

# THE GREEK SLAVE.

A Story

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## CHAPTER I.

“ Desolate Athens! though thy gods are fled,  
Thy temples silent, and thy glory dead,  
Though all thou had'st of beautiful and brave  
Sleep in the tomb, or moulder in the wave,  
Though power and praise forsake thee and forget,  
Desolate Athens, thou art lovely yet!”—PRAED.

In the sixteenth century, after the final overthrow of the Byzantine Empire, the Greeks were bitterly humiliated and systematically oppressed in every quarter of their country by Pashaws, or Lieutenants, appointed by the ruling Turkish power.

Churches, that had withstood the successive shocks of the Roman power and the impetuous violence of the Crusades, still stood in solemn

dignity, enveloped in their own venerable dust, clothed in the holy memories of the glorious past; their aisles that had reverberated to the tread of devout worshippers, and their altars, had been wantonly pillaged; their votive ornaments and images of saints had been destroyed. Temples of wondrous workmanship, at whose shrines philosophers had bowed, now sadly breathed from their monumental ruins the bitter tale of humiliation and of by-gone splendor. The disciples of Greek philosophy were degraded with the brand of *slave*, and bent under their task at the bidding of Moslem tyrants.

And through this long night of degradation and oppression, the faintest gleam of coming light failed to pierce the shadowed heavens, and the bravest of hearts had sickened into despair as they hopelessly measured their future of servitude.

Yet amid the convulsive struggle and strife of years, Athens still boasted of marvelous classic domes and temples of a thousand fluted

columns, whose pure architecture had leaped as it were from the artist soul into some grand anthem or inspiring strain, then fashioned itself into "frozen music." Here and there a residence of palatial splendor still claimed pre-eminence. Spoilers had wrecked much, and left much. Turks, Athenians, Romans, Saracens, and representatives from other nations now thronged her streets.

Millions of wounded men who had come from foreign shores with health and brightest hopes, felt their feverish unrest ebb with their life, beneath the shadows of Athens' time-worn pillars and spires, and many a soul had left here unsung Ambition's sweetest notes. Proud Xerxes had learned to know despairing defeat, as he witnessed the destruction of his idolized fleet from his throne of white marble upon the coast of Attica. Each mountain, cliff or dell had wildly echoed the cry of woe and warfare—cries that freighted the years long before the birth of Christ, and the centuries since.

But though Greece had bowed under the oppressor's yoke, or fainted under the tight-strung bow of tyrants, she did not become identified with her victors as a nation. The relation of conqueror and conquered had not ceased; it did not sleep through the apparent peace that soothed her at times with deceptive lullaby. In that age Greece had not degraded herself by dressing, eating and sleeping *a la Turque*, as she did in later years.

Five miles to the south-west of Athens the shore leveled itself into the harbor of Piraeus, and beyond, across the narrow channel, lay the island of Salamis, floating like a fleck of seaweed in the waters that held its shores up to heaven's own light. Nests of emerald beauty lingered here and there, breathing out a dreamy welcome; white gleaming pillars revealed themselves amid a drapery of creeping vines, or held against their marble bosoms the proud head of a scarlet flower or rare exotic, whose chalice of perfume gave out its sweet breath to every wind, which greedily

caught, and flung it hither and thither; higher up, purple cups with the dew of morning, dropped tiny globules upon some broad black leaf, or slid carefully down the smooth surface of a tall, wide blade of grass that looked very like a treacherous dagger with invisible hilt. The fairies of water, or rain-imps were busily drawing out from flower-covered mounds or rocky ledge, long thread-like loops of silver, or silken floss, or glittering beads that fell into alabaster basin beneath, or on the narrow beaten path; in open spots, white delicate blossoms crowded through the green, looking as if some wasteful hand had hastily thrown down yards of crumpled lace; over all, the olive, palm and fragrant trees of spicy breath threw extravagant shadows in swaying clouds; nodding plants, stealing tendrils, wide-mouthed gorgeous blossoms, gaily plumaged birds, all mingled in luxurious confusion in that royal clime, reminding one of a hand hurriedly swept, but in exquisite chords, over the strong strings of a beautiful harp.

In view of the Ionic house, weird crumbling walls and ruins o'ertopped with vegetation attested the signet of time, and an occasional drawbridge was drawn up, or flung itself petulantly over a dark, slothful stream below, that was slowly strangling in its miry bed of green slime, rank grass and leaves.

Here and there a low-roofed hut, knowing of naught but its own misery, shrank poverty-shamed within some protecting nook; now a strip or belt of forest clasped with a golden circlet of water; now the shining wave-grooved strand, dipping into the Paronic Gulf, which restlessly beat between it and the opposite island of Ægina, and from the eastern portion of Salamis could be dimly seen the shadowy outlines of classic, peerless Athens.

The heavy white pillared mansion, disclosed pink silk curtains from the front, whose floating folds in the high windows brought to mind the wings of goddess Aurora. The spacious hall or court running to the extremity

of the building revealed its showy fresco on the walls and ceiling, and its checkered marble floor of gray and white contained in its center a tiny fountain with its rippling song, that hushed itself in the nestling mass fringing the basin, or whispered to sleep in the dreamy twilight the little fish in golden armor that uneasily traversed their home under the drops of falling water.

Reception rooms rivaled each other in elegance; there were carpets that elves would hopelessly sink and die in; divans and chairs that even vigilant Argus would forget himself to slumber in; pictures that would make restless the graves of Panæus and other old masters; vases that Flora might covet to hold her choicest blossoms; goblets that Hebe might consecrate with the nectar that she offered to the gods, and exquisite trinkets that would charm the fastidious taste of voluptuous Cleopatra. Sleeping apartments were also handsomely fitted up, and everything was in keeping save its owner and occupants.

Lygas Fabius was small in stature, and his Roman costume but added to his ungracefulness; he had a swarthy, treacherous countenance, sharp gray eyes, giving only covert glances, and thin compressed lips. Link with this an arbitrary, selfish will that best thwarts in disguise, and you have Lygas Fabius, the wealthiest man in Athens, whose residence during a portion of the year was upon the island. Only one generous trait beamed forth from the otherwise total blackness of his character; it was his love for the pretty, spoiled Aetë, his only daughter. She had little determination, everything that was daring, strong or noble, seemed utterly drained from her nature; her very weakness and pliability precluded the possibility of retaining any of the dark sentiments inherent in the characters of her father and brother; her existence was one of indolent flitting—more like a lazy insect in the shimmering light of a breathless summer day—but to her father she was *all*, the only string in his heart that could vibrate one note

of music, and all other harmonies were wanting.

Ducas Fabius reflected like a true mirror the imperfections of his father; mayhap there was a trifle more of refinement, which softened somewhat the evil in him, that was yet alike in both; however, his *personelle* was more dignified and affable. The greater part of the wealth that uplifted them, was rightfully his, having been recently bequeathed to him from his father's brother, with the stipulation that he must never wed Greek blood; that should he disobey the enjoined restriction, the wealth was all to pass to a distant branch of the family; for their household was lineally descended from Rome, and an ancient feud, descending from father to child, had existed between them and the Greek, and the hereditary ban had never been violated.

*Hate*, was a feeble word to express the feelings of Lygas Fabius towards a Greek; with his son, strange to say, the subject was one of indifference, but at one time—the reading of

the will—it occasioned angry words between them.

Half a mile to the rear of that sumptuous mansion a lowly dwelling hid itself in heavy foliage; its two small rooms were miserably poor, bare and bleak, and scarcely comfortable.

“Under the curse of God,” said its occupant, Egert Edemon, one day, “why are we such an accursed race? Why hath yonder Roman power to revel in luxury that is rightfully ours? Answer, Niobe, that I may not harm thee for thy passiveness. Dost thou not see my heart is nigh bursting the cursed fetters which enthrall it? Where is thy spirit, girl, that thou canst thus bow to the vile dog Turk? Thou art not child of mine with the stormy blood of our race that *risks* anything, *dares* anything; the Roman Arria would shame thee; dost remember that when her husband was condemned to die, by his own hand, she bade him not waver, but took the poinard and stabbing herself in his presence, presented it to him saying, ‘It gives me no pain, my Pætus.’”

“My father, I dare anything needful, I dare be a *Greek* Arria if necessary; thou knowest the peril I sought to save thee from an infuriate mob that would have hung thee from some tree in Athens; but see, father, my spirit is tried—my soul is in bondage!” and the Greek girl, in her sweet, sad dignity, arose and put her arms over the broad shoulders of him who quivered with suppressed rage and who in half uncertainty essayed to scorn her. Very, very beautiful was the countenance that looked up into his with an expression that one has seen upon the pictured face of a Saint through the solemn light of an old cathedral; braids of heavy black hair were wound in coils around the small regal head; she had large, dark, wistful eyes; features purely Grecian, and a marble-like complexion—unusual to her race. When her body was in repose one would pause and take her for a statue; perfect grace swayed the delicate form in its white flowing tunic, falling around the small feet; the purple sash, confining it to the tiny waist, had caught in

the upper skirt, drawing it, scarf-like, around her; a more perfect ideal of all that is lovely could not well be conceived. Egert Edemon also represented a handsome Greek, with his fine black eyes, dark complexion and clearly cut profile; the thin nostrils and well-defined, proud, noble mouth, were indicative of the unruly, turbulent soul within, whose altar was ambition, upon which he would peril his heart's dearest interest to attain the object of his desires—upon which in hours of passionate longing he would sacrifice all. There were moments that nearly claimed him mad, and well they might, for within sight of his own mocking poverty the Roman, Lygas Fabius, had absolute control of *his* wealth—of halls that his footsteps alone should tread—halls within which clustered precious memories of boyhood. Truly, fate was cruel to fling in his pathway such strange, poisonous vines, that, twining their bitter embrace around him, shut out the sunlight which a merciful Providence has bountifully distributed unto all. He was

a *Slave!* slave to a Turk; and a volume of bitterness is contained in these words.

But the fair Niobe! was she the passive creature that he reproached her with being? She had the same feelings of agony that so deeply moved her father's soul, but unlike him she coveted not the riches that were; she cared not that her robes were devoid of delicate embroidery, or her dark braids without jewels and the emblematic golden grasshopper; or her palpitating diamonds—those sparkles of the past were all pleasant things to possess, but the loss of them did not bring a sorrow to her breast. No! it was only the name and degradation of being a *Slave* that pained her—that name, and the degradation pierced her brow like a thorny crown, or rested upon it like a polluted tiara; in the hours of night, she would often awake, start and clutch at her temples, as if she might hope to dash away some object of pain and of loathing. But why resist? Why weary soul and body with rebellious strife, if



the stern, pitiless Present seems bereft of all communion with the Future? Why harass and make irksome the duties of to-day, when they might with strong faith and content distill a drop of sweet even under the fetters of bondage. True, the well-spring of her life appeared utterly wasted, and the dry bed incapable of nourishing a single blossom, but she would watch and wait, wait and watch; perchance the water may return, or some beam of light may softly steal into her darkened heart.

A galley of silken banners and canopy of gold and purple, landed a troop of gay Roman maidens at a short distance from the home of Lygas Fabius. Everything like unhappiness should cease to exist in their joyous presence, yet it was not so, for careful, menacing looks were sent after them by the Athenian oarsman, and at the prow, stood half defiantly Egert Edemon, between whose shut teeth came low suppressed words.

"Rocking you in this silken ark to my

home, and *my rights!* We will see! we will see!"

It was not without a violent struggle that he endeavored to rest the oars at the bidding of Lygas Fabius, who in supercilious tones, bade him return home, and commanded the others to depart to Athens; he had come with noiseless steps down the long path to receive his daughter's guests. It was well that he failed to perceive the threatening glance which Egert Edemon gave him, or the passionate anger that made him fiercely crush the white sand under his feet, which movement snapped the coarse thong to his sandal, giving him sufficient excuse to stoop and refasten, thus hiding the anger, which would otherwise have been detected, and the report of which might have cost him his life, did it reach the ears of his Turkish master from whom his services had been bought for this occasion. Roman and Turk did not mingle socially, but they were at the present time upon amicable terms.

With long strides, scowling brow and fly-

ing mantle Egert Edemon gained his home. "Home?" he said aloud in bitter sarcasm as he stooped to enter the low door, then paused and looking back to the grand house of polished stone, glittering in the light and shadow of fading day, lifted his arm and in deep, solemn tones said: "By the power of the eternal God, yonder home shall be mine again—that sun now sinking beyond Mount Cithæron shall soon rise over my rights restored, and the accurst, foul, venomed Fabius shall yet bow to my will, and honor and pride and life if necessary shall be sacrificed; my vow shall be daily registered within my heart."

He almost sank down upon the threshold, so powerfully had passion o'ermastered him; with tottering footsteps he entered and sat down, saying, "Niobe! Niobe! bring me water!" But there was no response.

"Where can the girl be? Ah! gone with her finished task to the simple fool Aete Fabius. Never thee mind, proud child of mine, only a few brief months longer! Poor Niobe,

the bitter draught of slavery tells upon thy youth, veiling thy matchless face in sadness; but it shall not be much longer."

With drooping head upon his hand, he sat in earnest thought awaiting her return; but as lengthening shadows of trees and flowers crept over the floor to his feet, silently asking what *he* had done with the day, he started up to seek her.

"But not there! I will wait for her near yonder ruin that overlooks the grounds." Walking slowly past the deeper shadows that were reflected here and there from pillars or walls close to the near crescent bridge, his gaze fell upon two forms quietly strolling up and down the path, regardless of naught but themselves. With hasty steps Egert Edemon suddenly laid his hand heavily upon the young Greek's shoulder and with one turn, brought him around face to face; for a moment they searched each other's eyes, and measured each other's strength; then passionate scorn settled over Egert Edemon's

lips as he sternly said, "This can never be! and beware lest thou thwart me—*two* slaves in one household are curse enough—why add a *third*?"

"Father, you are too bitter!"

"Hush, girl! thy head is turned that thou shouldst question thy father. Come with me."

"Wait but one moment! Selon, beloved, why art thou silent?"

"It was only my youth respecting thy father's age! But hear me, Egert Edemon! I ask for thy Niobe that she may be my bride—my wife; this night I was coming to thy home to proffer this request. Our position is equal."

"Equal? bitterly so!" interrupted her father with a sneer.

"Our ancestry ranked the same when Athens was herself, and although now a slave, I dare to claim her, and feel the same as if our country boasted the olden independence; what if our freedom is quenched into present

humiliation, it will yet spring to life within our breasts, which secret we can only whisper to one of our race; but either way it cannot alter or restrain the emotions of my soul, whose cry is for her. Niobe hath given me her love, therefore she is *mine*!"

While yet he spoke the quiet stars had settled in darkness, the moon's disk was shrouded in shadow, and a sudden storm whirled and swept down, like wild human passion, breaking over their heads in relentless fury. Niobe swayed under the blast, but father and lover stood frigidly firm.

