

had given him at parting, and ordered the driver to go on as fast as possible. The mules galloped off. Mandane kicked the purse away, rushed after the carriage and clung to it firmly. One of the wheels caught her dress and dragged her down. With the strength of despair she sprang up, ran after the mules, overtook them on a slight ascent which had lessened their speed, and seized the reins. The driver used his three-lashed whip, or scourge, the creatures reared, pulled the girl down and rushed on. Her last cry of agony pierced the wounds of the mutilated man like a sharp lance-thrust.

On the twelfth day after Nitetis' death Cambyses went out hunting, in the hope that the danger and excitement of the sport might divert his mind. The magnates and men of high rank at his court received him with thunders of applause, for which he returned cordial thanks. These few days of grief had worked a great change in a man so unaccustomed to suffering as Cambyses. His face was pale, his raven-black hair and beard had grown grey, and the consciousness of victory which usually shone in his eyes was dimmed. Had he not, only too painfully, experienced that there was a stronger will than his own, and that, easily as he could destroy, it did not lie in his power to preserve the life of the meanest creature? Before starting, Cambyses mustered his troop of sportsmen, and calling Gobryas, asked why Phanes was not there.

"My King did not order . . ."

"He is my guest and companion, once for all; call him and follow us."

Gobryas bowed, dashed back to the palace, and in

half an hour reappeared among the royal retinue with Phanes.

The Athenian was warmly welcomed by many of the group, a fact which seems strange when we remember that courtiers are of all men the most prone to envy, and a royal favorite always the most likely object to excite their ill will. But Phanes seemed a rare exception to this rule. He had met the Achæmenidæ in so frank and winning a manner, had excited so many hopes by the hints he had thrown out of an expected and important war, and had aroused so much merriment by well-told jests, such as the Persians had never heard before, that there were very few who did not welcome his appearance gladly, and when—in company with the king—he separated from the rest in chase of a wild ass, they openly confessed to one another, that they had never before seen so perfect a man. The clever way in which he had brought the innocence of the accused to light, the finesse which he had shown in securing the king's favor, and the ease with which he had learnt the Persian language in so short a time, were all subjects of admiration. Neither was there one even of the Achæmenidæ themselves, who exceeded him in beauty of face or symmetry of figure. In the chase he proved himself a perfect horseman, and in a conflict with a bear an exceptionally courageous and skilful sportsman. On the way home, as the courtiers were extolling all the wonderful qualities possessed by the king's favorite, old Araspes exclaimed, "I quite agree with you that this Greek, who by the way has proved himself a better soldier than anything else, is no common man, but I am sure you would not praise him half as much, if he were not a foreigner and a novelty."

Phanes happened to be only separated from the speaker by some thick bushes, and heard these words. When the other had finished, he went up and said, smiling: "I understood what you said and feel obliged to you for your kind opinion. The last sentence, however, gave me even more pleasure than the first, because it confirmed my own idea that the Persians are the most generous people in the world—they praise the virtues of other nations as much, or even more, than their own."

His hearers smiled, well pleased at this flattering remark, and Phanes went on: "How different the Jews are now, for instance! They fancy themselves the exclusive favorites of the gods, and by so doing incur the contempt of all wise men, and the hatred of the whole world. And then the Egyptians! You have no idea of the perversity of that people. Why, if the priests could have their way entirely, (and they have a great deal of power in their hands) not a foreigner would be left alive in Egypt, nor a single stranger allowed to enter the country. A true Egyptian would rather starve, than eat out of the same dish with one of us. There are more strange, astonishing and wonderful things to be seen in that country than anywhere else in the world. And yet, to do it justice, I must say that Egypt has been well spoken of as the richest and most highly cultivated land under the sun. The man who possesses that kingdom need not envy the very gods themselves. It would be mere child's play to conquer that beautiful country. Ten years there gave me a perfect insight into the condition of things, and I know that their entire military caste would not be sufficient to resist one such troop as your Immortals. Well, who

knows what the future may bring! Perhaps we may all make a little trip together to the Nile some day. In my opinion, your good swords have been rather long idle."

These well-calculated words were received with such shouts of applause, that the king turned his horse to enquire the cause. Phanes answered quickly that the Achæmenidæ were rejoicing in the thought that a war might possibly be near at hand.

"What war?" asked the king, with the first smile that had been seen on his face for many days.

