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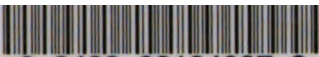
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CLEOPATRA
HER LIFE AND REIGN
BY
DÉSIRÉ DE BERNÁTH

CLEOPATRA

LONDON
ARTHUR L. HUMPHREYS
1907

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CLEOPATRA

HER LIFE AND REIGN

CHAPTER I

THE LAST OF THE LAGIDÆ

DURING the period between about 80 and 70 B.C., the Ptolemaic Empire, once so powerful, was already at the height of its decline. The crimes of its princes, the moral laxity of the people, the entire absence of anything like public spirit, had so completely undermined its power that it fell an easy prey to the cupidity of the Roman Empire, whose dominion was daily being extended on all sides. The bright star of the renowned Lagidæ was on the wane, and seemed about to sink for ever in the bottomless gulf of oblivion, as those of the other Alexandrian dynasties had sunk before it—when, suddenly, about the middle of the century preceding the birth of Christ, its rays shone forth afresh, and it appeared as a meteor in the heavens, dazzling the astonished world with its splendour for a little while, and then, abruptly, went out for ever, in a vast catastrophe.

There is, perhaps, no town in the world to be compared with Alexandria, where, in so short a

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space of time, so many tragedies were enacted, each one of which had so great an effect upon the lives of the people. And it would be difficult to find, in the history of the world, men and women who, by their character and their deeds, merit the attention of the historian to a greater extent than Caesar, Antony, Octavius Augustus, and Cleopatra.

A period of barely three centuries separates this epoch from that in which Ptolemy Soter, son of Ptolemy Lagus, brought the ashes of Alexander the Great from Babylon to Alexandria, and there laid the foundations of the mighty Egyptian Empire, under the brilliant dynasty of the Lagidæ. It was owing to the wisdom and the warlike qualities of the early Ptolemies, that this empire soon became first among the great powers of the world as it then was. Its dominion extended over Syria, Palestine, the whole of Asia-Minor, and part of the Greek Archipelago; the northern coast of Africa, as far as Carthage, acknowledged its sway, and, in the south, all the land as far as the third cataract of the Nile and the shores of the Red Sea. Among the reigning dynasties at the beginning of the second century before Christ, that of the Lagidæ was certainly the richest and the most illustrious. And yet it could not be said that the descendants of the first kings had inherited the military virtues of their ancestors. Strabo tells us that 'from the time of Ptolemy III., all the kings of Egypt were bad rulers; luxury and debauchery had corrupted them, and especially was this the case with Ptolemy IV., Ptolemy VII., and the last of the line, Ptolemy Dionysus.' Little by

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little the great empire fell away: now one portion, now another, became separated from the main body. At one time an island would be torn from it, at another a town, and at another a whole province would be lost. At the very moment when it should have been in possession of all its strength in order successfully to oppose any further extension of the rule of the Roman people, who, in the first century before Christ, recognised no obstacle nor any bounds to their ambition, the country was no longer capable of defending itself: the vices of its princes and the immorality of its people had undermined and shattered its strength.

In the reign of Ptolemy Auletes, eighty years before our era, the empire was reduced to the valley and delta of the Nile. Even Cyprus, the only remaining insular possession belonging to what had once been so mighty a power, had separated itself from the empire, and now formed a kingdom apart, belonging to the brother of Auletes, who had inherited it as his portion, until it too became incorporated in the Roman Empire. Under Ptolemy XL Alexander, the immediate predecessor of Auletes, Numidia had likewise seceded from the Egyptian Empire; and further, the Arab tribes of the eastern shores of the Red Sea and of Arabia Petraea were no more than nominally under its dominion. If, indeed, occasionally in time of war they consented, in return for large sums of money, to reinforce the Imperial army with their cavalry, in times of peace they were entirely independent of Egyptian rule. And yet, although so

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much reduced, the empire still embraced some 6900 square miles. The richest regions were the valley of the Nile and that vast plain of fertile land at its mouth, which the river waters periodically at the time of its rise. Then, as now, that part of the country was called the Delta. As for the territories bordering on the valley of the Nile on either side: the high plateau separating it, to the east, from the Red Sea and, on the opposite side, the oasis of the desert of Lybia, they were attached to the empire by no very firm bonds. The wandering tribes that dwelt in these regions did no more than recognise the supremacy of Egypt, and sought by the offer of presents from time to time to gain the good will and protection of the Imperial government, of which they stood so much in need, both to aid them in the broils and struggles in which they were themselves constantly involved, and to enable them to place their products and their slaves upon the markets of the empire. But, at the same time, the perpetual changes of abode of those tribes made it impossible for the government to organise any regular administration in those regions.