"Mine? thine? Surely thine impudence is great that thou should'st talk thus to me—but why fool with a stripling. Niobe, come!"

She faltered a moment, then extended her arms to Selon. With angry eyes and short breath Egert Edemon snatched her away, and quick as thought, lifted the young Greek at arms length above him over the bridge.

"Oh! pity, stay thy hand from such sin, father, and I pass body and soul into thy keeping," she gasped in terror.

"Promise that thine eyes shall never behold him more!"

"I—y-e-s!" She swooned in the dismal darkness and pelting rain, as he restored the boy in safety, sternly bidding him to depart. "Go! there is murder in my heart; cross not my path again."

Egert Edemon caught up the wet, unconscious burden at his feet and sped swiftly home through the beating storm. Pushing the door violently open, he entered the back room, and placed her upon a rude couch, where she slowly unclosed the quivering eyelids, full of unshed tears, and a piteous look, like the first great sorrow of an orphan, stole over lips and face; but it only caused him to rise from his stooping posture and stand proudly up, looking deliberately down upon her with folded arms. "Ah! Niobe! as well might thou wrestle with the implacable Pluto, as to contest thy father's will." She saw and she felt how useless it was to oppose that will, and in forced resig-

nation she yielded, little dreaming but what the sacrifice would have ended there. 'Twere well that her soul sought not to peer beyond, or it might have fallen with its burden. Too heavy a blow prostrates forever, but when gradually dealt it may be borne, until at last we look back through the long vista of weeping years and wonder that life triumphed in those battles, and how we could have survived the conflicts.

After a few moments of unbroken silence, Egert Edemon walked from the room out into the fearful tempest, whose rush and whirl and fury proved a pleasure to him.

Poor Niobe sighed with relief, as she endeavored to arise and change her wet garments, and wring the water from her wealth of black hair that fell like a dusky mantle around her; then in her purity and innocence she knelt with clasped hands and uplifted eyes before a rude painting of the Virgin Mary, and prayed with tremulous lips that the Mother of God would be tender with her

youth, and merciful with her destiny. All the long night, wretched Niobe tossed restlessly, moaned until the light of day sweetly kissed her into brief repose; while thus resting from nature's weariness, Egert Edemon entered the house, the inner room, and looking upon her with something of tenderness, said, "It is well!"

The storm had hushed itself two hours ago; birds had smoothed their ruffled plumes, and trees and flowers had flung off the cold rain-drops of the night.

The miserable morning meal was left untasted, and Niobe languidly resumed a piece of work, that she had traced the previous day, now ready for embroidering; it was the upper skirt of a linen tunic for Aete Fabius, and as she wrought the warm pink buds, or dark, delicate leaves, Egert Edemon's eyes looked as if he longed to crisp the fabric into irreparable ruin.

"Dost thou covet that garment?" he suddenly asked; they were the first words that

had been exchanged since the previous evening.

"My father, the question is strange and my answer unprepared!"

"Think then, and give me a reply?"

"Nay! I desire it not, unless I were free, then would I wear it with pride!"

"And free? a slave no longer; would'st thou hope to keep it?"

"Yes! yes, indeed! but why nurture hopes that perish like evening clouds?"

"Evening clouds oftentimes herald the brightest day, proving goodly harbingers. Niobe, if this bondage hanging over us is removed, if thou and thy father art freed from this curse, wilt thou solemnly promise to accept this robe from the hands of Ducas Fabius?"

"*Why* Ducas Fabius!" and her face changed to pallidness, as she recalled the look in his eyes, of an evening that he walked beside her, whispering evil words into her pure ears—of the anger and threats that met her scorn, which she feared to reveal.

"Why Ducas Fabius?" she repeated in low tones.

"Because *I will it!*"

"Oh! father, is there hate in thy breast for thy daughter, that thou dost treat her thus? What have I done to merit it?"

"Niobe," he said in slow, measured tones, "would'st thou be free?"

"Free? Free?" with what deep breaths she took in the glorious, exhilarating thought, "Free?" how her face mantled in blushes, as she knew that *then* she might be Selon's bride while the beaming eye and transfigured countenance told how dear a prize she would give—how great a sacrifice she could make. "Freedom? oh, my father do not so cruelly taunt me, when thou knowest it can *never* be—when thine own soul leaps, but to fall more hopelessly back into bitter disappointment."

"Daughter, it falls but to spring the higher, and already it catches the breath of liberty. It shall all be if thou givest me thine implicit

obedience. Ducas Fabius is the deliverer; through him freedom must come to us."

"Can it be none other than he?"

"No! Listen. Treat him as I command thee, and ere the last flower is interwoven in that skirt thou shalt place it over the form of a proud, *free* Greek girl. Dost thou promise?"

"I promise!" but the words were sad and slow.

"May fate and the furies doom thy soul to Hades, if thou dost break thy word."

She shuddered at his awful curse, and her eyes followed his figure with uneasiness as he left the house and vanished down the road. All day long she sat by the low, broken casement with bowed head and dreary feelings, that were strangely at variance with the promised joy. She sat with a vague presentiment of evil in the coming light. Mechanically she prepared their evening repast, but Egert Edemon came not; after waiting some time she went outside the open door, and sat down where vines, stretching forth their sweet and

lovely flowers, patted her gently upon cheek and head like tender, mute comforters.

Ducas Fabius aroused her from her dreaming with a quiet greeting. She started, paled and flushed by turns; then in a frightened voice asked for her father. "I am here at his bidding," and his smile manifested the triumph he had not the policy to conceal.

"His bidding. What would'st thou?"

"To say that Egert Edemon hath gone to Athens and will not return until to-morrow's sun."

"Any other message?"

"None!"

"Then I will enter my home, and bid thee depart unto thine," she said, rising and turning towards the door.

He caught her hand in his strong grasp, saying, "My father is waiting for me now, else would I not permit this repulse, but in the morning thou shalt see me."

She gave him no reply as she hurriedly closed the door, with a whispered exclamation of

thankfulness at being thus so happily rid of him.

"Fool that I am," muttered Ducas Fabius to himself as he walked homeward, "not to have remained and frightened the beautiful slave. Father, forsooth, waiting for me!" and he laughed; "but by the thunderbolt of Jupiter I had to make some well-feigned excuse, or she would think me a coward, and Egert Edemon may have been lurking about to watch my movements. That dog's power over me is wonderful—there is something in his eyes that I dare not dispute, and by the beards of my ancestors, I do not care to lose hold of life yet. If that maiden were Roman, I'd wed her to-morrow—but a slave!—ah, I'd contaminate our illustrious race. Still, I'd heed not that, it's that *will* which fetters me," and he brought his hand heavily down upon a stump, "it's enough to craze one."

Yes, Egert Edemon had witnessed all. He knew the influence he exerted, and felt secure in that power. What in life so much to be

feared as a powerful, utterly desperate man, and that man a *slave*! Law can punish with death, but is powerless to restore the victim, and the transgressor views with complacency the wheel he is to be broken upon, if his revenge has been fully gratified, or his object has been obtained.

The next day while light and shade struggled in the twilight, Egert Edemon met Ducas Fabius near the old ruin by the bridge, where Niobe and Selon had been so peremptorily parted.

"Stop! Ducas Fabius, I have somewhat to say to thee. Come here within these shadows, that we may not be seen or overheard. I have known of thy love for Niobe, and were if not for me, thou wouldst have taken her at all hazard; tell me! were every obstacle of race or wealth surmounted, wouldst thou marry her?"

"I would in truth! But why tell me this?—it cannot come to pass! my father would prove a very vampire upon my life."

"Thy father, tush! he is but little more than spittle on the ground."

Ducas Fabius did not frown down the rude speech, but half smiled, as he said "Yes! he should be the last barrier between beautiful Niobe and me;" and his swarthy face kindled up as the bright vision of possessing her entered his dark soul. "I will give thee any price that thou wilt name, if she will be given me," he said, with great earnestness.

"Ducas Fabius, but *one* price can buy Niobe Edemon. If thou wilt *free us*, and *marry* her, she shall be thine."

"How?"

"Hear me! Go to Athens; see Ali Ishlen; purchase us from him; then release us from bondage to thee, but let my hands destroy the document of slavery."

"It can avail naught! What phantasm is this? for know that I would not sacrifice my wealth even for the peerless Niobe; yet she shall be mine, at all events; how canst thou



a slave, help thyself?" replied Ducas Fabius, with a malignant leer.

"Beware!" hissed Egert Edemon, while he fixed his gleaming eyes with a terrible look of meaning upon the Roman beside him, who shivered as he peered around in the ominous darkness.

"Ducas Fabius, this is no hour for vain words. Relinquish the wealth inherited from thy uncle, and *I* will give thee money and jewels far beyond thy most ambitious dream."

"Thou! Turn thy face full toward the light, that I may see if the Gods have crazed thee. What hast thou of riches, who hast known for years naught else but abject poverty! a pretty story with which to dupe me," he answered with a forced laugh, for his coward heart ached to be freed from the presence of the dreaded Greek.

"By the power of the Almighty, I do not lie to thee." Their faces almost touched as he whispered, "meet me—meet me one moon from this time, at midnight, one mile to the

south, by the blasted cypress tree and broken palm. There will I have ready a sacrifice. We both will register a vow to heaven. Thou shalt promise to wed Niobe—to give unto us our old home, which thou dost now occupy, and I will promise to give unto thee two-thirds of all my vast wealth, which is far more than thine."

"*Dare* I trust thee?" asked Ducas Fabius in low frightened tones.

"Trust me? Yes, *better* than thine own self!"

"It is well! Without fail I shall be there. But Niobe?"

"She shall likewise be there!"

"When? that night?"

"Yes! Listen! Thou must marry her according to our ancient Greek laws. The bride is never known to consent, she must be forcibly carried away, and then thou must not be seen in company together either by stranger or servant. *My* consent is all that is necessary to pronounce it legal."

"But if she struggle?"

"Borrow no thought there; leave that to me. On thy way to the cypress tree, stop and enter the door of our abode; thou wilt find her awaiting thee, carry her thither. I will be there before thee. Dost thou remember the time—the hour?"

"I do!"

"Ducas Fabius, dare thou play me false?"

"I will not," he replied to the stern, threatening question, as he turned to depart.

With complacent air, Egert Edemon leaned against a tree, and watched the vanishing figure of the Roman, and said, half aloud: "As I am a true wily Greek, with all the inherent craftiness and indomitable will of our race, I feel sanguine of success. Were Niobe's nature as subtle as mine own, I should fear the realization of my dream, but she is pure and womanly, gentle, and submissive to my will."

Long did Ducas Fabius seek to unravel the intricate web weaving around him. Long

did he seek to find means whereby he could possess himself of Egert Edemon's wealth and daughter; but plots and plans were as often relinquished for some more indefinite and fruitless scheme. Could he determine the nature or locality of Egert Edmon's riches, he would not hesitate to wrest them from him, but it was yet an undivulged secret, and must remain as such, until its master should reveal it. Then he would question if Egert Edemon had lied to him, and conclude not to keep that appointment. But at heart he was a miserable coward; he feared Egert Edemon, and he dared not forget his promise. At last, seeing no possible way of escape, he went to Athens and purchased Egert and Niobe Edemon from Ali Ishlen. His fingers closed in triumph over the document, consigning her to him—now his bride by right of law; his peerless slave—were it not for Egert Edemon. Even the simple Æte observed his capricious demeanor, which at one moment was the joy of a boy—again, the sullenness of a grovelling

nature. He escaped the keen, penetrating eyes of his father, whom business detained across the Gulf, for it was his desire to keep all from his father's knowledge until his plan was consummated, then he would openly defy whatever authority his father might choose to assume.

## CHAPTER II.

"Hearts oft die bitter deaths before  
The breath is breathed away,  
And number weary twilights o'er,  
Ere the last evening gray.

I've sometimes looked on clos'd eyes,  
And folded hands of snow,  
And said, 'It was no sacrifice,  
The heart went long ago.'

O blessed Death, that makes our bed  
Beneath the daisies deep !  
O mocking Life, when hearts have fled,  
And eyes must watch and weep !"

Days passed ; one more cluster of leaves ere Niobe's work is finished, and in their soft unconscious shades, looking out from the white groundwork, lies hidden her destiny. Thus she feels it to be, as she lingers long over them, scarcely knowing why, yet dreading to outline the last. The needle seems a heavy weight—the silken thread, a cable, as she re-

luctantly continues the now irksome task. Confused, wandering thoughts, anxiously endeavored to fathom the mystery of the coming deliverance from bondage. Two months ago, if a ray of hope had beamed into her soul, or if there had been the slightest prospect of such deliverance, she would have sprung to her feet with inexpressible joy.

And Selon? to her he was still the same beautiful dream of her life, the secret treasure over which all the choice rays of her heart shed a halo. There were moments at night when his fond eyes rested upon hers in unutterable love and woe—when his face looked as white and sad as the dead, making her awake to tremble and weep. She had none to question, concerning him, save her father; at times she dared not question even him. Again, she would deeply quaff the sweet draught of liberty, in her thoughts, casting all sadness behind, and sending before all that was bright. Her soul seemed like a fountain, whose spray of light sparkled and flashed into beautiful

rainbows of promise, and she would close her eyes and dream on, until that shadow, slowly creeping, enveloped her in its darkness, bringing back the olden woe.

Twenty more stitches would finish the tunic. Yes! twenty—she had carefully counted them. Slowly dragged the moments, leaving fifteen, now ten—she caught her breath wildly, as if seeking to shake off the incubus settling upon her, then mechanically sped the needle on its way with its glittering train of silk; five more stitches remained to fill up the *point* of the leaf, which looked sharp and piercing as a blade, that seemed almost to turn itself into her heart; one more—the last—but the silk snapped ere it was taken; with a great sob, she threw herself upon her knees, just as her father entered the room with Ducas Fabius.

“A fine Arria thou would'st make!” fell upon her aching senses in tones of bitter sarcasm, “arise and show me if the garment is complete?”

“My Father, it lacks one stitch!” Her

slight form was drawn to its full height; her long eyelashes scorned their birthright of tears; her pale brow and lips crimsoned as she stood proudly waiting—looking into her father's face.

"Now thou art my Niobe," he said with pride. "I'd *dare anything* for such beauty," whispered Ducas Fabius in his ear, which Niobe overheard, and she gave him a requital, in a look of withering contempt, that sent him within himself. At that moment he could have laid a wager, that his soul was not bigger than a mite.

Egert Edemon took the robe and examined it critically, saying, "All finished but one stitch, which thou can'st add at thy leisure." He gave a meaning glance to Ducas Fabius, who advanced towards Niobe with a roll of parchment in his hands.

