized by a violent attack of fever.

34. Mobeds are priests. They are not mentioned in the Avesta. Spiegel derives the name from *nmāna paiti*. Rogge prefers, with Tiele, Haug's derivation from *magu pat*, Lord of the Magi.

CHAPTER VII.

PREXASPES, the king's messenger, and one of the highest officials at court, had brought Gaumata, Mandane's lover, whose likeness to Bartja was really most wonderful, to Babylon, sick and wounded as he was. He was now awaiting his sentence in a dungeon, while Boges, the man who had led him into crime, was nowhere to be found, notwithstanding all the efforts of the police. His escape had been rendered possible by the trap-door in the hanging-gardens, and greatly assisted by the enormous crowds assembled in the streets. Immense treasures were found in his house. Chests of gold and jewels, which his position had enabled him to obtain with great ease, were restored to the royal treasury. Cambyses, however, would gladly have given ten times as much treasure to secure possession of the traitor.

To Phædime's despair the king ordered all the inhabitants of the harem, except his mother, Atossa and the dying Nitētis, to be removed to Susa, two days after the accused had been declared innocent. Several eunuchs of rank were deposed from their offices. The entire caste was to suffer for the sins of him who had escaped punishment.

Oropastes, who had already entered on his duties as regent of the kingdom, and had clearly proved his non-participation in the crime of which his brother had been proved guilty, bestowed the vacant places exclusively on the Magi. The demonstration made by the

people in favor of Bartja did not come to the king's ears until the crowd had long dispersed. Still, occupied as he was, almost entirely, by his anxiety for Nitetis, he caused exact information of this illegal manifestation to be furnished him, and ordered the ring-leaders to be severely punished. He fancied it was a proof that Bartja had been trying to gain favor with the people, and Cambyses would perhaps have shown his displeasure by some open act, if a better impulse had not told him that he, not Bartja, was the brother who stood in need of forgiveness. In spite of this, however, he could not get rid of the feeling that Bartja, had been, though innocent,—the cause of the sad events which had just happened, nor of his wish to get him out of the way as far as might be; and he therefore gave a ready consent to his brother's wish to start at once for Naukratis.

Bartja took a tender farewell of his mother and sister, and started two days after his liberation. He was accompanied by Gyges, Zopyrus, and a numerous retinue charged with splendid presents from Cambyses for Sappho. Darius remained behind, kept back by his love for Atossa. The day too was not far distant, when, by his father's wish, he was to marry Artystone, the daughter of Gobryas.

Bartja parted from his friend with a heavy heart, advising him to be very prudent with regard to Atossa. The secret had been confided to Kassandane, and she had promised to take Darius' part with the king.

If any one might venture to raise his eyes to the daughter of Cyrus, assuredly it was the son of Hystaspes; he was closely connected by marriage with the royal family, belonged like Cambyses to the Pasargadæ,

and his family was a younger branch of the reigning dynasty.³⁵ His father called himself the highest noble in the realm, and as such, governed the province of Persia proper, the mother-country, to which this enormous world-empire and its ruler owed their origin. Should the family of Cyrus become extinct, the descendants of Hystaspes would have a well-grounded right to the Persian throne. Darius therefore, apart from his personal advantages, was a fitting claimant for Atossa's hand. And yet no one dared to ask the king's consent. In the gloomy state of mind into which he had been brought by the late events, it was likely that he might refuse it, and such an answer would have to be regarded as irrevocable. So Bartja was obliged to leave Persia in anxiety about the future of these two who were very dear to him.

Cræsus promised to act as mediator in this case also, and before Bartja left, made him acquainted with Phanes.

The youth had heard such a pleasant account of the Athenian from Sappho, that he met him with great cordiality, and soon won the fancy of the older and more experienced man, who gave him many a useful hint, and a letter to Theopompus, the Milesian, at Naukratis.³⁶ Phanes concluded by asking for a private interview.

35. In the inscription of Behistân there is a pedigree of the family of Darius, which can be reconciled with the one for which we are principally indebted to Herodotus. *Inscription of Behistân* I. §. II.