"We were only speaking in general of the possibility of such a thing," answered Phanes carelessly; then, riding up to the king's side, his voice took an impressive tone full of feeling, and looking earnestly into his face, he began: "It is true, my Sovereign, that I was not born in this beautiful country as one of your subjects, nor can I boast of a long acquaintance with the most powerful of monarchs, but yet I cannot resist the presumptuous, perhaps criminal thought, that the gods at my birth appointed me to be your real friend. It is not your rich gifts that have drawn me to you. I did not need them, for I belong to the wealthier class of my countrymen, and I have no son,—no heir,—to whom I can bequeath my treasures. Once I had a boy—a beautiful, gentle child; . . . but I was not going to speak of that,—I . . . Are you offended at my freedom of speech, my Sovereign?"

"What is there to offend me?" answered the king, who had never been spoken to in this manner before, and felt strongly attracted to the original foreigner.

"Till to-day I felt that your grief was too sacred to be disturbed, but now the time has come to rouse you from it and to make your heart glow once more.

You will have to hear what must be very painful to you."

"There is nothing more now, that can grieve me."

"What I am going to tell you will not give you pain; on the contrary, it will rouse your anger."

"You make me curious."

"You have been shamefully deceived; you and that lovely creature, who died such an early death a few days ago."

Cambyses' eyes flashed a demand for further information.

"Amasis, the King of Egypt, has dared to make sport of you, the lord of the world. That gentle girl was not his daughter, though she herself believed that she was; she . . ."

"Impossible!"

"It would seem so, and yet I am speaking the simple truth. Amasis spun a web of lies, in which he managed to entrap, not only the whole world, but you too, my Sovereign. Nitetis, the most lovely creature ever born of woman, was the daughter of a king, but not of the usurper Amasis. Hophra, the rightful king of Egypt, was the father of this pearl among women. You may well frown, my Sovereign. It is a cruel thing to be betrayed by one's friends and allies."

Cambyses spurred his horse, and after a silence of some moments, kept by Phanes purposely, that his words might make a deeper impression, cried, "Tell me more! I wish to know everything."

"Hophra had been living twenty years⁵⁸ in easy

58. According to Herodotus, II. 169. Amasis treated his dethroned predecessor with great lenity, and spared his life until the Egyptians fell upon him and hung him. On account of Nitetis' age, we are obliged to allow Hophra twenty years of life after his dethrone-

captivity in Sais after his dethronement, when his wife, who had borne him three children and buried them all, felt that she was about to give birth to a fourth. Hophra, in his joy, determined to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving in the temple of Pacht,* the Egyptian goddess supposed to confer the blessing of children, when, on his way thither, a former magnate of his court, named Patarbemis,⁵⁹ whom, in a fit of unjust anger, he had ignominiously mutilated, fell upon him with a troop of slaves and massacred him. Amasis had the unhappy widow brought to his palace at once, and assigned her an apartment next to the one occupied by his own queen Ladice, who was also expecting soon to give birth to a child. A girl was born to Hophra's widow, but the mother died in the same hour, and two days later Ladice bore a child also.—But I see we are in the court of the palace. If you allow, I will have the report of the physician, by whom this imposture was effected, read before you. Several of his notes have, by a remarkable conjuncture of circumstances, which I will explain to you later, fallen into my hands. A former high-priest of Heliopolis, Onuphis, is now living in Babylon, and understands all the different styles of writing in use among his countrymen.⁶⁰ Nebenchari will, of course,

ment. It is the only way in which we can rescue Herodotus' narrative, which forms the basis of our tale. Amasis would scarcely have dared to send Cambyses a bride of forty; for it must be remembered that on the Nile a woman of forty is older than one of sixty in Europe. This subject has already been mentioned in our preface.

59. Herod. II. 162.

60. The three Egyptian styles of writing existed already at the time of Amasis, though the demotic or popular style used for correspondence, does not seem much older than the dynasty to which he belonged, (the 26th).

* See vol. I. note 53.

refuse to help in disclosing an imposture, which must inevitably lead to the ruin of his country."

"In an hour I expect to see you here with the man you have just spoken of. Cræsus, Nebenchari, and all the Achæmenidæ who were in Egypt, will have to appear also. I must have certainty before I can act, and your testimony alone is not sufficient, because I know from Amasis, that you have cause to feel a grudge against his house."