"Niobe Edemon, thou, and thy father are free. I went to thy Turkish master and bought thee from him at a marvelous price, for he had set great value on thee. Herein is written

and sealed the transfer of thy father and thyself from the Turk to me. The ownership I will relinquish on certain conditions, made known to thy father. Thou knowest the love I bear thee. I would make thee my wife."

"Thy wife?" she exclaimed incredulously.

"I have said it!"

"Lo! what change hath come over thee; can it be that thou, the slave of wealth, should'st seek to wed the slave of poverty? I know well, that the eyes of thine implacable father are closed to all this. But, I forget—accept my deepest, life-long gratitude for the inestimable boon of *freedom*, my thanks are unspeakable—yet, thy wife I can *never* be!"

Ducas Fabius spoke as if to remonstrate, when Egert Edemon said with some asperity, "Press not the subject now! *Remember!* Give me the parchment."

Ducas Fabius hesitated, but handed it to him; something in the Greek's dark eye, made him obey. Egert Edemon consumed it in the flame of a small lamp, which he had lit for

that purpose, saying, "Thus perish the bonds of servitude."

Then spoke Ducas Fabius, as the Greek bade him do, before entering the door. "Niobe, accept this tunic that thou hast worked for my sister, Aete Fabius; she will not desire it, or miss it from her ample supply of robes and tunics.

Ere she could reply, Egert Edemon took the robe, and in solemn dignity, threw it over her shoulders. "Niobe, thou art free, and I am free forever!"

Great was her inclination to throw the tunic far from her, for its folds seemed to whisper a fate, like that of the persecuted, doomed Latona.

But, although bowed with some inevitable dread, she yet felt that life was not bereft of hope, that the unpromising dark surface had revealed a few delicate lines of light to her long watchfulness. A bud struggling from its grave of withered leaves, as if stretching upward to the sunlight, aptly symbolized her

life. The curse of slavery had been removed; then again heavy tears dimmed the brightness and glory of freedom.

"Niobe," suddenly asked Egert Edemon, the day previous to the appointment by the cypress, as she sat deeply absorbed and quiet. "Give me thy thoughts. Methinks thine ingratitude has shamefully failed to appreciate thy liberty."

"My Father, it is blessed to be free! but why this nameless sadness intermingling with the joy—this fear, to think or move? Night after night, have I prayed to God, to the blessed Virgin, and to the shining Saints of Heaven."

"'Tis their pleasure to disregard thy prayers; thou must submit to Clotho, and not seek to take from her spindle the thread of life, and weave them as thou desirest; thou should'st seek content in the present."

"My Father, let me ask this one time, where Selon is?"

A heavy frown settled on Egert Edemon's

brow, a hot flush of anger kindled his cheeks, and on his lips there played a bitter smile, which boded little good to Niobe.

"I have seen him once since that night by the bridge, and then I bade him not look into my face again, or come nigh to you. Dare not again question me thus; I will have unconditional obedience!"

The pale face grew whiter and sadder—the large dark eyes more despairing, and as a shiver, like a rough wind sweeping through wild woods, bowed the form, now seemingly slighter than ever, she meekly drooped her head a trifle lower in compliance.

Some tender chord, half responded in Egert Edemon's breast, as he witnessed her mute touching submission, but the vow he had taken hushed it to silence, lest the secret sympathy might lull his spirit, and weaken his purpose; he arose and went out to one side of the open door, and shading his eyes with his hands gazed steadily across the channel, where ripples tossed off the light under

the bright sun to the distant peak of Mount Parnes, whose summit was veiled in a purplish mist, fringed by the smaller but cloud-capped mounts around it. "There!" said Egert Edemon, "is registered my vow, and methinks I see Nemesis bending low over it, weighing it against me, if 'tis broken. Niobe, child, knoweth not what is best—pinching poverty hath not kin with her noble blood, for we are of patrician race. Alas! for the olden days; ease cannot come unless she be the bride of Ducas Fabius, for I dare not, although a free Greek, reveal the mystery of my wealth. A Roman must needs stand between me and Turk, then I shall not be questioned. When the power cometh to rule in yon dwelling of splendor, peace, smiles and happiness, will prove the ready attendants of my daughter; and I?—ah, the mighty, ambitious dream of my soul, shall be *fully* realized, and *Lygas Fabius!* how sweet to know his rage—how my soul longs to triumph over him. If he rebel? then does he become beggar and outcast, and 'twere well

to let him go! But no! triumph were incomplete without his lying at my feet. The hours seem tardy that usher in the blessed morrow. Is the opiate true?" he added, in lowered tones, taking a small box inlaid with gold and ivory, from under his vest. "Let me be the *first* to test it, for sooner would I send my soul to Charon than shorten one moment of her young life." He re-entered the house and inner room, saying to Niobe as he passed, "I would rest, disturb me not for an hour."

Throwing himself upon the rude bed or couch, he opened the tiny casket, and hastily inhaled a portion of its contents, then closed the lid, and placed it beneath his garment; quickly he felt the lethargy creeping over him—heavily drawn breaths seemed to combat the invisible influence. He feebly attempted to rise, as if trying its power. His eyelids closed, and a smile, sweet and innocent as that of childhood, rested on the proud, handsome features which but an instant before, were so full of life and fire.

Moments on fleeting wings, made up the hour that disenchanted the intoxicating dream; while freed from its spell, he still remained motionless, endeavoring to recall his dreaming fancies. "Were it not for the evil effects which follows the use of opiates, and which undermine the life, I would often drown my misery thus," he whispered to himself as he arose, smoothed his garments, and entered the outer room, where sat Niobe, just as he had left her. She looked in some surprise at the unusual languor and weariness that was depicted in her father's face, as he passed from the room. The low, bleak walls had become insupportable to his restless spirit, for he now scorned their protection, and chafed with impatience for the anticipated marvelous transfer. Late at night, after Niobe had retired, she heard him enter. Sleep was beyond the reach of her excited nerves; every breeze stealing in through crack or crevice murmured *Selon!* every rustling leaf seemed to say *Selon!* 'till she appeared to be drifting into a



vortex of despair. "*Why* this ceaseless haunting of his presence?" she vainly questioned.

The moonless night, that night of fate, enveloped the world in unrivaled splendor with her host of stars. For a long time Niobe had walked to and fro in her narrow room. It seemed as if Alecto and the grim furies of old classic legend, were circling close above her; an almost irresistible impulse nearly impelled her to fly to the dark woods for protection; then she smiled at her foolish fears, and laid down with closed, determined eyelids, to force the patronage of reluctant Somnus, God of sleep. Her efforts were nearly crowned with success, when, of a sudden, alternate lights and shadows began flitting before her, like dancing nymphs or satyrs.

"At eventide, when the shore is dim,  
And bubbling wreath with the billows swim,  
They rise on the wing of the freshened breeze,  
And flit with the wind o'er the rolling seas."

Egert Edemon had stealthily entered and placed the opiate in the way of her breath;

then when the untroubled, peaceful face, told that the drug had taken effect, he gently raised and placed upon her the embroidered tunic, still lacking that *one* stitch; and as his eye fell upon the unfinished leaf, he whisperingly chided her indolence—not dreaming that she had refused to complete it—leaving it, even as when she fell to sleep she left unfinished the dirge-like song of her life. He carried her into the outer room, where a lamp dimly burned, and placed her in her accustomed seat by the casement, resting her head against its broken frame-work.

Quietly, without any show of feeling, save a joyous light in his eyes, Egert Edemon secreted a small poniard about him, took in his hand a roll of parchment, a little box with stained liquid and a quill for writing, then hastened away. But few moment's elapsed before Ducas Fabius darkened the doorway. Looking suspiciously around, his eyes fell upon Niobe, whose countenance in the uncertain light, mirrored all of content. Softly he ad-

vanced nearer, listeping to her gentle breathing. If there had been one trait of nobleness in his nature, he would have felt pity for her utter helplessness and stayed the sacrifice. But no; malevolence and fiendish triumph stamped every feature, as he took her in his arms, saying,

"Mine! unwilling as thou art." He was prepared for a struggle as he carried her from the house, not knowing that she was under the influence of a drug. When he had proceeded some distance on his way, he sat down, looking uneasily into the wan face, fearful that life had departed, and that he held to his breast a corpse. Placing his hand on her heart and finding it continued its pulsations, he breathed with relief and said, "My peerless Niobe, how deeply thou dost sleep;" then with greater speed, he resumed his journey. Tired and exhausted, at length he sank down with his burden, at the foot of the weird-looking, blasted cypress tree.

"Thou hast done well, Ducas Fabius, to

keep this appointment. Give me Niobe 'till I rest her in a more easy position, for she is insensible from an opiate, and will not yet awake."

Half reclining, beautiful Niobe Edemon leaned against the altar of sacrifice, blissfully unconscious that *she* was its priceless victim. Oh! how must earth, and stars, and kind heaven have pitted her impending doom!

Lovely flowers rich and rare,  
Slumber on the quiet air,  
Music low, like quivering bells,  
Softly steals along the dells,  
Stars look down in sad surprise  
To behold the sacrifice.

On the lovely forest shrine,  
See that form, almost divine  
Pure as Angel in the skies,  
That unconscious victim lies;  
Dare a ruthless hand molest  
The sweet Virgin's stainless breast?

Niobe! Greek Slave! in vain  
Fate hath riven thy captive chain!  
What is freedom now to thee  
When thy spirit is not free?  
O sleep on; enjoy thy rest  
For in sleeping thou art blest.

"I am now ready for the vow!" said Egert Edemon, igniting a resinous substance with the lamp he had brought, and a half-fledged eaglet, a prisoner from the mountains, aroused the night air with its shrill cries, as the flames consumed it.

"Ducas Fabius register thy vow!"

He approached, partially leaning over Niobe, and with one hand on his heart, and the other lifted towards heaven, sternly pronounced this oath: "In the name of the Eternal God, before whom I stand, I do solemnly swear to wed Niobe Edemon, to give unto her and Egert Edemon the home I now occupy, and may I be forgiven for this violation of the will of my dead ancestors;" then stepped aside for Egert Edemon, who simply said: "as God liveth, I do solemnly promise thee, Ducas Fabius, my daughter Niobe, and two-thirds of my wealth, which I will now disclose;" he plucked from near the blaze, a few unsinged feathers, which he threw upon the air, then handed the small dagger to Ducas

Eabius, saying: "With this, thou shalt open a slab of marble, under which, lie my money and jewels. 'Tis by the fountain of Calirrhoe, and with the early daylight I will accompany thee thither, for thou would'st fail to discover it by thyself; and see, this poniard hath a curious point, that fits to a spring in the slab, which thou could'st not open. Here, sign thy name to this, as guarantee of the transfer of thy home, and of thy marriage with Niobe, and I will add mine, giving thee two-thirds of my wealth; but hasten, for soon the drug will lose its spell."

They took the quill, signed their names, and divided the parchment, each keeping his own.

"Where is Lygas Fabius this night that I may meet and acquaint him with his change of fortune?" asked Egert Edemon, who felt that his triumph was incomplete, without his revenge gratified. He longed to flaunt his victory in the face of his enemy, as he recalled insult upon insult, and the long tyranny he had been

subjected to from one whose rancor he had to bear as a slave.

"He hath gone to Corinth! and will not return for several days."

"Lead on! I will follow with Niobe," and he took the unresisting form in his arms. They gained the house in silence, meeting no passer by, to whom the unusual scene would undoubtedly have awakened interest, and perchance inquiry.

Ducas Fabius led the way through a suite of rooms, to where a beautiful hanging lamp shed a soft light through its alabaster shade, upon rich tapestry, and pale orange curtains, that fell in luxurious folds to the blue carpet. Antique vases and delicately poised statues gleamed through the dreamy shadows.

Egert Edemon turned back the soft lamb-skin blankets, and laid the motionless Niobe upon the sumptuous bed, then turning to Ducas Fabius, with folded arms—a habit with him that signified something already decided—said: "I desire that this room be open to me

at all hours, for I dedicate my life to render her life happy?" A gentle expression swept his face as he said, "be kind to her, and gratitude—love perhaps—may repay thee. I will now go and fasten up my past, hated abode, and do thou hide thyself from her eyes, lest she awaken and be greatly alarmed."

As Egert Edemon trod the tessellated halls, feelings of exquisite joy ravished his soul. "'Tis as it should be!" he whispered, with a beautiful smile. "Ah! how I have watched and waited in agony for this hour." He hastened away to the hut that had proved so bitter a home, took from it a few personal articles, then re-fastened the door and left it and its poverty forever.

The moment of triumph had likewise come to Ducas Fabius, and as he thrust aside the tapestry curtain his swarthy face grew darker still in its fiendlike joy. He feasted his eyes long upon the exquisite beauty of that same white face, and for one moment its beautiful purity, the archetype of angels, awed him into

a momentary feeling of shame, which vanished as quickly as it had come. "All mine own!" and passionate kisses rained over her tresses, and brow, and cheek. Yet her deeply fringed lids did not quiver; half alarmed he passed his arm around her, and drew her nearer to his throbbing breast. The close embrace called forth a shudder from the hitherto motionless form, and the influence of the opiate with its mystic train of dreams and fancies was dispelled. With deep sighs the Greek girl returned gradually to consciousness and the reality of her forlorn situation flashed upon her with appalling power; with a dreadful cry of woe, she sprang from the arms of him, whom her very being loathed. One wild glance around the luxurious apartment, and she knew that her father had given her to Ducas Fabius. With a frantic gesture of hate and despair she fled to the door, and fell with a bitter moan into the arms of Egert Edemon, who had at that moment returned to the room. He was greatly startled at the strange

pallor of her face, and by the fearful gleam of her eyes. With tight drawn, colorless lips she wildly plead "to be saved, to be taken away—far away—anywhere, even back to slavery—anywhere but here!"

"My Niobe!" Egert Edemon's voice was almost as tender as a loving mother's; it found its way into her troubled heart with soothing power, softening that hard, steady gaze into tears.

"Prove a fond, noble Arria, for my sake?" She looked at him long, with a weary expression, without giving any answer.

"Niobe, for *thy father's* sake!" The almost piteous tone seemed to arouse her, for she sat upright, with uplifted eyes, and tightly clasped hands.

"My father, I will! so heart and brain hold out!" she said with inexpressible fervor, and her white hands wandered childishly over his dark hair—over the dark brow, seamed with many a line of trouble and care—and she clasped him fondly around the neck, watching

him all the time with a strange mournful smile.