The valley of the Nile and the Delta, fertilised afresh every year by the regular rise of the great river, were an inexhaustible source of wealth and prosperity. The banks of the Nile, no less than the Delta, were well peopled; the dikes and canals which the Persians had destroyed had been restored by the Lagidæ, who were careful to keep them in good repair, and who had, besides, constructed new and important works of irrigation in

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the neighbourhood of the town of Arsinoë, founded by them on the shores of Lake Mœris. Every inch of land that was available was most carefully cultivated. And yet, with the exception of Alexandria, the country possessed no large towns. In Memphis, as well as Thebes, the number of the inhabitants had slowly decreased, and these ancient capitals of the Pharaohs never recovered their former splendour, even under the Lagidæ. Their ancient monuments had lain in ruins since the time of the Persian invasion, and they were now only famous as the place of residence of the priests who were given up to the worship of the ancient deities of Egypt; it was to these towns that pilgrimages were made by the Coptic people. Their commerce consisted solely in supplying the needs, which were few, of the cultivators of the valley of the Nile and the wandering tribes of the neighbourhood; they acted as intermediaries to Alexandria. All the important commerce of the country lay entirely in the hands of this great town, the youngest of the cities of the Delta. Alexandria was looked upon with such favour by the Lagidæ, that neither Sais, nor Heliopolis, nor Pelusium, all towns most fortunately placed for purposes of traffic, nor even Berenice, the first port on the Red Sea, could aspire to so much as a position of secondary importance.

Aristocracy of birth was unknown in Egypt, and, under the Lagidæ, even the castes seem to have entirely disappeared. The priests, however, tried

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hard to preserve the purity of the Coptic blood by means of marriages contracted between the young men and women of the race, but, at the same time, the priests had no more than a shadow of their former influence, and, if they continued to exist in great numbers, it was only due in part to the revenues afforded them by certain old endowments, and in part to the generous offerings of the Copts, who still held the caste of the priests in great reverence and esteem. The court was composed, as were all courts at this time, of a troop of favourites, among whom were to be found a large number of eunuchs and freedmen. The prevailing influence was decidedly that of the military classes; scholars, artists and priests were, however, favourably received by the ruling princes.

The form of government was an absolute autocracy, administered in the most lenient manner possible; the system answered very well with the people of the country, composed as they were of so many races and embracing so many different religions. At Rome and in the Greek republics foreigners were not permitted to become naturalised citizens and no worship of strange deities was allowed. The Lagidæ, who were themselves new-comers in Egypt, offered a friendly welcome to any strangers who presented themselves: Greeks, Jews, Arabs, and Phœnicians, all received the same treatment as the natives. No one sought to know whence the immigrant came, nor what his nationality, his religion. The empire of the Lagidæ was an international state, in which every-

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one was free to worship his god in his own way and gain his livelihood as best he could ; no one thought of asking him the name of his native country. In the same way no one, unless it were the Copts themselves, considered Egypt as their country. Neither Greeks, Jews, nor Arabs were attached to the soil, either by memories of the past or of the virtues of their ancestors. The Arab tribes were still nomadic, never settling anywhere for any length of time ; the Jew considered himself to be no more than a sojourner on the earth, and was indifferent where his life was cast ; while the Greek was little better than a paid soldier, and any reputation he might happen to gain as artist or scholar only added in his eyes to the glory of Greece. There remained only the Copts, who were attached to Egypt as to their native country.

But the Copts were far behind the times, possessed no influence whatever, and lived by cultivating with apathy and grumbling the land of their ancestors : a land that no longer belonged to them and of which they were now only tenants. The Greek immigrant, proud of his race and his nationality, despised the Copt and did not even attempt to win over the autochthonous population to Hellenic civilisation ; at the same time, he carefully avoided any union with the natives, and thus deprived himself of any possibility of ever becoming a leader of the country. And yet the danger in which this state of things must inevitably have placed Egypt only appeared in all its gravity on the day when the empire had to

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defend itself against a powerful enemy, the Roman People. It was then seen that the existence of such a condition of things might serve individual interests well enough; but that, in reality, there existed neither nation nor people capable of feeling any enthusiasm for the empire of the Lagidæ, nor of defending their fatherland from the attack of an enemy.