36. It is clear from different passages in the classics, that the ancient Greeks were accustomed to take introductions with them on their journeys. These consisted sometimes of letters, sometimes merely of the impression of a seal. Even as early as the *Iliad*, Glaukus mentions such a Symbolon. Compare Plutarch. *Artaxerxes*, XVIII., and especially Böckh, *Corp. Inscr.* I. p. 126. *Marmor. Oxon.* II. 24. In this inscription mention is made of the letter of recom-

Bartja returned to his friends looking grave and thoughtful; soon, however, he forgot his cause of anxiety and joked merrily with them over a farewell cup. Before he mounted his horse the next morning, Nebenchari asked to be allowed an audience. He was admitted, and begged Bartja to take the charge of a large written roll for king Amasis. It contained a detailed account of Nitetis' sufferings, ending with these words: "Thus the unhappy victim of your ambitious plans will end her life in a few hours by poison, to the use of which she was driven by despair. The arbitrary caprices of the mighty can efface all happiness from the life of a human creature, just as we wipe a picture from the tablet with a sponge. Your servant Nebenchari is pining in a foreign land, deprived of home and property, and the wretched daughter of a king of Egypt dies a miserable and lingering death by her own hand. Her body will be torn to pieces by dogs and vultures, after the manner of the Persians. Woe unto them who rob the innocent of happiness here and of rest beyond the grave!"

mendation or token (*σύμβολα*) which Strato, the king of Sidon, might give, say, to his ambassadors to Athens. A passport (*ἰσοπαις*) abroad is also spoken of in the *Birds* of Aristophanes 1212. This was provided with the government seal. The Lokrian seal bore the evening-star; the Samian a lyre, and so on. See Vol. I. note 286.

We will here insert the following letter, found by Passalacqua, with the seal still unbroken, in the wrappings of a mummy belonging to the time of the Ptolemies. It was addressed by a certain Timoxenes to Moschion, introducing a man, whose name is destroyed, and who died on the journey before he could deliver it. The letter he carried was placed in his coffin. It runs as follows: "Timoxenes greets Moschion—M . . . s, who will give you this letter, is the brother of Philon, Lysis' private secretary. See that no wrong is done him. His father is also here with Petonuris Second. These lines have been given him with the token of my family." This token consisted of a palette, similar to those used by the Egyptian scribes, to which the letter was fastened.

Bartja had not been told the contents of this letter, but promised to take it with him; he then, amid the joyful shouts of the people, set up outside the city-gate the stones which, according to a Persian superstition,³⁷ were to secure him a prosperous journey, and left Babylon.

Nebenchari, meanwhile, prepared to return to his post by Nitetis' dying-bed.

Just as he reached the brazen gates between the harem-gardens and the courts of the large palace, an old man in white robes came up to him. The sight seemed to fill Nebenchari with terror; he started as if the gaunt old man had been a ghost. Seeing, however, a friendly and familiar smile on the face of the other, he quickened his steps, and, holding out his hand with a heartiness for which none of his Persian acquaintances would have given him credit, exclaimed in Egyptian: "Can I believe my eyes? You in Persia, old Hib?*" I should as soon have expected the sky to fall as to have the pleasure of seeing you on the Euphrates. But now, in the name of Osiris, tell me what can have induced you, you old ibis, to leave your warm nest on the Nile and set out on such a long journey eastward."

While Nebenchari was speaking, the old man listened in a bowing posture, with his arms hanging down by his side, and when he had finished, looked up into his face with indescribable joy, touched his breast with trembling fingers, and then, falling on the

³⁷. This superstition prevails even to the present day. Morier. *Zweite Reise* in Bertuch's *neuer Bibliothek der Reisebeschreibungen*, See also de Wette. *Archäologie* §. 192.

* In ancient Egyptian Hib signifies an ibis. Many of the ancient Egyptians were called after the sacred animals.

right knee, laying one hand on his heart and raising the other to heaven, cried: "Thanks be unto thee, great Isis, for protecting the wanderer and permitting him to see his master once more in health and safety. Ah, child, how anxious I have been! I expected to find you as wasted and thin as a convict from the quarries; I thought you would have been grieving and unhappy, and here you are as well, and handsome and portly as ever. If poor old Hib had been in your place he would have been dead long ago."

"Yes, I don't doubt that, old fellow. I did not leave home of my own will either, nor without many a heartache. These foreigners are all the children of Seth.* The good and gracious gods are only to be found in Egypt on the shores of the sacred, blessed Nile."

"I don't know much about its being so blessed," muttered the old man.

"You frighten me, father Hib. What has happened then?"

"Happened! Things have come to a pretty pass there, and you'll hear of it soon enough. Do you think I should have left house and grandchildren at my age, —going on for eighty,—like any Greek or Phœnician vagabond, and come out among these godless foreigners (the gods blast and destroy them!), if I could possibly have staid on in Egypt?"

'But tell me what it's all about.'

"Some other time, some other time. Now you must take me to your own house, and I won't stir out of it as long as we are in this land of Typhon."

The old man said this with so much emphasis, that

* See vol. I. note 147.