Ducas Fabius approached them, but was waved imperiously back by Egert Edemon. 8

“Not so! Come here, Ducas Fabius,” said Niobe, holding out her hand. “Listen to me. You have won me against my will; I know that Greek maiden is never known to give consent, but with me it was different; thou knowest well the *hate* I bore thee; nay! I couch not my words in velvet and time will *never* change these feelings. Shame upon a man, who would wed a maiden against her will!” A scarlet flush crossed her face, but meeting a look of mingled entreaty and displeasure from her father, she continued in more gentle tones, “but, Ducas Fabius, I will try to bear this for my father’s sake; I will with my own feet, crush the buds that might bloom into flowers, and let them be pierced with cruel thorns. I will relinquish the hope of my life, that of living for Selon Clethe; all this I will do for my father’s sake. But

heed me,” and she clasped both his hands in her earnest pleading; “’tis not too late to give me up; oh, why seek to retain a broken-hearted creature in thy presence? Many a noble Roman maid would gladly wed thee; bid me leave thee; bid me go home! Ducas Fabius, oh! as thou lovest thy life, give me back mine!” and Niobe Edemon flung herself passionately at his feet. “Bid me depart in peace, and I will bless thee forever!”

“I ask not thy blessing!” replied Ducas Fabius, looking down upon her with disdain, “I would in truth be fool or idiot to relinquish thee now, when months of intrigue have but just brought thee to my feet. And thou hast a lover? Ah! that is news to me!”

Niobe arose, wounded to her inmost soul, feeling shamed and disgraced that in forgetfulness of self, she should have knelt to him. Haughtily she replied, “Ducas Fabius, I have had a lover; a man, whose nobleness of thought and feeling would shame thy black spirit to its proper level—to the lower world

itself! Would he were with me now! And thou layest claim to patrician blood; art sure it is not crossed with that of the base Turk, whom thou despisest? Methinks thou art uncommonly swarthy and ugly," she said with a ringing, hysterical laugh.

"Niobe, beware lest thou make me resort to punishment; there is a dark cavern beneath this room, so remote and deep that thy loudest wail could never reach a human ear."

"Punishment! Punishment!" and laugh after laugh echoed wildly through the room. "Yes, a mean man's tyranny over a helpless victim. How truly noble of soul thou art! how worthy of a woman's love! In my contempt for thee, I had hoped that I might have judged thee harshly, but thou art even lower than I had deemed thee to be! But my father! I forget myself, forget my womanly dignity, I must remember that I am thy sacrifice. In pity, leave me, both of you! I have suffered enough for one night." Then tapping her forehead with her forefinger, she said,

"Beware, oh, beware! within is something beating with hideous din; beware, lest reason be shattered under these blows, for the very air seems to pulse heavily around me. Mind! leave me alone for hours to come, and let not master or servant trespass here. Go, let me fasten the door and be to myself."

Surely this slavery was worse than that from which she had been so recently delivered. The sleepless eye only knoweth the passing bitterness, the anguish and despair that racked her troubled spirits. A kind Providence sent his angel to mingle in her bitter cup some healing drop of balm.

"Dost thou seek sleep Ducas Fabius?" asked Egert Edemon as they stood in the hall.

"Far from it! rest would be tardy for me; see, the chariot of Aurora mounts the horizon. What sayest thou to starting now for Athens?"

"Not in these garments of poverty! I have others with me."

"Stay! I will give thee thy bed chamber,

which shall be thine while thou art master here."

"And pray thee, why not master now? But which one—yon door to the right?"

"Nay! that is my father's!"

"Then shall it be mine again!"

"Will none other answer?"

"None! Remember only I, and thou rule now. Let Lygas Fabius have a menial's room and place."

"Nay! Egert Edemon humble him not thus. Lygas Fabius hath Roman blood; thou should'st spare him such disgrace!"

"Roman blood? Methinks one drop, and that so strangely ill at home, that it frets into biliousness. I care not! In this shall I hold my will. Thou knowest I have little liking for thee, but between us, there shall be respect and tolerance; with thy despicable father there shall be none. Can I forget his arrogance—his contempt and base treatment to me, when he was well aware of my incapability of defense? Spare thy father disgrace?"

Never, no never! But the door is fastened."

"Lygas Fabius only knoweth the secret of its fastening."

"Nevertheless, I shall enter."

"Stay! thou wilt alarm the household; wait until our return, and I will give thee assistance."

"True! I had forgotten. Give me another room then, for the time being."

Egert Edemon soon re-entered the hall, dressed in the costume of a wealthy Greek. He looked very proud and handsome as he walked beside Ducas Fabius in the soft, mysterious haze of that beautiful morning. On they kept, to the not far off little bay, and unmoored a light boat, with which they crossed the channel and then secured their craft in the upper portion of the harbor, near the outskirts of the town of Piræus. On the right promontory, the tomb of Themistocles looked inspired under the golden glow of the rising sun; to the left, the fortress of Eëtionea, erected by the Four Hundred, appeared blazing



with jets of light, and like white, even, high banks of shells ran the two long walls, connecting Piræus with Athens. Upon the slope of the Mount Lycabettus, rested that marvelous city, now flooded by a gorgeous sun, which capriciously flashed, warm, bright beams over turret, dome or spire, or trailed a silver line over the small rivers of Cephissus and Illissus, which bounded Athens east and west. In the upper city, the Acropolis stood in all the majesty and grandeur with which ages had hallowed its huge rocky sides—one hundred and fifty feet high, and one thousand, one hundred and fifty feet long, and five hundred broad. Wide shafts of sunlight and misty shadows crept within its scarped sides or furtively played upon its sharp projections. Beautiful temples, and bronze and marble statues covered the summit. The marvelous Parthenon, sacred to the Goddess Minerva, seemed garlanded with prismatic gems, and the magnificent Erechthéum with its three separate temples, appeared alive with myriads of trem-

bling stars, that flashed brightest from gilded arch, or Greek inscription; while the helmet and spear of the colossal statue of Athena Promachos, looked as if bathed in the light of the fire of some celestial altar.

“Ruins of the great old time” said Egert Edemon, with reverential voice and manner, as they stood at a distance below, looking up at those wonderful monuments. They wondered what master hand, had chiseled with sculptor’s skill, the frieze of the Parthenon.

“Come! let us not tarry here, for the morning is already advanced,” replied Ducas Fabius, who had little or no appreciation of artistic beauty. With a heavy sigh for his oppressed country, Egert Edemon turned away, wondering how long it would be thus. They followed a narrow, winding street, past the Acropolis, towards the southeast, near the Illissus, and now by the Nine Springs or fountain of Calirrhoe; a little farther on, they stopped near a vast heap of ruins, over which, wild nauseous vines throw their rank, poisonous leaves

and gaudy blossoms. Looking cautiously around, Egert Edemon plunged among them, and separated a dense labyrinth before him.

"Follow me!" he called back to Ducas Fabius.

"Not there! amid that wilderness of poison!"

"These have been my faithful sentinels; better than any of your Centurions. But give me the poniard that I may open the vault."

"Where is the vault?"

"Here!"

"No further?"

"None!"

"Well then, I will come!" and Ducas Fabius, proceeded carefully through the narrow pathway. He could not resist the selfish pleasure of being the first to grasp that hidden wealth; besides he feared Egert Edemon might prove treacherous, did he relinquish the weapon.

"Stoop low," whispered the Greek, and

with his arm he brushed aside a heavy thicket of ivy and reed-grass, that disclosed an open space or what was once the adytum of a temple. After removing a deep layer of dust, small dark lines were discovered, that formed a little square, one end of which appeared notched. Egert Edemon pointed with his finger, saying "Insert the point of the poniard there, and press hard against it."

Ducas Fabius obeyed, and the cover of stone slid smoothly back, revealing large pockets of sheepskin. How his eyes leaped and glistened over the treasure, as he spread his swarthy hands over it, impetuously whispering "All mine!"

"Only two-thirds!" replied Egert Edemon. Move aside, that I may divide it rightly; but methinks their value is marked. Yes! these two, and that small one are thine; this one is mine," and the heavy bags were lifted from out the bed, that had hidden them for fifteen years. As they were removed, dazzling jewels glittered upon the marble floor, for Time had

eaten away their covering, as if to gloat surreptitiously over the valuable contents.

"Thou art a wise fellow," said Ducas Fabius, slapping the broad shoulders of Egert Edemon. "I will forget thy Greek extraction and deem thee Roman."

"Nay! I shall be prouder of my own Grecian ancestry than thine. Only one request have I to ask of thee? Treat Niobe well, and when she would fain be alone, leave her without rebuke or harsh words."

"I will seek to serve thee;" answered Ducas Fabius, whose pleasure was excessive, at finding his somewhat dubious hopes, fully realized. He felt willing to guarantee anything in his satisfaction of relief from his anxiety.

"We cannot remove all of this at one time," said Egert Edemon, as the Roman was greedily gathering the fallen gems, "Here bind this rough cloth around that sack, that it may not create suspicion, as we traverse the streets homeward."

Doubly, triply secure did Ducas Fabius

fold and fasten them, jealously watching lest one should escape.

With a hug of inexpressible delight, Egert Edemon pressed to his breast his recovered wealth—wealth that he had longed to possess for years past, but dared not even approach, for fear of exciting the suspicious eye of some watchful Turk. He then placed an equal quantity of the jewels within the vault, and reclosed the lid, watchful that no diamond had tried to bury its brilliancy in some near crevice. He then returned a portion of the sand which had accumulated there, particle after particle, with the revolution of every passing year.

They retraced their steps, seeking to restore the thicket of stems and brush to its former undisturbed appearance, and as they kept on their way, they peered vigilantly on all sides, to learn if their movements had been detected. But their eyes had failed to perceive the shrinking form of the young Greek, Selon Clethe, who in a darkened niche at the opposite side of

the adytum had witnessed in silence all that transpired.

This secret spot, had for several years been to him a favorite hiding place, when he could steal away from the discord and care around him, and its gloom and shadows and loneliness were often what his heart most craved for; silent moments that were rich with beautiful dreams or wild fancies. But Selon Clethe did not know until now, that such wealth had been lying so near him. Yet, although he was in tacit possession of the remainder, the thought never entered his mind to appropriate it, and make his escape to the mountains; his soul was too full with its own woe. For years he had loved and learned to look upon Niobe Edemon as his future bride; she had intertwined herself within his being as a part of himself; had nestled within his heart like the pure, spring violet, which gave promise of the beautiful summer of his life and although the future seemed dark with ignoble servitude, they could rainbow their souls with

this love. And it had all been ruthlessly torn from him—the pale violet had died upon his heart, leaving it dizzy and sick, for want of that perfume that had nourished it, and the summer would never come for him. He shuddered and shivered, and wondered if some passing blast had strayed from the snowy summit of Olympus and struck him with its wintry breath. He flung himself with a passionate sob upon the stone floor, knowing now full well, from whence sprang the doom of Niobe and himself; knowing that her father had bartered her priceless purity and innocence for ambition and riches, and as thought after thought crowded through his distracted brain, he pictured her own powerless anguish. With pallid face he saw their inexorable destiny; he felt the vast distance between them; in utter helplessness, he submitted to Fate, because there was no other alternative. What could a *slave* do? Were Egert Edemon a brother in bondage, he might cherish some intangible hope, but from his rich dress, he knew him to be freed.

With a bitter, useless regret, he returned to the light of that outer world, which shed the painful atmosphere of slavery upon him, and which now required the mightiest struggle of his soul to cope with, and endure. In the distance he saw the receding figures of Egert Edemon and Ducas Fabius disappear through the gateway leading to the Acropolis, and without any definite object he mechanically followed, gazing upon the ground, that still bore the impress of their sandaled feet. He thought if these footprints were only *Niobe's*, how he would ever follow them, asking no other joy. Keeping on, he paused and watched the tiny wake of their boat broaden into the unquiet ripples, and he looked down into the depths of the cool water, that more enticing than syren's song, seemed to lure him to seek in their watery depths some rest for his sorrowing soul.

"But not quite ready yet for Charon and Hades," he said aloud as he turned to the home of his master, where he eagerly asked

with almost tearful eyes, for some errand to Salamis.

"What errand would'st thou have there?" replied his imperious owner, Ali Ishlen.

"Naught, but thy own bidding!" The evasive, humble answer, so well pleased his master, that he was told to take the day for his own. It was the first remembered liberty he had known for many years. All the precious moments of the day he lingered within sight of that home of splendor, where he saw Egert Edemon enter and leave at his will; but vainly did he seek to catch one glimpse of white hands, or a delicate form; and then, as twilight lingered over the Olympian range, he returned to Athens, fretting under the stern decree of his life.

Egert Edemon had not full satiety, for one drop had failed to overflow his cup of joy—a smile from *Niobe* was wanting. They had entered her room to find her strangely quiet, a quietude which defied all their attempts to awaken one spark of interest in things around

her, or bring the faintest gleam of pleasure to her sorrowful lips or down cast eyes.

"Perchance after a little time, she will be herself," said Egert Edemon as they left her.

"She is like a pouting child over a lost toy," exclaimed Ducas Fabius, with annoyance, "I will send Æte to her."

That weak, pretty bauble of vanity, in company with an attendant was dispatched to Niobe. Æte wondered with something of alarm at the strange change in their household, as she ran back to ask her brother its meaning.

"Niobe is free, and my wife! Treat her as thine equal!" was the brusque reply.

"I am glad, for I ever liked her," she answered, content without further questioning. But her offers to entertain were unheeded; as if there could be anything in common between the rich nature of the one, and the palpable dross of the other.

After Egert Edemon and Ducas Fabius had deposited their money and jewels in places of

safety, known only to themselves, they reclined on their couches while they partook of a well selected repast. Then the numerous servants were called in, who were mostly of the lower class of Greeks, and were informed that Egert Edemon was now their master in place of Lygas Fabius, and that they need not obey orders from the latter. Many faces revealed an expression of pleasure, for Lygas Fabius had proved a hard, tyrannical owner, and there was something in the frank, handsome countenance before them, that betokened a change for the better.

Egert Edemon obtained access to the room of Lygas Fabius, and had everything belonging to him, removed to a distant portion of the building, excepting a small heavy iron box, that defied their ingenuity and force to open; it was decided to keep this until his return.

At different times Egert Edemon made repeated attempts to arouse Niobe from the strange quiet, settling over her young life; he

had her robed in costly garments, decorated her regal head with golden grasshoppers and jewels that flashed their glittering light over her unquiet brow, regardless of its superb setting. Passively she yielded to all their wishes and whims, without any show of emotion, save on two occasions: once when they would have dressed her in the fatal tunic, which she had worked for Aete, but she shuddered violently and refused to have it near her; and once, when she first listened to the sound of musical instruments. As the exquisite harmony softened and swelled around her, she arose in all her matchless beauty, and walked with uncertain steps and bewildered manner, towards the tapestry concealing the players; pushing back her hair from her temples as if its weight was oppressive, she listened with drooping head and appeared to catch sight of the far off lights of consciousness with its returning memory, for her face flushed deeply and her eyes grew bright with the olden look.

"Like herself again," whispered Egert Edemon.