The whole country was the property of the king; all the land belonged to him, and the tenants and tillers of the soil, who were recruited solely from the ancient population of the country—that is to say from among the Copts—were looked upon as no more than the king's farmers. As a rule, land so farmed only consisted of just so much as the holder and his family were capable of cultivating themselves. In payment of rent due to the king a third of the produce was exacted, together with every third beast born during the year. The king, in return, protected the farmer from having to pay any further tax or to make any further payment in kind. By reason of the extraordinary fertility of the soil, the holder was always provided with plenty for his own needs and those of his family, and he was even enabled each year to put a certain amount of his produce aside. The Greeks and Jews were far more industrious than the Copts. Instead of being contented with cultivating a little piece of land themselves, they employed bands of slaves to farm vast territories in regions recently rendered fertile by the construction of new canals, while they themselves remained in luxurious

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case in their sumptuous palaces at Alexandria or Onais.

From an administrative point of view, Egypt was divided into twenty departments called nomes, each nome being divided into a certain number of districts which went under the name of toparchies. The nomes were administered by crown functionaries, whose duty it was to see to the maintenance of order and to render justice; but these officials had nothing to do with the military, who, garrisoned in the different towns, were under the orders of special commandants. In the towns and in the country, the taxes were at first gathered by collectors for the crown, but, in later years, by the farmers, and the military commandants were under orders to afford them, in time of need, similar assistance to that which they afforded the governor of the nomes.

The Egyptian army, which under Ptolemy II. Soter and Euergetes comprised 200,000 foot soldiers, 40,000 horse, 300 elephants, and 200 chariots, had, under their successors, become gradually smaller and smaller. Under the miserly Ptolemy Alexander, the immediate predecessor of Auletes, the army had dwindled away to so great an extent that, on the accession of his successor, it was utterly insignificant both in numbers and in fighting power. There was, it is true, a standing army of Greek mercenaries; but even in times of peace this force could do no more than maintain order in the nomes and assist in the collection of the taxes. The country possessed in addition a permanent body of cavalry,

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some 3000 or 4000 strong, in the pay of the king ; but it was now no more than a shadow of the famous Egyptian cavalry of former times, inasmuch as these men rode their own horses and lived a life that was practically nomadic, surrounded always by their families, sometimes on the south-west shores of Lake Mareotis, and sometimes in the plain that stretches south of Heliopolis as far as the Red Sea. When war broke out they had to be reassembled hastily, and the regiment recruited as well as possible by men who came from the four corners of the earth to offer their services. It is hardly necessary to state that account was taken neither of the nationality nor the religion nor the antecedents of the recruits, and, provided the man who presented himself was capable of bearing arms, even his age was not inquired into. Thus it happened that youths of eighteen fought in the same troop with convicts of fifty; that Arabs, Greeks, Jews, Copts, and Persians marched side by side with Gauls and Germans, who had by deserting escaped the severer discipline of the Roman legions.

The most important element in the armament of Egypt was its powerful fleet, which was estimated by ancient historians at many thousands of vessels of all kinds, and considered to be the finest in the world. It numbered 120 ships of the line, many of which were 200 and even 280 ells in length. A portion of this naval force protected the navigation in the Red Sea, while to another portion was allotted the task of safeguarding the traffic of the Nile and defending the port of Alexandria. But the

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bulk of the Egyptian fleet held the waters of the Mediterranean, dominating the Archipelago, the Ionian Sea, and the Adriatic. It visited the ports beyond the Columns of Hercules, and conducted a thriving trade with them, for the kings of Egypt employed their fleet for purposes of trade with the Levant as well as with the western countries. As a natural consequence of this traffic, large revenues flowed into the coffers of the treasury.

Thus the revenue of this treasury proceeded—to make no mention of taxes—from several sources, such as the customs, the mines, the tributes paid by dependencies, and lastly the maritime commerce carried on by the royal fleets on behalf of the revenue. In the reign of Ptolemy Auletes, the annual income of the treasury was estimated at 14,500 talents, or £344,000 of our money. The royal granaries received besides, every year, about four million bushels of corn.