Nebenchari could not help smiling and saying: "Have they treated you so very badly then, old man?"

"Pestilence and Khamsin!"* blustered the old man. "There's not a more good-for-nothing Typhon's brood on the face of the earth than these Persians. I only wonder they're not all red-haired and leprous. Ah, child, two whole days I have been in this hell already, and all that time I was obliged to live among these blasphemers. They said no one could see you; you were never allowed to leave Nitetis' sick-bed. Poor child! I always said this marriage with a foreigner would come to no good, and it serves Amasis right if his children give him trouble. His conduct to you alone deserves that."

"For shame, old man!"

"Nonsense, one must speak one's mind sometimes. I hate a king, who comes from nobody knows where. Why, when he was a poor boy he used to steal your father's nuts, and wrench the name-plates off the house-doors. I saw he was a good-for-nothing fellow then. It's a shame that such people should be allowed to . . ."

"Gently, gently, old man. We are not all made of the same stuff, and if there was such a little difference between you and Amasis as boys, it is your own fault that, now you are old men, he has outstripped you so far."

"My father and grandfather were both servants in the temple, and of course I followed in their footsteps."³⁸

³⁸ The son was usually obliged to follow the same profession as his father. Diod. I. 74. Lepsius has discovered some remarkably

* The south-west wind, which does so much injury to the crops in the Nile valley. It is known to us as the Simoom, the wind so perilous to travellers in the desert.

"Quite right; it is the law of caste, and by that rule, Amasis ought never to have become anything higher than a poor army-captain at most."

"It is not every one who's got such an easy conscience as this upstart fellow."

"There you are again! For shame, Hib! As long as I can remember, and that is nearly half a century, every other word with you has been an abusive one. When I was a child your ill-temper was vented on me, and now the king has the benefit of it."

"Serves him right! Ah, if you only knew all! It's now seven months since . . ."

"I can't stop to listen to you now. At the rising of the seven stars I will send a slave to take you to my rooms. Till then you must stay in your present lodging, for I must go to my patient."

"You must?—Very well,—then go and leave poor old Hib here to die. I can't possibly live another hour among these creatures."

"What would you have me do then?"

"Let me live with you as long as we are in Persia."

"Have they treated you so very roughly?"

"I should think they had indeed. It is loathsome

long family pedigrees, in which every member belonged to the same calling. The genealogies appearing on the monuments, which recorded the names and titles of fathers, mothers, children, etc., have been recently collected and published by Lieblein, *Dictionnaire des noms hiéroglyphiques*. They have become important as a means of calculating the epochs of Egyptian history. But the castes among the Egyptians were not so rigidly circumscribed as in India, for we see from the monuments, that the son of a priest could enter the army, and vice versa; that sons of the same father could devote themselves to different professions; and also (on which point we have favorable evidence in some hieratic manuscripts, the contents of which are of a didactic character) that young men were allowed to choose their own professions. Without question, however, it was more usual, and considered preferable, to remain in the father's calling. This indeed was the case among all ancient nations, not excepting the Greeks.

to think of. They forced me to eat out of the same pot with them and cut my bread with the same knife. An infamous Persian, who had lived many years in Egypt, and travelled here with us, had given them a list of all the things and actions, which we consider unclean.³⁹ They took away my knife when I was going to shave myself. A good-for-nothing wench kissed me on the forehead, before I could prevent it. There, you needn't laugh; it will be a month at least before I can get purified from all these pollutions. I took an emetic, and when that at last began to take effect, they all mocked and sneered at me. But that was not all. A cursed cook-boy nearly beat a sacred kitten to death before my very eyes. Then an ointment-mixer, who had heard that I was your servant, made that godless Bubares ask me whether I could cure diseases of the eye too. I said yes, because you know in sixty years it's rather hard if one can't pick up something from one's master. Bubares was interpreter between us, and the shameful fellow told him to say that he was very much disturbed about a dreadful disease in his eyes. I asked what it was, and received for answer that he could not tell one thing from another in the dark!"

"You should have told him that the best remedy for that was to light a candle."

"Oh, I hate the rascals! Another hour among them will be the death of me!"

"I am sure you behaved oddly enough among these foreigners," said Nebenchari smiling, "you must have made them laugh at you, for the Persians are

³⁹ On the numerous methods of purification, by washing, shaving, purging, etc., see Herod. II. 37. 41. 47. 77. Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 5. Genesis 41. and 43. Ebers, *Aegypten u. d. Bücher Mose's*, I. p. 350.

generally very polite, well-behaved people.⁴⁰ Try them again, only once. I shall be very glad to take you in this evening, but I can't possibly do it before."