That instant the music ceased, to take up some other strain—and that moment's pause broke the spell. The beautiful conscious expression flitted instantaneously. With a sudden shiver and despairing glance, she settled back into that frigid reserve and pallid stupor. With an exclamation of woe, Egert Edemon sprang to his feet and folded her to his breast, saying in anguished tones: "My Niobe is mad! my child hath lost her reason! Niobe my heart's treasure, speak to me!" and he held her at arm's length, as he eagerly searched her face for one glimpse of reason.

"What would'st thou, my Father?" But the dark eyes meeting his, were cold and unmeaning; the even tone was devoid of all feeling. She was utterly passionless.

"Oh! my poor Niobe! Niobe!" he repeated, clasping her closer within his arms.

In vain the melody that had so moved her, was played again and again, now softly, now loudly, but it fell unheeded upon her dumb senses. The most skillful physician in all

Greece was sent for, who after fruitless prescriptions, ordered undisturbed repose. Long and patiently did Egert Edemon prove her only attendant, and his tender watching was at last rewarded, by an almost imperceptible change for the better. She would now evince a little pleasure whenever he approached her.

One morning, while he was seeking to attract her attention to a beautiful, rare bird, that he had purchased from a wandering Saracen, Ducas Fabius called to him, "My Father is coming." With a frown of mingled anger and triumph Egert Edemon left the room, and strayed in the middle hall by the rippling fountain, to await him. As Lygas Fabius entered the door-way a sinister expression crossed his face as he confronted the Greek, and he said in his shrill voice: "Slave! begone; how darest *thou* to be here?"

"*Slave*, no longer!"

"What meanest thou by thine impudence? Thy master shall know of this."

"My master? I have a master no more forever."

"Get thee hence! Stay; I will have thee bound and carried to Athens," and he stamped his foot with rage to summon his slaves.

But an unbroken silence was the only reply. Egert Edemon stood motionless but wearing a heavy frown and haughtily resting his folded arms on his breast. After a moment's silence he said, "Lygas Fabius, *I* am master and owner here, and thou art my slave, a beggar in the highway!"

"Is the fellow mad? Where is Ducas?" and Lygas Fabius advanced cautiously nearer.

"Mad? No! thou despicable fool; there have been times when thou hast nearly made me so; but those times are past," replied Egert Edemon with rising anger, "Thy son has wooed my daughter, and thy riches have all passed from thee."

The face of Lygas Fabius was literally livid with fear and rage; he made a movement as if to spring upon the Greek, then paused, and



called loudly for Ducas Fabius who soon entered, and stood with averted head before his father. Perchance a momentary fit of shame swept over his soul, as he saw his father thus humbled and disgraced, for although evil deeds had made up the greater part of his life, nevertheless Lygas was his father, and as such entitled to respect.

"Ducas Fabius, tell me, is there truth in what this fellow saith; that thou hast polluted thyself with Greek blood, bringing upon us its penalty of poverty and starvation, for thou knowest we have naught but what thine uncle hath bequeathed us?"

"It is true! as Egert Edemon telleth thee, but he had wealth far greater than ours, of which he hath given me two-thirds."

"He? A slave? A low born impostor? Forsooth, a pretty madman's tale!"

"Back! with those words upon thy cowardly tongue," interrupted Egert Edemon, standing close before him. "My blood and name are superior to thine, and without thy

black guilt. Is not this dwelling rightly mine, and art thou not the impostor?"

Lygas Fabius retreated a step or two, and with something akin to a shivering moan, asked for his room. But when Egert Edemon said that the apartment was his, a paroxysm of fiendish despair leaped into his eyes.

"Show it to me!" he gasped.

Egert Edemon led the way, and pointing to the iron box, commanded him to open it.

"Never!" almost screamed Lygas Fabius.

"Then it shall go to Athens, and be opened there by some artificer. Think better; thou art powerless. Submit quietly, and I'll not be as hard and vindictive to thee as thou hast ever been to me."

"Ducas Fabius, canst thou stand by and see thy father thus disgraced?" he asked in piteous tones.

"Thou hast never been an over-indulgent parent to me; but I have not the power to aid thee. It is better to open the box without trouble."

With a heavy sigh and tottering footsteps Lygas Fabius obeyed; but as the sparkle of jewels met his eyes, he suddenly grasped a handful and fled from the room. Egert Edemon quickly detained him, and with his strong hand, compelled him to relinquish his hold of the treasure. Lygas Fabius shrieked with terror and rage. "By the God of Heaven, thou shalt bitterly rue this." His hands and face worked convulsively; their color became a purplish black, and he fell in a spasm upon the floor. They carried him to the menial's room, and summoned a servant to his assistance. He shortly recovered, but remained all day upon his couch, rude indeed, but not so poor and hard as those which Egert and Niobe Edemon had occupied for many years.

The contents of the box, including scrip and writings, disclosed the intention of Lygas Fabius, to abscond with a large portion of the wealth belonging to his son, and his visit to Corinth was for the purpose of making his final arrangements. Ducas Fabius was com-

pelled to take a portion of his newly acquired money and add it to his patrimony, which was found wanting, that it might balance the amount due his distant relatives according to the will.

When Lygas Fabius fully realized the position he occupied, he was in appearance perfectly submissive and almost fawning to Egert Edemon whenever they chanced to meet, which was seldom, as they took their meals separately and avoided each other as much as possible. Egert Edemon's feelings of revenge were amply satisfied, and for the sake of Aete Fabius, whom he nevertheless heartily despised, he forbore visiting further indignities. The only companionship Lygas Fabius had in his ignominious situation, was that of Aete, and from her idle prattle he learned all he desired to know about the family. He often questioned her quite particularly concerning the condition of Niobe.

## CHAPTER III.

It was one of the balmy days in the Grecian Spring that Egert Edemon bade Niobe good-bye for a two weeks' absence to Megaris. She half smiled amid her tears, in spite of her vain efforts to keep them back, for she would sadly miss the dear face that had been so untiringly her companion for many days.

Ducas Fabius, she had not seen since her first appearance as an inmate in his house, for he had been peremptorily excluded by Egert Edemon, whose will he did not care at present to dispute. But now Egert Edemon asked that she would permit him to enter, and be her nurse until his return. She consented, and for the first time in his life, Ducas Fabius forgot his selfishness in ministering to and entertaining his unwilling bride. When he brought her flowers and rare ornaments,

and tiny statues from the bazaar in Athens, she thanked him with gentle words, and almost forgot that he had been cruel. Once, when Aete was with her, and her ceaseless chatter had become almost intolerable, he considerably sent her to her room.

But as days went by, and the conviction became a settled fact, that the affection of Niobe Edemon was beyond his winning—that even in sleep she unconsciously called for Selon Clethe, his vindictive nature became fully aroused, he vehemently hated his helpless victim, and laid out a species of persecution for her to undergo. In a thousand irritating ways he compelled her to feel his jealousy and contempt; he would bring her a bud or blossom, then in the act of presenting it, would say, "Tis a pity that Selon cannot give it thee." If she was in a frame of mind to be excited, she would fling it back into his face, replying, "Such a hope would be indeed too blessed!" If she was calm and passionless, she would let it fall unheeded in her lap.

But she soon wearied of this incessant strife, and at last received his taunts in silence, trusting that her father's coming would end them. If the cruelty had to be borne much longer, she must die, or go hopelessly mad, for the mania was fitfully returning. Twice he essayed to rouse her spirit by stinging blows upon her white shoulders, but they were received with indifference. At times she would sit for hours with some aphyllous stem in her hands, as if she was absorbed in the study of its inanimate stalk. Ducas Fabius paid no heed to her threatened complaints of him to her father; he felt that he had lost rather than gained by the purchase, and that his captive bride had failed to charm. He would have sought gratification to his disappointment in absence, travel or associations of novelty; but he could see that such a course would only subserve to the gratification of her whose happiness he plotted to destroy. With his father he scorned communication, for that father's treachery, still rank-

led within him; Aete, he alternately petted and scolded; called her a bit of vanity, or simple fool, and had forbidden her visits to Niobe, owing to her having ventured to remonstrate with him against his cruel treatment.

Niobe Edemon looked for the coming of her father as some helpless swimmer views amid wild breakers the safe though stern rock of safety. She knew that insanity threatened her; that only with mighty effort could she hope to stay it until her father's return, and then perhaps his presence would bring her relief;—and oh, she would plead so well to be taken away—she would strive so earnestly to enlist her father's sympathy, and surely he loved her now better than ever. “Oh! father, come to me! come to thy child!” she would exclaim, suddenly starting, forgetful of all else. Ducas Fabius heard the heart-breaking cry and took a fiendish delight in her sufferings.

A little later he entered her room with dolorous face and well feigned sorrow.

"Niobe, my bride, I have bad tidings for thee."

"Tidings from where—from whom?" she asked with unusual interest.

"From Egert Edemon!"

"Oh! my father, what of him?" and she sprang to her feet with an anxious expression in her face.

"He is dead!"

With a moan that seemed racked from her inmost soul, she beat the air wildly with her hands, as he kept on, his words biting like some pitiless scalpel into a festering wound.

"He was drowned in a gale with a number of Helots while crossing the Saronic Gulf."

Unhesitatingly, she believed the tale, for her unsuspicious mind could not credit the possibility of such fiendish sport. She sat down with hands pressed hard against her temples, and a fierce glare in her hot, dry eyes, while her tormentor stood near, watching her keenly; then her arms fell powerless to her side, and there she sat the remainder of that

long day, whose moments seemed like ages. The lights and shadows falling across the floor, looked to her like waves of woe, bearing up the dead body of her father. We will, in charity, think that when Ducas Fabius left her, he did not know that he had almost set the seal of madness upon her—for had he thought so, he might have paused to pity her.

The hours of night mercifully brought her sleep; quieting, somewhat, the overtaxed brain—but a sleep strangely akin unto death. The slave that entered to unrobe her, was frightened at the corpse-like pallor of her still face, and hastily called Ducas Fabius. He too bent uneasily near her to find if she were indeed dead, but seeing that she breathed, he bade her attendant place her in bed.

One hour later Egert Edemon returned, and stood over Niobe with anxious face, lamenting her fearfully changed appearance; first, he thought to awaken her, then sorrowfully said: "No! sleep on poor child, and may sleep sweetly refresh thee." He gently kissed her,

then left the room. With searching eyes he questioned Ducas Fabius regarding her, who replied, somewhat defiantly, that "he was becoming absolutely tired of her—that she was naught but a capricious child, and he was heartily weary of humoring her."

"What dost thou say to giving her back to me, that I may remove her to another home, where she is free from thy presence and thou art free from hers?"

For a moment he hesitated; weighing the sweetness of longer oppression against the bitterness of that opposition which would be arrayed against himself, for it was evident that at last the father's love was anxiously aroused for his ill-fated child.

"Yes! be it so! I am not loth to relinquish so troublesome a pest, and one that mortifies my Roman pride."

Egert Edemon parried not the thrust contained in this malicious reply, but sought his room with a tender smile, at the thought of bestowing joy upon Niobe, when the morning should come.

A little later Niobe Edemon awoke, and rising, seated herself upon a low ottoman, near a massive, carved chair, against whose frame-work she could rest her burning head; above her swung a dim light, and upon the floor slept a slave. As she half reclined there, endeavoring to untangle her confused and bitter thoughts, she observed a strange rustling in the opposite end of the room and saw the tapestry slightly moved, then raised, and Lygas Fabius glared upon her with the face of a demon. She made an effort to rise, but the body refused her will—to cry out, but the faint semblance of a cry died upon her lips, and she sank back almost lifeless, with wild, terrified eyes fixed upon him. Lygas Fabius chuckled to himself as he witnessed the terror of his helpless victim, and coming closer to her, hissed in sarcasm and hatred: "So thou art the exquisite Hebe of this household? Thou also did'st think to turn me out of it. To enslave my son at thy feet. To enrich thy father and thyself at the expense of our im-

poverishment. What meanest thou, base, Greek slave, to dare this usurpation?" and he fiercely shook her in his iron grasp. Then fastening his fiendish eyes full upon her until they nearly touched her own, he said: "If thou tellest mortal that thou hast seen me here—dost hear me? listen well—I will take thy life. See, if this blade fail, here is poison," and he exhibited a portion of white powder in the palm of his hand; "thou art completely in my power; none can save thee; I could will that this night should be thy last, but I have more to do with thee—more joy for thy lips to taste. Thou shalt see me soon again." And he disappeared beneath the tapestry that fell before her helpless gaze.

Long and motionless she sat thus with those stinging words, "thou art completely in my power," ringing in her ears, and with those horrible eyes piercing her soul. She could not bear it longer. With a struggle she endeavored to move, and dash away that hated spell, but she only arose to fall in a merciful

swoon to the floor, awakening the bewildered slave. Ducas Fabius also heard the noise, for he had not yet gone to sleep, and he ran hastily in. He lifted her in surprise; when she soon returned to her wretched life and clung to him closely in terror, pleading with beseeching sobs for him never to leave her again.

"But where is Selon, why does he not come to me?"

Ducas Fabius almost threw her from him when she mentioned that hated name. At that moment Egert Edemon entered the room. Niobe sprang into his arms with wild laughter; holding her with one arm, he strode towards Ducas Fabius with uplifted, tight-clenched hand.

"By the immortal Jove I have not harmed her," said Ducas Fabius; "'tis but this moment that I came in. Ask her?"

"Niobe, did he touch thee?"

"No! no! Selon no!" she cried, alternately sobbing and laughing, and evidently mistaking her father for Selon Clethe.

"What *does* this mean, Ducas Fabius?"

"By the throne of Jupiter, I tell thee I know not!"

"Hath any one else been here?"

"No one!"

"Be quiet, Niobe, and tell me the cause of thy fright?"

"I cannot! oh, I cannot! Perhaps it was a fancy of my brain; methinks it must have been. It could not have been ought else. It was fearful. Those eyes! those eyes!"

"What eyes, my daughter?"

"Oh, those that my brain conjured up—those frightful eyes of my dream. But tell me, Selon," she said, pleadingly, "you will never leave me again, say never again?"

"Daughter, it might prove a rash promise. I shall stay by thee a long time to come, but I am thy father, and not Selon Clethe."

"Hush! do not dupe me. My father lieth in the Gulf waves. Only be near me?" and she nestled closer, with her arms around his neck.

Several days Egert Edemon remained her vigilant watcher; waking her tenderly from some hideous dream that left great drops of perspiration on her brow, or singing some lullaby in his melodious voice. To him she was a child again, and not the rebellious woman he had known. Yes, childlike, pitifully so; all that brave earnestness of her strong nature had been quelled by Ducas and Lygas Fabius. Now, her own will never asserted its sovereignty, and her reason was governed by capriciousness. Egert Edemon had unconsciously settled into a sad, remorseful man before this woeful wreck of his daughter. The brilliant dream of his soul was tarnished, and the warm, ambitious hope he had grasped with such avidity failed to be fully realized.