The chief glory of the dynasty of the Lagidæ was the town of Alexandria, built, by order of Alexander the Great, next to Canopus, facing the island of Pharos, between Lake Mareotis and the sea. After the dismemberment of the great conqueror's empire, Ptolemy Lagus had made it the capital of the kingdoms that had fallen to his share. Neither he nor his successors spared trouble or expense in making Alexandria as large and splendid a town as they possibly could. Lagus built part of the royal palace and erected the Sema, a magnificent mausoleum situated in the centre of the town, which was destined to receive the mortal remains of Alexander

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the Great, as well as those of the Lagidæ. His son, Ptolemy Soter, built the celebrated museum, which was the meeting-place of all the learned men of the time, and laid the foundations of the library, which became so deservedly famous. In the reign of his grandson, Philadelphus, a gigantic lighthouse, one of the seven wonders of the world, was constructed in white marble, on the island of Pharos. Higher even than the pyramids, this lighthouse lit up the sea for many miles, and guided the ships to the finest port in the world. It fell to the share of Euergetes to construct an enormous mole, 700 fathoms long, uniting the town with the island of Pharos and serving as a protection to Alexandria from the north-east winds. Epiphanes endowed the city with a gymnasium and a hippodrome; and, lastly, Auletes enriched it with a theatre (mention of which is made by Cæsar in his commentaries), which adjoined the royal palace.

It was at Alexandria that the Ptolemies collected the riches of their mighty empire. They entirely abandoned the ancient dwelling-places of the Pharaohs; if, from time to time, a new building was erected in any one of these towns, it could do no more than restore to it a shadow of its former splendour.

The Lagidæ displayed great generosity towards artists and scholars, and the worst prince among them was ever a warm friend to science. They devoted large sums of money to the translation into Greek of the scientific works of the Pharaohs. The writings of the historian Manetho were trans-

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lated by Eratosthenes, and it is thanks to him that certain portions of this great work have been transmitted to us by Flavius Josephus. Philadelphus had five books of the Old Testament translated into Greek, and, in order to ensure an accurate and reliable rendering, he invited to his court the prophet Eleazar and a number of learned Jews. The astronomer Aristarchus of Samos, following the path of Coptic science step by step, came to assert, towards the end of the second century before Christ, that the earth revolved round the sun during a period of 365 days. Although the learned philosopher was brought before the judges for venturing to teach such a doctrine, we read that in the end he was acquitted.

The court of the Lagidæ was the home of the mathematician Euclid, whose Elements are in use to this day at all secondary schools in England; Hieron of Alexandria, the inventor of the clepsydra or water-clock; Archimedes, the immortal philosopher and mathematician; the architect Socrates; the philosophers Apollonius of Pergamus and Zeno; Demetrius of Phaleron, Callimachus, Lycophron, the inventor of the Alexandrine metre, Theocritus and Aristophanes, all celebrated poets; and lastly the famous painter, Apelles, and the sculptor Antiphilus. These great and famous men have, by their learning and research, rendered the museum at Alexandria immortal; it was held in such high renown that the most distinguished families of Rome sought in the museum for masters for their children, and young students came from far

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and near to be instructed in the sciences and the arts. Natural history and astronomy were the principal subjects of study, in the course of which many precious landmarks were to be found in the scientific writings of the Pharaohs, so carefully preserved by the Lagidsæ. The literary works of the neighbouring nations were also, thanks to these princes, collected in the museum, and available to all to whom they might be of interest; this priceless treasure, which has in this way come down to us, forms to-day the foundation of all our knowledge. The school of Alexandria flourished no less in the reign of Auletes than in those of his predecessors, for men like Apollonius the Sophist, Didymus, Diodorus of Sicily, Castor of Rhodes, Parthenius, Posidonius, and Sosigenes worked there, and strove by unremitting labour to add still further to the ancient glory of the museum. In the company of this distinguished band of philosophers the king himself was glad to spend his time, and was ever ready to welcome them as guests at his palace.

Yet it was not only as a scientific centre that Alexandria was famous; the town was also by far the most important market in existence for commercial transactions between East and West. It covered an area of ten square miles, and its population was in no way inferior in size to that of Rome. In consequence of the glory which the Pharaohs and the early Ptolemies had bequeathed to the Egyptian capital, and in consequence, too, of the magnificence of its buildings, both public and private, and of its renown as the chief centre of learning

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and research, the town far outstripped Rome both in size and splendour. Its two enormous harbours gave shelter to vessels hailing from the farthest corners of the earth. In its large, well-kept streets swarmed an ever-moving crowd. The centre of the town, which was called the Bruchium, was traversed by two great avenues, bordered by beautiful trees and paved with granite. Beneath the porches of the magnificent palaces which rose on either side of the principal streets, pedestrians might shelter from the heat of the sun. In the heart of the town was a great square, in the middle of which stood the Sema with its wonderful, glittering roof of gold, while in the north of the city, completely surrounded by shady parks, lay the gorgeous royal residence, a unique structure, with which no prince in the world could venture to compare his palace. Each king, in his turn, improved it either by increasing its size or by adding to its embellishments; its courts and great wings covered an area little less than that of one of the suburbs. The marble staircase of the north front was washed by the waters of the royal lake, which was filled from the harbour by means of an ingenious mechanical contrivance. Next to the museum, which, with its vast courts, all laid out with great care, reached nearly as far as the Bruchium, was the library, with its 900,000 manuscripts. On one side of the great public square stood the gymnasium, in whose vast halls were held the popular assemblies, and all important public ceremonies. Close to the gymnasium stood the theatre, which is mentioned by Cæsar in his commentaries.