"It is as I thought! He's altered too, like everybody else! Osiris is dead and Seth rules the world again."

"Farewell! When the seven stars rise, our old Ethiopian slave, Nebununf, will wait for you here."

"Nebununf, that old rogue? I never want to see him again."

"Yes, the very same."

"Hm—well it's a good thing, when people stay as they were. To be sure I know some people who can't say so much of themselves, and who instead of minding their own business, pretend to heal inward diseases, and when a faithful old servant . . ."

"Hold your tongue, and wait patiently till evening."

These last words were spoken seriously, and produced the desired impression. The old man made another obeisance, and before his master left him, said: "I came here under the protection of Phanes, the former commander of the Greek mercenaries. He wishes very much to speak with you."

"That is his concern. He can come to me."

"You never leave that sick girl, whose eyes are as sound as . . ."

"Hib!"

"For all I care she may have a cataract in both. May Phanes come to you this evening?"

"I wished to be alone with you."

"So did I; but the Greek seems to be in a great hurry, and he knows nearly everything that I have to tell you."

⁴⁰ Herod. I. 134.

"Have you been gossiping then?"

"No—not exactly—but . . ."

"I always thought you were a man to be trusted."

"So I was. But this Greek knows already a great deal of what I know, and the rest . . ."

"Well?"

"The rest he got out of me, I hardly know how myself. If I did not wear this amulet against an evil eye, I should have been obliged . . ."

"Yes, yes, I know the Athenian—I can forgive you. I should like him to come with you this evening. But I see the sun is already high in the heavens. I have no time to lose. Tell me in a few words what has happened."

"I thought this evening . . ."

"No, I must have at least a general idea of what has happened before I see the Athenian. Be brief."

"You have been robbed!"

"Is that all?"

"Is not that enough?"

"Answer me. Is that all?"

"Yes!"

"Then farewell."

"But Nebenchari! . . ."

The physician did not even hear this exclamation; the gates of the harem had already closed behind him.

When the Pleiades had risen, Nebenchari was to be found seated alone in one of the magnificent rooms assigned to his use on the eastern side of the palace, near to Kassandane's apartments. The friendly manner in which he had welcomed his old servant had given

place to the serious expression which his face usually wore, and which had led the cheerful Persians to call him a morose and gloomy man.

Nebenchari was an Egyptian priest through and through; a member of that caste which never indulged in a jest, and never for a moment forgot to be dignified and solemn before the public; but when among their relations and their colleagues completely threw off this self-imposed restraint, and gave way at times even to exuberant mirth.

Though he had known Phanes in Sais, he received him with cold politeness, and, after the first greeting was ended, told Hib to leave them alone.

"I have come to you," said the Athenian, "to speak about some very important affairs."

"With which I am already acquainted," was the Egyptian's curt reply.

"I am inclined to doubt that," said Phanes with an incredulous smile.

"You have been driven out of Egypt, persecuted and insulted by Psamtik, and you have come to Persia to enlist Cambyses as an instrument of revenge against my country."

"You are mistaken. I have nothing against your country, but all the more against Amasis and his house.

"In Egypt the state and the king are one, as you very well know."

"On the contrary, my own observations have led me to think that the *priests* considered themselves one with the state."

"In that case you are better informed than I, who have always looked on the kings of Egypt as absolute."

"So they are; but only in proportion as they know

how to emancipate themselves from the influence of your caste.—Amasis himself submits to the priests now."

"Strange intelligence!"

"With which, however, you have already long been made acquainted."

"Is that your opinion?"

"Certainly it is. And I know with still greater certainty that *once*—you hear me—*once*, he succeeded in bending the will of these rulers of his to his own."

"I very seldom hear news from home, and do not understand what you are speaking of."

"There I believe you, for if you knew what I meant and could stand there quietly without clenching your fist, you would be no better than a dog who only whimpers when he's kicked and licks the hand that torments him."

The physician turned pale. "I know that Amasis has injured and insulted me," he said, "but at the same time I must tell you that revenge is far too sweet a morsel to be shared with a stranger."

"Well said! As to my own revenge, however, I can only compare it to a vineyard where the grapes are so plentiful, that I am not able to gather them all myself."

"And you have come hither to hire good laborers."

"Quite right, and I do not even yet give up the hope of securing you to take a share in my vintage."

"You are mistaken. My work is already done. The gods themselves have taken it in hand. Amasis has been severely enough punished for banishing me from country, friends and pupils into this unclean land."

"You mean by his blindness perhaps?"

"Possibly."