One month later, Aete Fabius petitioned her brother for a visit to Athens to see some of her Roman companions; he was to accompany her there, and return for her in a few days. The same galley with its silken banners, that Egert Edemon had guided as a slave,



lay waiting for Aete ; urgent was the temptation to order Lygas Fabius in the place he had occupied, but he refrained and let it depart with a Helot. He hurried homeward, ever anxious for Niobe, although but few moments had elapsed since he left her.

What a sight met his gaze ; he found her raving madly, with foam upon her lips, and with great staring eyes, and labored breath. His very soul sickened and died within him.

Lygas Fabius, ever watchful, ever wakeful, had improved the momentary absence of Egert Edemon and again stealthily entered Niobe's apartment. His visit aroused all the slumbering fury of insanity, and with smiles of triumph he knew that the light and reason of Niobe Edemon's soul were gone forever. In secrecy and darkness, akin to his own treacherous nature, had he struck the final blow, and well had it told. All efforts to restore her mind proved unavailing. At times her frenzy would subside into moodiness or melancholy. Meanwhile, windows and doors were securely barricaded to prevent the possibility of escape.

Some two weeks after the visit of Lygas Fabius, Niobe Edemon awoke at midnight ; half resting upon one arm, she peered cautiously around to see if the slave, who was lying upon the floor, was asleep. During the day Niobe had been unusually restive and violent. Under the light of the swinging lamp she now arose and dressed herself in a fine tunic, sprinkled with silvery leaves. Opening a casket, she took from its soft lining a blazing fillet of diamonds which she placed upon her head, and a zone of opals, with which she encircled her waist, all the time whispering gently, "Selon's bride! Selon's bride!" Then her eye chanced to rest upon that hated tunic which she had made for Aete Fabius ; with a fierce expression in her dark eye, she rent and trampled it under her feet. Again looking at the sleeping slave, she said, "It is well that she lies thus quiet," and then advancing to that side of the room where she had seen Lygas Fabius enter, she lifted the tapestry which disclosed a small aperture near the

floor, and lying down, dragged herself through it. Moonlight and stars, night air and dew, gave her welcome; a beautiful smile made radiant her face as she sped away on swift feet to the forest. Her flight was tracked by the scintillant fillet and zone, streaming back their brilliancy under the moon. She passed by the blasted cypress tree, beneath whose branches she had unconsciously reclined during that strange ritual of the bridal and sacrifice. On she fled through the checkered woods, hearing no sound, meeting no mortal—on to that home of poverty, where she sprang like a hunted deer through its low broken casement, and flung herself with wild laughter upon the bed that had so often pillowed her head, crying in loud triumphant tones, “Free at last! Thine, Selon! Selon, thine!” and with a smile sweet as the slumber of infancy, she rested her tortured head upon the lowly pillow, and slept through many hours.

Great was the consternation when the dawn

of that morning revealed the flight of Niobe Edemon. The slave was cruelly punished, but she firmly reiterated her unconsciousness of Niobe's departure, and with the superstition common to that age, they believed that she had been spirited away during the silent hours of the night.

Only Lygas Fabius suspected the truth, and in secret joy he gloated over the misery of Egert Edemon, who now realized the enormity of his sin and that his sin was receiving deserved punishment.

But only two days of triumph remained for Lygas Fabius. He was suddenly stricken low with a consuming fever. Aete was sent for from Athens, and endeavored to nurse him with care; but as in all things else, she proved thoughtless and awkward, doing more harm than good.

Death stood over him with the “sacrificial sword.” In agony Lygas Fabius viewed the far off shadowy shores, where Charon with his boat was waiting impatiently for his soul,

and through the dark smoke ascending, he saw a legion of weird, grotesque forms, with faces of horror, plunging, wrestling and beckoning him on. Even then he cowered not but sent for Egert Edemon that he might see him suffer.

"Here!—stand there that I may behold thy face? Thou canst not harm me now, for already I feel the billowy swell of the surging Styx. *I* was the cause of thy daughters' madness; it was *I* that secretly entered her room, and with diabolical threats blasted her reason."

Egert Edemon grasped the dying man, and in tones of passion asked, "Did Ducas Fabius know aught of this?"

"He—did—not!"

"May thy soul"—but he left the curse unfinished. Lygas Fabius was dead; dying without revealing the secrecy of his entrance into that room, or suggesting that Niobe might that moment be upon the island.

After the unostentatious funeral of Lygas

Fabius—which was like that of a beggar—Egert Edemon made preparations to leave Greece forever, and to relinquish his home to Ducas Fabius, for a satisfactory amount in money and jewels. Three mornings after, he stood upon the shores of Salamis with tearful eyes and blighted life, a voluntary exile from the home of his youth and manhood. Anguish contracted his dark brow, as he thought of a beautiful dark eyed child, looking to him for father, mother, sister and brother; of a matchless girl, branded as slave; a sacrificed bride, a frenzied woman, and lastly, of that sleeping woe-stricken face. All these swept before him, like a retributive picture. With a deep groan he turned and motioned the rowers to a distant war-ship, anchored in the harbor and bound for Italy. —

As they floated seaward, Egert Edemon remained on deck, the last to watch, until the land faded away in the distance, and the purple range of Hymettus with its romantic trees and herbs was dimly seen. He gazed

upon the Acropolis with its master works of Phidias and others as it faded indistinctly away, and with bitterness in his heart he questioned this mockery of his life. His soul instinctively yearned for its master—longed to cast anchor somewhere; and there floated into his mind from out the years of childhood, an indistinct memory of the Greek church. But it was intangible to him; the many years of servitude and cruel despotism, which had ruled ill-fated Greece, had but served to quench in superstition the beautiful light that St. Paul had lit and left upon the classic shores of the people for whom his heart yearned. In boyhood he had heard the story of the Holy Nazarene. He believed in the existence of God, but he knew not how to worship Him. The religious impressions made on his heart in early life were almost obliterated.

Ducas Fabius determined to dispose of all his property and take Aete with him to Rome, to reside among his relations. He went to Athens where he found a ready purchaser in

Ali Ishlen, who gave him but half the value of his palatial home.

Aete, shed a few tears by the fountain that never tired of playing over the tiny fish; and Ducas Fabius paused in the sloping pathway to glance back. It all looked the same now as it had when he first gazed up the long aphrite walk. The pillars were just as cold and white, the scarlet flowers blushed as deeply, the wide blades of grass were as treacherous, the vines were tender and clinging, and the purple cup-like buds with open mouths, were still watching the dewdrops, ready to fall. Ducas Fabius passed his hand over his eyes to see if he were not dreaming, or if the disappointment and unhappiness he had known in that home, were not some painful vision. But the memory of Niobe Edemon came unpleasantly to him, in the breath of the jasmine by her barricaded window, and he hastened after Aete.

## CHAPTER IV.

"Birds of omen dark and foul,  
 Night-crow, raven, bat and owl,  
 Leave the sick man to his dream—  
 All night long he heard your scream—  
 Haste to cave and ruin'd tower,  
 Ivy, tod, or dinged bower,  
 There to wink and mope, for, hark!  
 In the mid air sings the lark."

Ali Ishlen, with his numerous trains of slaves, soon took possession of the mansion, bereft of its olden inmates. It was not long before he felt quite at home in the marble court by the fountain, where he was wont to sit upon a gorgeous mat and smoke his tortuous pipe. With heartache and wild yearnings, Selon Clethe entered the mansion that had once sheltered his idol, and yet his feelings turned more lovingly to the poor, humble dwelling whose poverty had been borne with greater pleasure. One sunny day, not

long after his arrival, Ali Ishlen, lazily reclined against the coping of the fountain, leisurly inhaling the opium from his pipe, and as the delicate wreaths of smoke revolved upward to the frescoed ceiling, Selon Clethe stood opposite, intently watching their airy folds, which would persistently remind him of the wondrous gracefulness of Niobe. He faltered forth a question, then hesitated—which attracted the notice of his master, whose thoughts had been roving to a pretty Spartan girl, that he had seen for sale, and whom he contemplated purchasing for his already well filled harem.

"What dost thou say young fellow?"

"It might be impertinence, therefore I had best keep silence!"

"Thou art discreet, and not given to impudence, and if thou should'st this time be overforward, I will not chide thee."

"Tell me then, what has become of Egert Edemon and his daughter?"

"What good can the knowledge do thee?"

"Naught, but to gratify my curiosity! Methinks the daughter was fair as Venus."

"Troth! by the beard of Mahomet she was, and I had thought to have her grace my harem, but Ducas Fabius offered me twice her price, in jewels, so I sold herself and father to him. It is whispered that he wed her, but I scarce believe it; he told me that she had lost her reason!" Ali Ishlen then puffed away, innocent of the painful feelings he had kindled in Selon Clethe, who had not until this moment, known that Niobe had become insane.

After a momentary pause, he asked, "and Egert Edemon?"

"He hath gone to some foreign land—to Italy I believe! But keep thy tongue silent now, and trouble me no longer with idle questions."

"I thank thee for thy graciousness, and will keep silence!" He stood there, tall and slight, leaning against the wall, while endeavoring to link together what he knew and

what he had just heard, so that he might form some intelligible sequel to her sorrowful life. But it baffled him, and he only knew that she was very fair and dear to him.

"Bring me more opium slave?" startled him from his reverie. As he turned to depart, his foot accidentally struck the alabaster stand that held the costly pipe of Ali Ishlen. With an oath, his master forgot his native indolence, and springing to his feet, struck the young Greek across the face. The blow was sudden and undeserved. Forgetting that he was a slave, Selon Clethe returned it. With furious voice Ali Ishlen summoned his servants, who jostled and crowded around them in surprise.

"Take that dog out; strip him; bind his hands and feet, and lash him until I give the command to stop!"

Three or four Helots carried him struggling away. As the whip cut into the flesh of his naked shoulders and back, his lips quivered, but he stood there without flinching, or with-

drawing his great black eyes from his master, whose face was fairly contorted with rage. When long crimson lines streamed all over him, and he fainted from excess of agony, Ali Ishlen cried "Enough! throw him into his room and there leave him;" and his corpulent form in blue turkish trowsers, scarlet vest, and green turban, disappeared to look after the wreck of his favorite that had solaced so many hours.

"That brute's folly hath cost me a pretty sum, for now will I have to send to my brother in Turkey to purchase me another, for its like cannot be found in all Greece."

Selon Clethe soon returned to consciousness, and while lying there in his pain and anger, vowed to perish by starvation, rather than break the bread of Ali Ishlen. All that day he groaned with suffering, but would instantly hush his moans when others came near him. When night advanced, and the household were asleep, he dragged himself upon hands and feet, from his bed of barley straw, to a rough

box, where he succeeded in obtaining a small knife; then with his teeth and tied hands he cut the goat-skin string that bound them. It was with extreme difficulty that he could stand up, but after repeated attempts, he finally made his way across the yard, without being seen, to the wall composed of mortar and sticks that fronted the same portion of woods that Niobe Edemon had fled to. With noiseless perseverance, he was successful in making a hole, sufficiently large to admit his body, but when once outside, he was compelled from weakness and fatigue to lie down, and crawl to the forest, whose shelter, when gained, seemed to bless him. But not yet could he whisper freedom. On he dragged himself, listening now and then to some imaginary sound, or startled bird; through the same path that Niobe had traversed, and the thought came to him, that could he gain the hovel where she once lived, he would die content. But when almost there, his strength failed and he could but feebly secrete himself

under a heavy growth of lucerne, whose trailing vines formed an impenetrable shelter.

Late the next morning, he was awakened by the sound of many voices, which continued to approach near his hiding place; he knew that persons were in quest of him, and he fearfully listened with the eager hope that they might pass on. He felt the vines crush under their tread—still nearer, almost upon him and he held his breath, while great drops of sweet burst from brow and face; then his pursuers seemed a little farther away, then more so, and then the voices and footsteps died out in the distance. He thankfully breathed freer, feeling this time he was safe. All day he remained there in his cramped position, until the shades of night could more effectually shield him from observation. As the young moon arose he left his retreat and hurriedly quenched his excessive thirst in a near stream—never in his life had a few drops of cold water tasted so exquisitely sweet—and after bathing in its limped waters he stood up

greatly refreshed, and ready for his long journey. During the day he had formed his route of escape; but the demands of hunger must be first appeased, so he searched the forest for the tall *Artocarpus*, whose long white fruit would amply satisfy him for the present. An irresistible desire impelled him to visit the lowly home of Niobe; keeping among the shadows of the poplars and junipers, he neared the hovel, and entered by the low casement. With large black eyes full of loving thoughts, he lingered now by the chair she was wont to occupy—now by the rough table where he had once partaken of a meal in company with herself and father. Ah, with what passionate longing did he yearn for one look into her beautiful face, or the clasp of her soft white hand; then he paused in the doorway of the inner-room with feelings of reverence, for to him, the plain low couch, that had so often borne her form, was an object of sanctity. But suddenly he started with blanched cheek, for there upon the coverlet lay a long



tress of waving hair and he knew that it had never crowned head but hers. Tears and kisses fell over it; then in an instant like sunlight through a rain cloud, his face gleamed with a brilliant hope as he said aloud, "Be-gone, the unnatural tale of her flight to Olympus! No, she has secretly escaped from scenes that her soul abhorred. Perchance in my wanderings I may find thee, sweet idol of my soul! and this shall be the magic wand. But not upon Salamis can I hope to see thy form; too many days have come and gone since thy escape, for had'st thou lingered here thus long thou surely would'st have been recaptured. Yet I must not tarry, or the morning bird may make me captive," and he quickly buried the tress of hair under his vest and left the house with hasty steps—pausing but a moment over the bridge where he had last seen Niobe Edemon with her white outstretched arms towards him.

It was a long weary way from Salamis to Phocis, but what was that compared to servi-

tude, or the trust of meeting Niobe? Thenceforth his home of liberty should be amid the Parnassian range, near Delphi, where he had heard dwelt hundreds of escaped Greeks like himself. For several days he hid among trees and shrubs near the shore, hoping that he might espy some fisherman's boat, with which he could cross over to Megaris, eight stadia from the shore. Seeing a small house in a narrow secluded street, he returned to gain admittance; the kind matronly face that bade him enter, won his confidence, and he briefly told the woman of his escape and his reasons for it. She sympathized with him, for in her girlhood days she too had been a slave, but had been liberated by her master, with whom she had been a favorite. While he partook of bread, fruits and wine she exclaimed, "Ah! hast thou seen the spirit of Night?"

"Spirit of Night? What meanest thou kind friend?"

"Hast thou not heard of the fair spirit, white as the moonlight, with stars, that flash around her?"

"Thou dost not mean Diana?"

"Nay! this is not that spirit; she haunted our town but one time, and it was six crescents gone by."