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Alexandria boasted neither springs nor wells; the town was fed by water taken from the canals of the Nile, supplied to the houses by an ingenious system of pipes. This water also supplied the magnificent fountains in the great squares and in the public buildings, which, together with the proximity of the sea, served to temper the heat and render the atmosphere of the town pleasant and agreeable.

The Egyptian capital had many rich inhabitants, whose fortunes consisted chiefly in precious vases, slaves, houses at Alexandria, and pleasure villas in the country. The majority of these men were engaged in commerce. It was at Alexandria that merchandise was exchanged between the Levant and the West, and from Alexandria that the surplus of the rich harvests of the valley and Delta of the Nile started for Italy and Greece. As for Arabia, Egypt had, from very early times, supplied it with corn and wheat in abundance. Alexandria served also as the exchange mart for all the metal extracted from the European silver mines, as well as for the gold that proceeded from the royal mines near the town of Berenice, on the Red Sea. Here, too, caravans from the interior of Africa carried the gold dust bought from the people of distant countries. The shops and warehouses of Alexandria supplied Rome and Greece with ivory and pearls, as well as with silks, perfumes, and spices coming from the heart of Arabia. And lastly, the town traded on a very large scale in slaves, and was the receiver of the contraband goods of the

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pirates of the Mediterranean. All manual work was done by slaves; but the articles manufactured and perfected by them—glass, precious stuff, copper goods, papyrus, and the thousand and one little objects demanded by the luxury of the rich—made the manufactures of Alexandria famous and greatly enriched the owners of the slaves.

As with all large towns, of every country and of any time, the population of Alexandria included a great number of people who had come from all quarters of the world. At the time with which we are about to deal, it was estimated at 600,000 souls, half of whom were slaves. Among the citizens the Greek element predominated, attracted by conditions of existence more favourable there than elsewhere. The number of Hellenes increased, moreover, every day, in consequence of the constant enrolment of foreign mercenaries into the royal army. Under the later Ptolemies, the native Copts had already come to be relegated to the background, and, when they demurred at such treatment, they were lodged in a suburb at the western end of the great town. The Jews also constituted an important part of the population of Alexandria, occupying another suburb, to the east of the Bruchium. The farmers of the state taxes were generally recruited from their number; they were by far the richest people in the town.

Greek was used almost entirely as the language of science, as well as in conversation. It was the language spoken at court, in the army, and in trade, while the native tongue of the original in-

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habitants of the country was only heard in the western suburb and from the lips of country people. Latin was little understood, and still less was it spoken: it would seem that no one felt any leanings towards the language of the Romans. Hellenic civilisation differed in every possible respect from that of the Romans, who were looked upon by the Egyptians as coarse and rude, churlish and unpolished. On the other hand, if the Romans had a certain respect for the Hellenes of their time, they had a profound contempt for the Greeks of Asia-Minor and the Greco-Macedonians of Egypt. And although they held the ancient learning of Greece in great esteem, and although Greek was spoken at Rome, where the enthusiasm of the more cultured was such that many knew the works of the orators and poets by heart, they had a very low opinion of the Greek people as a whole, regarding them as a nation without character, born but to be slaves, thoroughly effeminate, and unstirred by any thoughts of fame. The two nations were, as a fact, separated not only by differences in the idiom of their language, but still more by their mode of thought and of living, which were essentially different. They had nothing in common: not even their chronology, not even their money values were the same.

The dress of the Egyptian did not at all resemble that of the Roman. In the time of the Pharaohs, the costume of the Egyptians was extremely simple. The men wore a double apron reaching to the knees; the lower part, which was

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usually white, was fastened from front to back, while the upper part, fastened from back to front, was fashioned in some coloured material, and was often richly embroidered and of very precious stuff. The back, as well as the legs, was quite bare. The head was close-shaven, and protected by a cap made out of the skins of animals, feathers or fur. As for the feet, they were covered by a kind of slipper made from a herbaceous substance of the rush family. The women wore a garment called a 'kalasiris,' which clothed the body from the neck to the ankles, leaving only the arms bare; it was fastened at the neck by a clasp, while a rich belt confined it at the waist; the legs were enclosed in a species of baggy trouser, fastened a little above the ankle. With rich women the arms, neck, ears, and ankles were decked with costly jewels. The hair was artistically braided and arranged on the top of the head.