At the time appointed all were assembled before the king in obedience to his command.

Onuphis, the former high-priest, was an old man of eighty. A pair of large, clear, intelligent, grey eyes looked out of a head so worn and wasted, as to be more like a mere skull than the head of a living man. He held a large papyrus-roll in his gaunt hand, and was seated in an easy chair, as his paralyzed limbs did not allow of his standing, even in the king's presence. His dress was snow-white, as becomed a priest, but there were patches and rents to be seen here and there. His figure might perhaps once have been tall and slender, but it was now so bent and shrunk by age, privation and suffering, as to look unnatural and dwarfish, in comparison with the size of his head.

Nebenchari, who revered Onuphis, not only as a high-priest deeply initiated in the most solemn mysteries, but also on account of his great age,⁶¹ stood by his side and arranged his cushions. At his left stood Phanes, and then Cræsus, Darius and Prexaspes.

The king sat upon his throne. His face was dark

⁶¹ Among the Egyptians it was a sacred duty to honor the aged. Herod. II. 80. Cicero, *De Senectute*, 18. The Egyptian remains testify to the same. In the *Prisse Papyrus*, the fifth commandment of the Mosaic law exists, even including the annexed promise.

and stern as he broke the silence with the following words: "This noble Greek, who, I am inclined to believe, is my friend, has brought me strange tidings. He says that I have been basely deceived by Amasis,—that my deceased wife was not his, but his predecessor's daughter."

A murmur of astonishment ran through the assembly.

"This old man is here to prove the imposture."

Onuphis gave a sign of assent.

"Prexaspes, my first question is to you. When Nitetis was entrusted to your care, was it expressly said that she was the daughter of Amasis?"

"Expressly. Nebenchari had, it is true, praised Tachot to the noble Kassandane as the most beautiful of the twin sisters; but Amasis insisted on sending Nitetis to Persia. I imagined that, by confiding his most precious jewel to your care, he meant to put you under a special obligation; and as it seemed to me that Nitetis surpassed her sister, not only in beauty but in dignity of character, I ceased to sue for the hand of Tachot. In his letter to you too, as you will remember, he spoke of confiding to you his most beautiful, his dearest child."

"Those were his words."

"And Nitetis was, without question, the more beautiful and the nobler of the two sisters," said Cræsus in confirmation of the envoy's remark. "But it certainly did strike me that Tachot was her royal parents' favorite."

"Yes," said Darius, "without doubt. Once, at a revel, Amasis joked Bartja in these words: 'Don't look too deep into Tachot's eyes, for if you were a god, I could not allow you to take her to Persia!' Psamtik

was evidently annoyed at this remark and said to the king, 'Father, remember Phanes,'"

"Phanes!"

"Yes, my Sovereign," answered the Athenian. "Once, when he was intoxicated, Amasis let out his secret to me, and Psamtik was warning him not to forget himself a second time."

"Tell the story as it occurred."

"On my return from Cyprus to Sais as a conqueror, a great entertainment was given at court. Amasis distinguished me in every way, as having won a rich province for him, and even, to the dismay of his own countrymen, embraced me. His affection increased with his intoxication, and at last, as Psamtik and I were leading him to his private apartments, he stopped at the door of his daughter's room, and said: "The girls sleep there. If you will put away your own wife, Athenian, I will give you Nitetis. I should like to have you for a son-in-law. There's a secret about that girl, Phanes; she's not my own child.' Before his drunken father could say more, Psamtik laid his hand before his mouth, and sent me roughly away to my lodging, where I thought the matter over and conjectured what I now, from reliable sources, know to be the truth. I entreat you, command this old man to translate those parts of the physician Sonnophre's journal, which allude to this story."

Cambyses nodded his consent, and the old man began to read in a voice far louder than any one could have supposed possible from his infirm appearance: "On the fifth day of the month Thoth,⁶² I was sent for

⁶² The month of Thoth or Taut lasted from August 29 till September 27. The 5th of Thoth was therefore equal to our 2nd of September.

by the king. I had expected this, as the queen was near her confinement. With my assistance she was easily and safely delivered of a child—a weakly girl. As soon as the nurse had taken charge of this child, Amasis led me behind a curtain which ran across his wife's sleeping-apartment. There lay another infant, which I recognized as the child of Hophra's widow, who herself had died under my hands on the third day of the same month. The king then said, pointing to this strong child, 'This little creature has no parents, but, as it is written in the law that we are to show mercy to the desolate orphans,⁶³ Ladice and I have determined to bring her up as our own daughter. We do not, however, wish that this deed should be made known, either to the world or to the child herself, and I ask you to keep the secret and spread a report that Ladice has given birth to twins. If you accomplish this according to our wish, you shall receive to-day five thousand rings of gold,* and the fifth part of this sum yearly, during your life.' I made my obeisance in silence, ordered every one to leave the sick room, and, when I again called them in, announced that Ladice had given birth to a second girl. Amasis' real child received the name of Tachot,—the spurious one was called Nitetis."