"What is this spirit like?"

"I know not, save what others tell me! My eyes have not beheld her. They say that she entered the house of Arteo, the savant, who lives at the other end of the town, and that he gave her bread and wine, which he had placed in the olive grove, fronting his house, and allowed no one to approach or disturb her. They say she is slight as a sylph, with wild dark eyes; hair falling in waves to her feet, with a crown of brilliant light, and girdle of rare gems; but she was timid as a fawn, and fled to the forest, since when no one has seen her."

Had the good woman's failing sight, scanned the face before her she would have wondered at its mingled expression of surprise and joy. An inward conviction told Selon Clethe that the fair spirit was none other than his

ill-fated Niobe. It pained him to know of the perilous life she was leading. But why so beauteously arrayed? he inquiringly thought; then concluded from what he knew and had heard, that she must have escaped from the home of Ducas Fabius and Edemon in the costly robes and jewels which they had lavished upon her. With an eager hope in his heart, he begged his entertainer for some food to take with him, and replacing his sandals that he had removed before entering the door, he gratefully bade her farewell, and sought the outskirts of Megara.

With feelings of alternate hope and fear, he traversed every by-path; lingered near the olive grove; searched caves and dark recesses for his "spirit of Night," caring neither for rest or sleep. Often he caught himself fleeing after a bit of moonlight that some passing cloud had given life-like motion, or distant acacia, whose pinnated leaves in the night breeze appeared beckoning him there. But his hopes sickened when morning came and

he had not found her. How could he abandon the search and continue his way to Phocis? No; he would remain another day and night at the risk of being retaken to Salamis; so he returned to his former benefactress, giving for an excuse, that he was not sufficiently well to proceed further, and the rest, which he needed, gave new life and strength.

Again at dark he repeated his parting and retraced his footsteps of the previous night. Being somewhat weary with his constant watching, he threw himself upon a rising knoll of ferns. How, he scarce knew, his eyes must have drooped in slumber, for he was startled by the dawn of the new day, and he felt the uselessness of longer search, or of prolonging his stay in the neighborhood of Megara.

Now he passed through some defile, overhung with iris, or the pink and white dianthus; now through forests of juniper, aloe, cork or yewtree; now by the boggy edge of some filthy quagmire, breathing mephitic ex-

halations; again by some tumulus with broken remains of pedestal, or by the winding river of Phocis, or the fertile banks of Copais, now starred in beauty with the lotus flower and ribbed in soft shades of green. The soul of Selon Clethe expanded in the exquisite lights of the rich picture that seemed passing before him like some slow, moving panorama; but his eyes vainly longed to take in the form of Niobe Edemon, and in pain and regret he greeted the resplendent rocks of Parnassus, that flung back in his face the glaring sun of Heaven and liberty. But he would not utterly despond; he would still trust the beautiful hope of meeting her, and ambitious thoughts sprang up, of how he might some day return to Athens with warlike troops, enter its gates and haste to claim Niobe as a conqueror's bride. The dust of his ancestry should never rise to call him coward.

He found many warm, true friends ready to welcome him, who had long been waiting for tidings from Athens, and hoped in this, far off

woodland home, to learn that some active measures had been taken towards freedom. The instant that the first spark was struck from the anvil of liberty, they were all ready with one accord to pour down in a formidable band to strike or die; and here in the fastnesses of Parnassus were cradled the brave spirits, which in after years, triumphed in the emancipation of Greece, and wrenched away the Turkish power that had so basely throttled the land.

Amid its hills of myrtle, laurel and olive trees, Selon Clethe accepted the word of God, and realized how he had wasted in rebellious thought, and idle dreams, the years of his childhood. As he eagerly drank in the great, holy truths, his soul yielded an absorbing worship. It was a strange scene to see Miletus of Crete, an old bowed man, with gentle, benign face, and white hair that streamed on the morning wind, as he issued with tottering steps from a cave, at the base of the mountain, and greeted the throng of Greeks

who daily assembled to hear the marvelous words of salvation. Many of them wept like children when he told them in earnest trembling tones of the beautiful, but suffering life of Jesus, and of the lives of his Apostles. The venerable preacher had but recently come among them from a visit of several years in Rome; it was whispered that he had with him a daughter, but the rumor was somewhat vague. Selon Clethe proved his most attentive pupil, and the old man loved and encouraged him, and gave him a copy of St. Chrysostom's Commentaries on the Scriptures. One day Miletus questioned Selon concerning his life. When the brief story of Niobe Edemon was told in connection with his own, tears trickled down the old man's thin cheeks, and he appeared so agitated, that Selon Clethe paused in inquiry. After some moments silence, Miletus said, "My son, dost thou know that my adopted daughter is Niobe Edemon?"

"*My Niobe?* not *my* Niobe, *thy* adopted daughter? Oh! where? Let me hasten to

her, for long hath my heart been awaiting her," and he sprang to his feet, turning to the cave.

"Stay! my son, I have much to tell thee, and how I found her;" and he laid his feeble hand upon the Greek's arm. "It was in the early dawning as I left Megaris, that I sat down upon a rising hill, overlooking the Gulf, to behold for the last time, the shore and mountains of Attica. I knew that it was my last look, for all the young years of my life, have gone to herald the few remaining ones into that portal of rest, where our Redeemer liveth. Suddenly a tender hand rested upon my head, then toyed with my hoary locks, and a fair girl stood before me. But one glance was needed to tell that she was a maniac, and, I thought of patrician family, for her robe though worn and soiled was choicely embroidered in silver, and brow and waist were bound with rare gems. After much persuasion I induced her to sit beside me; she looked into my face long and earnestly, then

sobbing loudly, threw her arms around me, and called me father, while she piteously implored me not to leave her. She is timid with all others but myself, and looks to me as if I were, in truth, her natural parent. Failing to find any information in reference to her parents or guardians, I have taken care of and provided for her as a father, and she is now more contented and cheerful, though at times, dark moments of insanity brood over her. Now, that I remember, she has often called "Selon! Selon!" which must have been the cause of thy name seeming familiar to me. One minute she calls me father, and the next, persists that her father was drowned."

"Hast thou ever heard her speak the name of Ducas Fabius?"

"Nay! not Ducas, but Lygas Fabius, whom she appears to see in her worst moments of madness, for in shrieking tones she utters his name in affright."

"It is indeed my poor stricken Niobe, but

my Father in Heaven dealeth kindly with his children, for see how far he hath led our feet from Athens to permit our meeting here and how carefully hath he guarded her ; for many weeks have elapsed since her escape, in which she must have been unprotected and alone. Oh, that He in his good mercy would restore her mind."

"My son, I would not seek to deceive thee with false hopes; but I greatly fear that her soul will always remain clouded, while in this earthly tabernacle. Only immortality will remove the dire shadow from her young mind. Earnestly have I prayed that it might be, and lately I have perceived moments of returning reason, which I have improved in unfolding to her the glorious love of her Savior. What a raptured face is hers, while heeding me, but it is for a moment ; soon comes melancholy, and then stormy passion. Perchance thy coming may contain some healing balm for her racked mind, and I would suggest that thou shouldst reveal thyself to her, by being

apparently asleep under yon ash tree to the left, and permit her to find thee, as it were, accidentally. We can then best tell if there is hope for her ; if she doth recognize thee at once, without the sound of thy voice, it may yet be well. I will go to the grotto and send her forth."

With fast beating heart that would not be quiet, Selon Clethe hurried to the ash tree and threw himself down among the white blossoms of the parnassia. One glance through the waving grass, to the mouth of the cave, disclosed her, beautiful as ever! He could scarce compose his eyelids into seeming slumber, as he passionately uttered, "God bless thee!" and fairly held his breath, when he heard the grass and flowers rustle under her light footsteps. Now she paused to gather some bright bud, or look up for the sweet bird-note that attracted her attention. She had almost stepped upon Selon Clethe ere she discovered him. Starting back in alarm she turned to flee ; then stopped, and slowly,

cautiously returned; half leaning above him, she peered down into his face with a frightened look. Selon Clethe gazed full into her dark eyes without moving; closer she bent over him; now with a puzzled expression, now with an exquisite smile, and then sank kneeling by his side, whispering "Selon beloved, is it thou?" With yearning arms he caught her to his breast; with heart too full for utterance he imprinted rapid kisses upon brow and cheek, but she put up her hands and gently pushed his face from hers.

"Selon, I am mad! I must go hence, or Lygas Fabius will tear me from thee."

"Niobe! Niobe, talk not thus to me! Art thou not *my own*?"

"Yes Selon, I knew that thou would'st come to me; moon and stars have died away, but still my watch I've kept. Flowers have faded and blossomed since our parting, yet ever I timed thy coming. But see—look into my eyes for the wild light—watch closely, for I feel it ebbing there from heart to brain."

He covered his face with his hands, bitterly crying "Oh! Niobe! Niobe!"

Then she wound her arms around him, saying lovingly, "Do I terrify thee dearest? dost thou take back thy love and send me away? See! I am gentle now; do not cry?" and she placed her cheek against his with a loving smile.

Again he held her in a close embrace, feeling that his strong, earnest love might yet win her back to reason and happiness. This life, henceforth should be one of untiring devotion to her; he would protect her—he would die for her if need be.

"Niobe—no, I cannot *recall* a love, that has been constantly thine from a little child. Darling, thou art *all* to me, and our brothers of Parnassus shall witness our betrothal."

Miletus slowly approached them. He had observed them with smiles and tears, hoping that it might now be well for Niobe, as the recognition had been so favorable. They both arose to meet him, and Niobe joyfully ex-

claimed, taking his hand, "See! dear father, my beloved Selon hath returned to me, yet not my father either, for he sleepeth in the Gulf-waves; methinks at times his spirit is very near, and I whisper and whisper, trusting he will heed me. Selon, thou did'st hear my call for thee, and father too may come. Oh Selon! Selon!" she cried in loud terrified tones, "in pity, let not the fearful eyes of Lygas Fabius fasten upon me again! I will be thy slave—thy only one, so thou canst keep him away."

"Niobe dearest, I have heard that he is dead—he cannot return from the grave!"

"Art sure? Art sure?" she asked vehemently. No! No! No! It was but yesternight that he looked upon me and cursed me;" and she clung tightly to Selon Clethe.

"Oh! Niobe, calm thyself poor child. Believe me, he cannot harm thee."

"Yes! I forget, he dare not come near me, while thou art here," she said with a triumphant laugh, "I will defy him! I will defy him!"

The stormy fit of madness was upon her, and as Miletus led her half struggling back to the grotto, Selon Clethe flung himself to the ground in bitter woe; when calmer, he knelt and offered up a beseeching prayer to the Holy One, who knew his anguish of heart, and then he sped up a near glen, to his home on the steep of the mountain amid the tall firs.



## CHAPTER V.

———"Thou sweetest thing,  
That 'ere did fix its lightly-fibred sprays  
To the rude rock, ah! wouldst thou cling to me?  
Rough and storm-worn I am—yet love me as  
Thou truly dost, I will love thee again  
With true and honest heart, though all unmeet  
To be the mate of such sweet gentleness,"

Three weeks later, in the golden light of a lovely morning, when leaves were still gemed with dew, Selon Clethe, and a large band of followers, by whom he had been unanimously elected chief, were slowly winding along the descent of the mountain, on their way to the grotto. Their helmets and spears gleamed through the rich foliage, and their musical instruments thrilled the air. It was a gala day, the bridal morn of Selon Clethe; his face was very handsome in its happiness, but a close observer could detect, ever and anon, a serious, sad expression sweep over it, as if

some want remained unsatisfied. Still the sweet smile hovering on the firm lips, told of a quiet soul—of an abiding faith in duty. But why question the sadness of his face, or the fullness of his joy?

Miletus had endeavored to dissuade him from so great a sacrifice, as that of linking his fate with one, who would wearily drag it down by constant care and anxiety. He feared the burthen would prove too great, but Selon Clethe was not to be deterred from his purpose; he desired to possess the right of protecting and watching over her. Niobe was the idol of his soul, and he could not make her less so. Why—he knew not; but he felt that God, in his own good time would restore her reason; and since her recognition of him, after the storm of her mind had subsided, she had been less violent, and in perfect compliance had sought to please and obey him. He answered Miletus, "That were this earthly cup of joy without its dreg, Heaven might loose a trifle of its brightness; that were we

perfectly happy here, we might not be content there."

Miletus and Niobe Edemon, stood in the cave awaiting them. The diamond tiara flashed above her hair; the jeweled zone confined the long white tunic in graceful folds to her waist. Her face was whiter than the snowy hyacinth drooping against it; her dark eyes were gentle, but with a little wonder in their depths, at the approaching troop of Greeks, who uncovered their heads as they formed in a semicircle before her, while Selon Clethe advanced from their midst and stood beside her. Miletus stepped forward; in heartfelt tones made them man and wife in the sight of God and Heaven and the assembled throng, and the earnest benediction was tremulous with emotion. Niobe remained passive, quiet as a child, as the comrades of Selon Clethe saluted them, although her hands clasped together over his arm, nervously fretted against the burnished rivets of his armor.

Somewhat later in the day, Selon Clethe

observed a caravan of Turks and slaves in the outskirts of Delphi on a steep declivity of the slope of Parnassus, and could scarce credit his astonished eyes as he recognized his former master Ali Ishlen, who was gazing in wonder at its site, that resembled the cavæ of some great theatre. Then, with a few slaves, he saw him separate from the others, and go to the ruins of the once famous temple of Apollo.

Now he cautiously removed the clinging ivy from some parian pillar, that he might the better behold its strangely wrought design, or paused by some broken column, heavily covered with lichens or trailing moss.

Selon Clethe was almost tempted to reveal himself from the screen of shrubbery between them; then he thought the disclosure could not serve to benefit either, as Ali Ishlen would probably seek to force his return and allegiance, which he knew he had the right to dispute, and it would undoubtedly induce a serious quarrel. From what he could learn, they were bound for Macedonia.

Among the numerous slaves he recognized familiar faces, and was determined that the poor creatures should enjoy the liberty so dear to himself. When night came on, he disguised himself and entered their midst, as they were busily employed in preparing rude shelters for rest, with the secret sign of import, at that time well known to every Greek that was a member of the Society of Insurrectionists. Briefly he spoke the thrilling words their panting souls had been longing for. Ali Ishlen had many slaves of a different race, so that the few Greeks of noble lineage, whom Selon Clethe well knew, were successful in eluding the somewhat careless watch, and their light feet sprang over the ground on their way to the blest fastnesses of Parnassus.

In the morning the rage of Ali Ishlen knew no bounds, for eleven of his superior slaves had escaped. In vain were the woods thoroughly searched, and the neighboring peasantry strictly questioned. Fearing that the example would compel further desertion, he hurri-

edly gave orders to depart, and with his long train was soon seen moving in the direction of Thessaly.