With the dynasty of the Lagidæ, the Greek 'stola' made its appearance in Egypt, and began soon to be very commonly worn. It was a large cloak, which the elegant, men as well as women, wore as an outer garment. The 'stola' was fastened at the neck by a clasp. The men wore it over their shoulders, while the women caught up the lower folds, passed them through the belt, and let them fall again over the legs. In this way the body was only covered from behind, the neck, arms, and chest remaining bare. The softness of the stuff, moreover, enabled the wearer of the 'stola' to arrange it according to his own taste. When

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the power of the kingdom of Egypt was at its zenith, the women were already complaining of the severity of the ancient mode of dress, which hid the body completely and was far too hot for the climate, and the Greek 'stola' was beginning to be accepted as a legitimate garment. The 'kalasiris' first became shorter and shorter, and then was confined to the body alone, reminding us of the clinging tights of the dancing women of our own day. Later, in the reign of Lathyrus, it became the fashion to make the 'kalasiris' of stuff that was almost transparent, and soon afterwards of quite transparent material, and to leave the breasts exposed. At the court and in the palaces of important personages, slaves and actresses would appear, on the occasion of any solemn festival, stark naked, covered only with gold and precious stones. The women allowed their hair to flow over their shoulders in tresses, skilfully and tastefully arranged, while the men shaved the tops of their heads and then covered them with an arrangement of some precious stuff resembling a woman's bonnet. The lower classes did not wear the 'stola,' and the poor people, as well as the slaves, contented themselves with the double apron of ancient Egypt, and their women still wore the 'kalasiris,' reaching from the throat down to the ankles.

A soldier's full dress usually consisted of a cuirass and a helmet, of silver in the case of superior officers, of gold in the case of the king. In times of peace, when they appeared in public, the kings

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would be arrayed in a purple 'stola' and crowned with a golden diadem which rested on the bonnet that covered the head, while the ladies of the reigning house wore, as a rule, the costume of the priestess of some deity. Thus, Cleopatra always appeared in public clothed in a robe sacred to Isis, her head adorned with a crown of golden lily leaves.

The palaces of Alexandria were far more comfortable and the furniture far more luxurious than that of the homes of Roman patricians. Great use was made of sofas and padded couches, which somewhat resembled our lounge-chairs; the tables were almost always round, standing on three legs. Very precious and costly material was often employed in the making of furniture, which left nothing to be desired as to artistic execution and finish. Both furniture and flooring were covered with rich stuffs or rare skins. The Egyptians took their repast sitting down.

Their chronology was very different from that in use at Rome. They counted the years from the death of Alexander the Great, and the number of days in the year corresponded to the number in the astronomical year.

Very different from Roman money, too, was the money of Alexandria, both in form and in value. As at Rome, however, the unit was the talent. But, while the Attic or Roman talent weighed, roughly, 93 ounces of silver, the Egyptian talent represented 66 ounces of gold. Besides this difference, we must also take into account the constant fluctuations of premium between the two metals.

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At the time when the output of the silver mines of Laurium was greatest, and when Greece was abundantly supplied with the white metal, gold was only coming in in very small quantities, on account of the impossibility of communication with the principal productive centres under the Persian rule. Money-changers at that time gave fifteen Attic talents for one talent of gold. But, later, under the dynasty of the Lagidæ, and above all towards its close, when Laurium was exhausted and silver had become more and more scarce, while gold was pouring in from the royal mines in the neighbourhood of Berenice, and from the interior of Africa, in the shape of consignments of gold dust, the value of the yellow metal became very much less, and no more than five Attic talents were given for an Egyptian talent. In ancient times the gold money of Egypt took the form of a ring, which had to be accepted whenever any transaction was effected. The first Egyptian money of the type in use to-day was struck in the reign of Ptolemy Soter; from this time on, all coins in circulation bore the image of the reigning prince. The largest pieces of Egyptian gold were coined in the reign of Lathyrus, in the image of his mother, Cleopatra. They were almost as large as a five-shilling piece; six of these made a mina, and no less than 480 went to the talent.