At these words Cambyses rose from his seat, and strode through the hall; but Onuphis continued, with-

⁶³ We gather, not only from the Ritual of the Dead, but from many others of the Egyptian documents, that charity, especially towards widows and orphans, was commanded by their religion. Thus, for instance, a governor of high rank boasts on his tomb at Beni-hassan (Lepsius, *Denkmäler* II. Vol. 22.) that he has never injured a weak child (orphan is perhaps meant) nor done evil to a widow.

* See vol. I. note 172.

out allowing himself to be disturbed: "Sixth day of the month Thoth. This morning I had just lain down to rest after the fatigues of the night, when a servant appeared with the promised gold and a letter from the king, asking me to procure a dead child, to be buried with great ceremony as the deceased daughter of King Hophra. After a great deal of trouble I succeeded, an hour ago, in obtaining one from a poor girl who had given birth to a child secretly in the house of the old woman, who lives at the entrance to the City of the Dead. The little one had caused her shame and sorrow enough, but she would not be persuaded to give up the body of her darling, until I promised that it should be embalmed and buried in the most splendid manner. We put the little corpse into my large medicine-chest, my son Nebenchari carried it this time instead of my servant Hib, and so it was introduced into the room where Hophra's widow had died. The poor girl's baby will receive a magnificent funeral. I wish I might venture to tell her, what a glorious lot awaits her darling after death. Nebenchari has just been sent for by the king."

At the second mention of this name, Cambyses stopped in his walk, and said: "Is our oculist Nebenchari the man whose name is mentioned in this manuscript?"

"Nebenchari," returned Phanes, "is the son of this very Sonnophre who changed the children."

The physician did not raise his eyes; his face was gloomy and sullen.

Cambyses took the roll of papyrus out of Onuphis' hand, looked at the characters with which it was covered, shook his head, went up to Nebenchari and said:

"Look at these characters and tell me if it is your father's writing."

Nebenchari fell on his knees and raised his hands.

"I ask, did your father paint these signs?"

"I do not know—whether . . . Indeed . . ."

"I will know the truth. Yes or no?"

"Yes, my King; but . . ."

"Rise, and be assured of my favor. Faithfulness to his ruler is the ornament of a subject; but do not forget that I am your king now. Kassandane tells me, that you are going to undertake a delicate operation to-morrow in order to restore her sight. Are you not venturing too much?"

"I can depend on my own skill, my Sovereign."

"One more question. Did you know of this fraud?"

"Yes."

"And you allowed me to remain in error?"

"I had been compelled to swear secrecy, and an oath . . ."

"An oath is sacred. Gobryas, see that both these Egyptians receive a portion from my table. Old man, you seem to require better food."

"I need nothing beyond air to breathe, a morsel of bread and a draught of water to preserve me from dying of hunger and thirst, a clean robe, that I may be pleasing in the eyes of the gods and in my own, and a small chamber for myself, that I may be a hindrance to no man. I have never been richer than to-day."

"How so?"

"I am about to give away a kingdom."

"You speak in enigmas."

"By my translation of to-day I have proved, that your deceased consort was the child of Hophra. Now,

our law allows the daughter of a king to succeed to the throne, when there is neither son nor brother* living; if she should die childless, her husband becomes her legitimate successor. Amasis is a usurper, but the throne of Egypt is the lawful birthright of Hophra and his descendants. Psamtik forfeits every right to the crown the moment that a brother, son, daughter or son-in-law of Hophra appears. I can, therefore, salute my present sovereign as the future monarch of my own beautiful native land."

Cambyses smiled self-complacently, and Onuphis went on: "I have read in the stars too, that Psamtik's ruin and your own accession to the throne of Egypt have been fore-ordained."