Miletus and Niobe, when informed of the escape of the Greeks, gave them a cordial greeting. Niobe and Selon questioned what change had come over the mind of the usually inactive Ali Ishlen, that he should have undertaken so long a journey, and relinquished the palatial home of Salamis? Ali Ishlen had heard dark intimations of the slumbering revenge of Greece, that crouched for the deadly spring, and deeming "discretion the better part of valor," had removed to a more secure seat of Turkish power. He had sold to a free, wealthy Athenian the olden home of Egert Edemon. It may be that some idle dream swept into the soul of Niobe for another look at the frescoed walls of her former home, or to rest her foot upon its tessellated floors.

The spacious grotto, was divided into several apartments, and although not handsomely fitted up, was very comfortable; the fur or

skins of animals served as carpets and tapestry to rocky walls; curiously twisted olive branches made pleasant seats and couches; a swinging lamp purchased from some straggler and replenished with olive oil, lighted the dark recesses, and this was the home of Miletus, Niobe, and Selon—humble but happy. Now no master's tyranny was felt; no dark superstitious dread of death and the grave; and, to the inexpressible joy of Miletus and Selon, Niobe was gradually recovering the tone of her mind. Their earnest prayers and strong faith were rewarded, and ever as twilight died into night, could be heard the low voice of Miletus, as he offered up their evening petition, followed by some hymn of Selon's composition.

Compare the present home of Niobe Edemon with that of Salamis, where wealth and luxury reigned; where every outward adorning seemed complete, and yet was dark and miserable; where human passion proved its own worst enemy, being unblest with redeem-

ing love; where the inmates had no loftier aspiration than the present gratification of self, and how striking is the contrast.

A year rolled on, varied occasionally by some daring exploit with forest beast, or an arrival of escaped Greeks, or passing caravan of merchants and travelers.

We will for awhile, ignore time and distance, and place ourselves besides Egert Edemon.

The Italian sun was sinking behind hills of velvet, which were clouded with the rich purple blossoms of the petunia, flecked by the deep blue of the linum. Lovely birds faltered forth sleepy notes, or trilled an evening song; the evening star arose in a dark enameled setting, which enhanced her brilliancy; and slowly, one by one, some timid satellite took its place beside its queen, until her fit retinue was complete.

In that twilight hour, a lonely man was seen slowly wending his way along a serpentine road, leading from Patavium, (now Pa-

dua), and dreaming—for he did not appear to observe the superb beauties of the landscape, but with lingering gait and bowed head, kept on his way. His lips seemed to move, but it was a murmur of complaint. A little cottage, whose trellis supported by espaliers, almost screened it from view, arrested his attention, for a sweet, childish voice, came to him on the still, evening air, through the white curtained window, causing him to pause. The words were those of holy prayer.

“Savior, thou who ever lovest little children, hear my prayer; keep me pure as thy sweet angels, and when I die, take me to thy arms. Please save all those who do not love, or know thee, but whose souls are very precious to thee. Bless my sweet mother, and love thy child, and hear my little prayer, Amen!”

A strange, new feeling thrilled the soul of Egert Edemon, as he walked on to a thicket of shrubs. Something compelled him to prostrate himself on the ground. Neither lips nor

heart echoed that child's prayer, yet his posture was that of humble devotion, and doubtless God's own angel, whose mission is to cull the first heavenward thought or feeling, laid at the foot of the Eternal Throne, this offering of Egert Edemon. But he was a proud man, and in a moment he chided himself for such weakness. Still he instinctively retraced his steps, hoping to see the child. His path was crossed by a little fairy thing, calling up to his mind the most beautiful dreams pertaining to classic legend. Tresses of a golden hue streamed on the air, and the sweet, spiritual, upturned face, after looking into his with innocent surprise, turned away as the child sped on to a huge rock, whose lichen bound front, hid her from his gaze. He did not follow, but kept reluctantly on to the town, and his lonely home. For days, nay, for weeks, he hovered around or near the white cottage, without seeing the child that had awakened within him, such deep interest, for the portal and windows

of the cottage were closed and with feelings of disappointment, he returned to his inner life—to the old restlessness, which trouble, and an unquiet conscience had bequeathed him.

An impulse urged him to visit Sicilia, (Sicily), for his wanderings had no definite object. So he embarked with a number of passengers, mostly Greeks, like himself. He did not seek their companionship, and his moodiness and reserve prevented all advances on their part. Sometimes he would devote hours in thought of that beautiful child, until the desire to see her again became an intense yearning, and he wondered what spell had come over him that so irresistibly attracted him to the little stranger. If he could have turned the prow of their ship toward Venice he would have done so, but his caprice could not rule everywhere.

As they sailed into the harbor of Panormus, (now Palermo), he could not but give his attention to the beautiful scene that met his

gaze. He stood near the head of the vessel, silent, yet with his fine, dark eyes expressive of the pleasure he felt. They gradually approached red, stupendous rocks, and precipices, then the city with its campanile towers, and as they rounded the corner of the bay, Mount Ætna suddenly gleamed upon their view, with its hoary head and crown of perpetual snow, and over the mountain range of Nebrodes, hung blue wreaths of delicate mist and clouds. He had to acknowledge that his own beautiful land could not surpass it, yet not a day had passed ere he was sated with its beauty, and longed to return to Patavium. He soon engaged passage in the first vessel bound for Venice.

The first day out in the Mediterranean, he was leaning negligently over the side of the ship, watching the water that hissed and boiled around its keel, when he felt his hand, which hung carelessly by his side, taken in that of another. Turning with a flush of anger at the presumption, he saw a tiny, white-

robed creature beside him—the fair child, that he had been so longing for. His whole face lit up into a beautiful smile, such as had not rested there for many a month, as he stooped to take her in his arms.

“Child! darling, how didst thou come here—who is with thee?”

“My sweet mother! I saw you standing here, looking so sorry, that I wanted to come and see you, and I knew you were the stranger that I saw by our home in Patavium.”

“Where is thy father, child?”

“Up there!” and she pointed to the deep blue sky above them.

Egert Edemon sighed, he knew not why.

“Little one, what is thy name?”

“My name is Star Ateius! Please tell me yours?”

“Call me Egert!”

“So I will. Do you know that I love you very dearly?”

He did not reply, but nestled her closer to his breast, and a tear dimmed his eye.

“Why do you cry?” she naively asked, looking earnestly into his face; “I should think if Star loved you you would smile. Have you got a little girl?”

“None darling! I had one once,” he faltered forth, then placed the child upon the deck. “Seek thy mother now. I will see thee again,” and he turned somewhat abruptly from her to another part of the ship.

Ah! Egert Edemon, why dost thou tremble and sigh so deeply? Surely the blue eyes of Star Ateius, do not look like those of Niobe, nor that lovely face, so radiant in its pure happiness, like the sad, white face of thy daughter, as thou didst behold her last.

The mother of Star was a dark eyed Italian, a quiet, reserved woman, whose every thought was for her idol—who asked no greater happiness, than to witness the joy of her child—and Egert Edemon became her friend. But few days passed, ere the proud Greek and the timid child became warmly attached; she would lie confidingly within his arms as she

told him all her childish history, and she showed him a small portrait of her father. As Egert Edemon studied that face upon the canvas, he read the man, not the picture. The brown hair was brushed back from a high, white forehead, whose broad expanse revealed a superior intellect; the eyes had a sweet expression in their depths, and were of that peculiar hue that changes with every shade of light, at times light grey, deep blue, or black; the mouth was small and delicate as a woman's, yet not too effeminate, for there were lines of great firmness which told of an indomitable will, when aroused. The features were not classically regular, but over all, there was the unmistakable impress of nobleness of thought and feeling, and chaste refinement. He was an Austrian of rank; had been passionately devoted to his wife, but died six months after their marriage, and never beheld the face of his lovely child, who was now seven years old.

Once, Egert Edemon asked Star of that

evening prayer. With a raptured expression in her face, she told him of Jesus and Heaven; and little by little, Egert Edemon accepted the holy seed, planted by a child, but not yet with the cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

"Venice! so soon?" he exclaimed as they sailed up the Adriatic. Still they were not to part, for Star and her mother would remain some time in Venice, ere they returned to their home.

A day of unsurpassed beauty, dawned upon the city. There was to be a grand fete, and all Venice would participate in this festival of their patron Saint John. Like magic, the beautiful lagoon between Venice and the mainland, was covered and crowded with sumptuous galleys of the wealthy patricians, or humbler craft of the poor. Here was a cluster of tiny, crimson canopied shells, with their prows to one centre, as their joyous freight listened to some noted improvisatore; further on was seen a confused train, whose oars were busily



plied after a larger boat, containing musicians, whose exquisite harmony floated over the waters. Again, some more ambitious craft, vied with each other to reach a certain point of land; and there, to the right, in a blue and gold covered galley, is Egert Edemon, Star and her mother. Those three faces would be a study for a painter. Egert Edemon half reclines upon a luxurious mat, at the feet of the Italian mother, and upon his bosom his new found treasure, her golden hair mingling with the blackness of his own. His dark face, and darker eyes are lit up with pleasure, and his full, rich lips, part now and then, into his rare and beautiful smile. The quiet mother looks down upon him, with her pale oval face, and serene, smiling eyes. Star, has fallen asleep, in an innocent attitude of perfect grace, and Egert Edemon calls the attention of the mother to the exquisite loveliness of her child.

All Venice is wild with festivity and mirth; only the infirm, the sick, and indigent, are left within the city. But of a sudden, quick

as a blow that shatters a mirror, rises a great wail over that enchanting scene. "The colpo di vento! Colpo di vento! St. John, defend us! God, have mercy upon us! Holy Virgin, protect us!" Terror is depicted upon every face, and frantic attempts are made to gain the city; cries, and oaths, and prayers arise in wild affright. Dense black clouds envelope all; the wind comes tearing and howling down the ravines and gorges of the Alps, and the hitherto unruffled lagoon, is lashed into fury, and madly dashes the countless boats into pieces, or instantly engulfs them.

With all the strength of his mighty frame, Egert Edemon holds tightly the terrified child, as he endeavors to release their galley from the wreck around them. The rich adornings of the boat are swept away, and now, he springs forward to save that mother, who falls under the blow of the fierce blast. But too late; she drags Egert and the child with her into the water, with its mass of struggling lives—drags them with her under the waves,

but he, releasing himself from her, with the child in his arms, makes for a near island.

"Egert pray for us—for my sweet mother?" are the words that greet his ear.

He turns his head to look upon the child. All her terror is gone, and her face is like that of an angel, in its trust and purity. Instinctively, he closes his eyes, as if it was a sacrilege to look upon it.

"Dear Egert, my sweet mother is in Heaven, and I am going too. Egert, say a prayer for Star's sake, before those angels take her from you. Say the prayer that Jesus said, Our Father who art in Heaven. I have taught it to you!"

He looked one instant into those blue eyes, gazing upon him in such holy love, and while the storm raged in its pitiless fury and he struggled on, he answered back, as he pressed the child still closer, "Darling, I will!" and then and there, Egert Edemon, for the first time in his life, called upon God.

With an exclamation of joy, he beat his

way through the surf, to a little island, and as he hurriedly climbed upon a high rock, the sun broke through the dense clouds; the storm was past, and within his soul was the "peace that passeth all understanding." He felt indeed baptised in the love and pardon of redeeming grace; and with his Heaven-born hope shining in his face, he looked upon the child. She must be sleeping.

"Star! Star darling, awake for we are saved!" But the sweet, smiling lips do not murmur a response.

"Star! Child! speak to me?" But mute and motionless lies the little form upon his breast.

"Darling, art thou in truth dead? Oh! my newly found Savior, help me to bear this!" And that proud Greek, buried his head upon those wet, golden tresses, and wept as though his heart would break. He was weary and exhausted, and scarce heeded the questions of those who had come to take them away from the rocky island, but when they would have

removed the child from his arms, he sternly bade them desist, and it was only after they were in the city, and a priest urged him to relinquish her, that he gave her up after pressing a long, earnest kiss upon her cold brow. Yet when he saw them shape the little mound above her grave, he humbly said, "Not my will, but Thine."

Months past, and Egert Edemon rapidly progressed in the faith of the pure Greek church; the old restless, careworn expression was replaced by a tender placidity, and many and noble were the duties he performed.

Towards the close of a sultry day, a hundred horsemen were descried advancing through a defile of the Parnassus range, in the direction of Bœotia. Selon Clethe gave Niobe a hurried embrace, and darted up to the heights, where he gave the "signal call," and, like magic, his brave men stood around him, ready with armor and spear.

"Follow!" And their leader swiftly led the way to a distant ledge of rocks, through which

the coming band must pass. Silently they waited, and watched an open clearance through the heavy timber, and as the helmeted head of the chief appeared, Selon Clethe loudly gave the challenge.

"Friends! not foes!" answered back a stentorian voice.

"My father! 'Tis my father!" cried Niobe Edemon, as she almost flew down the mountain pass to meet him. She had stealthily followed Selon and his comrades, ever anxious for her loved one's safety. Sobbing, in excess of joy, she fell into the arms of Egert Edemon.

"My daughter! My dearest child!" was all that he could exclaim for many moments, through surprise and emotion.

Blame them not, those hardy, sunburnt men, that they turned aside, half in shame and embarrassment, to wipe away the tears that sprang into their eyes. Then Selon Clethe advanced to grasp the hand, freed from Niobe, and extended towards him.

"Father, Selon is my husband!"

"God bless thee, my son!" was the low reply.

"And dost thou give homage to that name?"

"I do!"

"And so do we!" cried Miletus in trembling tones, from a jutting rock above.

All faces were upturned, as with uplifted hands, and holy face, he fervently said: "We praise Thee, O Almighty God, for Thy everlasting mercies."

"Amen! Amen!" cried the men below with one accord, and on the quiet air arose a pæan of praise, whose echoes lingered amid the brown rocks and craggy ravines.

Egert Edemon placed Niobe upon his richly caparisoned horse, and walked beside her to the grotto.

In Italy Egert Edemon had caught the cry of his oppressed country, which evidently was on the eve of revolution. The fires of patriotism burned in his breast. He determined to strike a blow for the freedom of Greece, or to perish in the attempt. Collecting a hundred

followers, with a view of uniting them with a larger force of insurrectionists, he was on his way to the home of his childhood and the graves of his ancestors, animated by the hope that soon that dear home and those honored graves, now shadowed by the dark cloud of tyranny, should rejoice in the blessed sunlight of liberty. But why lengthen the story?—We will drop the curtain over a reunion so fraught with joy. Let holy love, and patriotism and piety thus close the scene, and may Niobe live to behold her native country, Greece, so famous forever in story and in song, rise Phoenix like from the ashes of her degradation, and assume an honorable place in the sisterhood of nations.