The native population of Egypt worshipped the sun and moon, air, earth, and water, as well as the deities representing the vivifying and fertilising elements in nature: Osiris and Isis. They

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believed in the immortality of the soul, declaring that it remained in the body until such time as the body was reduced to ashes. The soul was then compelled to undertake a long pilgrimage, sojourning in the bodies of many different animals in turn, until it came once more to fill a human form. It is for this reason that they showed an immense respect for animals, certain among which—considered as the home of the souls of the ancient Pharaohs—were actually objects of worship, and were looked upon as prophets of the future. Everyone has heard of the Bull Apis, which was the oracle at Memphis, the Lion of Leontopolis, the Crocodile of Moeris, and the Ibis of Heliopolis; at other places dogs, cats, wolves, were looked upon as prophets. The religious ceremony consisted of sacrifice: the faithful would bring food and drink and offer them to the sacred animals and to the idols. The office of high priest was held by the king, who himself presented the offerings to the statue of Osiris, and was acquainted with the religious secrets and mysteries connected with the worship. His authority and power were so great that his statue, erected while he was still alive, became, after his death, an object of worship, as though he were himself a god. Such was originally the nature of religion in Egypt; but, in the century preceding our era, it had undergone a complete change. Under the Persian rule the ancient deities of the Pharaohs had already lost much of their power; under the dynasty of the Lagidæ they gave place to Greek gods, to

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which an entirely new deity also came to be added, that of Serapis. Ancient Egyptian mythology was in this way blended with the mythology of Greece, but neither the one nor the other was capable of guiding the spiritual life of the race nor of affording any solid foundation for their ideas of morality. The knowledge disseminated in the works of philosophers and mathematicians had, towards the close of the reign of the Lagidæ, completely destroyed men's faith in Osiris and in Zeus; even the worship of the new god, Serapis, instituted by the Ptolemies, had not succeeded in becoming firmly established. The doctrines of the Stoics and Epicureans had drained the heart of man and worn out his nerves.

The idealism of ancient Greece had lost all its attraction for this people, whom material prosperity had rendered ultra-realist. But, although they no longer believed in gods, they were still a superstitious race, not daring openly to avow their scepticism. Every man considered himself an end in himself. To gain the maximum of enjoyment with the least possible pain to oneself: that was the height of wisdom; and he was called truly wise whom the misfortunes of others could in no way touch. In this society of atoms so different one from another, native country, the nation, the public weal, were superannuated notions. There was no aristocracy; to be noteworthy one had only to be rich, the representative of moving capital, a dweller in Egypt because life there was an easy and a pleasant thing. The fate of

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their country, public interests, were of no concern whatever to the inhabitants except in so far as that if things became less pleasant in Egypt they might be persuaded to seek a home elsewhere.

In their family life there was little to restrain them, and their religion was accommodating. Concubinage enjoyed the protection of the law and the sanction of morality. The well-to-do often possessed several wives, and the princes maintained establishments which were no less than harems. The women of the streets openly and shamelessly displayed their charms for the benefit of passers-by, and their trade was advantageously safeguarded by the law. No one had any thoughts beyond the worship of Mammon, and natives and foreigners alike had but one desire, that of gaining the greatest possible number of the material pleasures that Alexandria offered so freely to all comers. The court itself set the example: the whole town took part in the festivities celebrated in honour of Dionysus, and the people imperiously demanded that their kings should provide for their pleasure. Everything that science and art could invent and provide for their enjoyment was collected at Alexandria; at every step they found the temptation and the opportunity; they gave themselves up to all manner of excess and the enjoyment of the most subtle pleasures, to the most elegant sensuality and the basest debauchery. The outskirts of the town were strewn with villas, pleasure resorts, and beautiful walks; on the canals, vessels adorned with flowers and lamps floated in an end-

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less stream ; night and day were indistinguishable, such was the noise of music and of singing heard at all hours and on every hand. Canopus, in close proximity to Alexandria, was a hotbed of debauchery, and the orgies there celebrated had a world-wide reputation.

But while the Egyptian capital, heedless of the future, was giving itself up more and more to pleasure and depravity, the Roman legions were steadily pursuing their conquests on the side of the Levant, and there was now little to hinder their progress. The Eastern nations, whom Hellenic civilisation had all but rendered effeminate, were quite incapable of resisting the power of Rome, which grew mightier and encroached still farther every day. They had no sympathies in common, for the Oriental looked upon the Roman as a coarse, brutal fellow. Mithridates, King of Pontus, supported in spirit by the whole of Greece, and helped by her, both openly and secretly, did, it is true, attempt to retard the progress of the invader, but in vain: try as he might, the struggle was hopeless. The nations of the East could only stand by and look on at the successes won again and again by the arms of the mighty Republic. Alexandria, too, began to feel anxious: fear took hold of the town as it witnessed the fall, one after the other, of the independent states surrounding it, all of which became no more than simple provinces belonging to the Republic. They would have offered resistance, and have attempted to stem this tide which was threatening to engulf them,

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but the Greco-Macedonians no longer possessed the military virtues of their ancestors, nor did there exist, in Egypt, a people capable of dying for the liberty of their country. The mean and shabby intrigue that flourished there was of no avail whatever against the arms of the Roman legions.