"We'll show that the stars were right," cried the king, "and as for you, you liberal old fellow, I command you to ask me any wish you like."

"Give me a conveyance, and let me follow your army to Egypt. I long to close my eyes on the Nile."

"Your wish is granted. Now, my friends, leave me, and see that all those who usually eat at my table are present at this evening's revel. We will hold a council of war over the luscious wine. Methinks a campaign in Egypt will pay better than a contest with the Massagetæ."

He was answered by a joyful shout of "Victory to the king!" They all then left the hall, and Cambyses, summoning his dressers, proceeded for the first time to exchange his mourning garments for the splendid royal robes.

* See note 41.

Crœsus and Phanes went into the green and pleasant garden lying on the eastern side of the royal palace, which abounded in groves of trees, shrubberies, fountains and flower-beds. Phanes was radiant with delight; Crœsus full of care and thought.

"Have you duly reflected," said the latter, "on the burning brand that you have just flung out into the world?"

"It is only children and fools that act without reflection," was the answer.

"You forget those who are deluded by passion."

"I do not belong to that number."

"And yet revenge is the most fearful of all the passions."

"Only when it is practised in the heat of feeling. My revenge is as cool as this piece of iron; but I know my duty."

"The highest duty of a good man, is to subordinate his own welfare to that of his country."

"That I know."

"You seem to forget, however, that with Egypt you are delivering your own country over to the Persians."

"I do not agree with you there."

"Do you believe, that when all the rest of the Mediterranean coasts belong to Persia, she will leave your beautiful Greece untouched?"

"Certainly not, but I know my own countrymen; I believe them fully capable of a victorious resistance to the hosts of the barbarians, and am confident that their courage and greatness will rise with the nearness of the danger. It will unite our divided tribes into one great nation, and be the ruin of the tyrants."

"I cannot argue with you, for I am no longer

acquainted with the state of things in your native country, and besides, I believe you to be a wise man—not one who would plunge a nation into ruin merely for the gratification of his own ambition. It is a fearful thing that entire nations should have to suffer for the guilt of one man, if that man be one who wears a crown. And now, if my opinion is of any importance to you, tell me what the deed was which has roused your desire of vengeance.”

“Listen then, and never try again to turn me from my purpose. You know the heir to the Egyptian throne, and you know Rhodopis too. The former was, for many reasons, my mortal enemy, the latter the friend of every Greek, but mine especially. When I was obliged to leave Egypt, Psamtik threatened me with his vengeance; your son Gyges saved my life. A few weeks later my two children came to Naukratis, in order to follow me out to Sigeum. Rhodopis took them kindly under her protection, but some wretch had discovered the secret and betrayed it to the prince. The very next night her house was surrounded and searched,—my children found and taken captive. Amasis had meanwhile become blind, and allowed his miserable son to do what he liked; the wretch dared to . . .”

“Kill your only son?”

“You have said it.”

“And your other child?”

“The girl is still in their hands.”

“They will do her an injury when they hear . . .”

“Let her die. Better go to one’s grave childless, than unrevenged.”

“I understand. I cannot blame you any longer. The boy’s blood must be revenged.”

And so saying, the old man pressed the Athenian’s right hand. The latter dried his tears, mastered his emotion, and cried: “Let us go to the council of war now. No one can be so thankful for Psamtik’s infamous deeds as Cambyses. That man with his hasty passions was never made to be a prince of peace.”

“And yet it seems to me the highest duty of a king is to work for the inner welfare of his kingdom. But human beings are strange creatures; they praise their butchers more than their benefactors. How many poems have been written on Achilles! but did any one ever dream of writing songs on the wise government of Pittakus?!”*

“More courage is required to shed blood, than to plant trees.”

“But much more kindness and wisdom to heal wounds, than to make them.—I have still one question which I should very much like to ask you, before we go into the hall. Will Bartja be able to stay at Naukratis when Amasis is aware of the king’s intentions?”

“Certainly not. I have prepared him for this, and advised his assuming a disguise and a false name.”

“Did he agree?”

“He seemed willing to follow my advice.”

“But at all events it would be well to send a messenger to put him on his guard.”

“We will ask the king’s permission.”

“Now we must go. I see the wagons containing the viands of the royal household just driving away from the kitchen.”

“How many people are maintained from the king’s table daily?”

* See vol. I. notes 15, 16.