CHAPTER II

PTOLEMY AULETES

PTOLEMY PHYSKON was the seventh sovereign of the dynasty of the Lagidæ. He died in the year 639 of the Roman era, leaving two sons: Lathyrus and Alexander, the former of whom ought, in due course, to have succeeded him on the throne. But the widowed Queen, Cleopatra, had a strong dislike for her elder son, whose face was disfigured by unsightly pimples and carbuncles, and she did all in her power to dispossess him of his heritage. So well did she succeed, that Lathyrus, weary of the constant annoyances inflicted upon him by his mother, retired at length, a willing exile, to the isle of Cyprus, the rule of which usually fell to the lot of the younger members of the dynasty. After his departure the Queen, who was of a very masterful disposition, acted as if the rightful sovereign no longer existed, and proclaimed her second son King of Egypt under the name of Ptolemy IX. Alexander.

While his mother was still alive, Lathyrus took no heed of what was passing in his country, and, even after the death of Cleopatra, which occurred in 652, he continued to allow his brother to exercise his power undisturbed. But when, in 665, the people grew discontented with their king, and

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deposed Ptolemy IX., Lathyrus returned to Alexandria, resumed the throne, and banished the sons of Alexander to Cyrene.

Lathyrus had two sons. As the elder, Ptolemy Rhodion, was a gentle, timid lad, his father intended him to have the kingdom of Cyprus, and left him there when he himself returned to Egypt. His second son, Auletes, a youth of a far more active nature, was to succeed him at Alexandria. As long as his father was alive, however, he was but seldom seen in Egypt. Cyrene had been assigned to him as his home, but as the young prince was ill pleased with so uncivilised a country, he travelled about a great deal, and spent the greater part of his time at Rhodes.

Auletes had married very young in life, and, following the ancient custom of the Lagidæ, had espoused his younger sister, Berenice, who died after she had borne him three daughters, but no son. The two brothers were then betrothed to the two daughters of Mithridates, the valiant King of Pontus, Mithridatis and Nyassa. On account of this new relationship they entered into the political coalition which this prince, the irreconcilable enemy of Rome, had formed with all the Eastern princes who had come under the influence of Hellenic civilisation. By their marriages they became brothers-in-law both to Tigranes, the brave and wily King of Armenia, and to Aristion, the last Greek prince of Attica, who so heroically defended Athens against the superior forces of Sulla. At the death of Lathyrus, in the year 673 of the

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Republic (81 B.C.), the Roman Senate were far from pleased at the thought of a son-in-law of Mithridates mounting the throne of Egypt; nor was it difficult for Alexander, son of Ptolemy IX., who had in the meantime escaped from Cyrene and betaken himself to Rome, to persuade the all-powerful Sulla to send him into Egypt at the head of an army. He arrived in the absence of Auletes, who, thinking he had no cause for suspicion, had remained quietly at Rhodes, made himself master of the country, and mounted the throne under the name of Ptolemy X. Alexander.

The people of Alexandria, taken by surprise at this sudden and unexpected attack, were so enraged at the thought of its having been carried out by the help of armed intervention on the part of Rome, that they poisoned Ptolemy X. a few weeks after his accession. But Auletes could not, even then, gain possession of what was his by right: Alexander's younger brother had usurped the throne, with the aid of the Roman troops which were still in Alexandria, and had got himself proclaimed king under the name of Ptolemy XI. Alexander.

During the years that followed, the life lived by Auletes was that of a pretender to the throne. He knew no rest, but was constantly coming and going, journeying hither and thither, making demands, and, in return, promising all that was asked of him; in short, doing everything that lay in his power to regain his heritage. But for so long as Sulla was alive, he did not meet with the least

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success. The death of the Dictator, in the year 672, changed the aspect of affairs, not only in Rome, but all over the world. Sertorius' insurrection in Spain, the rebellion of the slaves in Italy, the troubles in Crete, and the perpetual raids of the pirates, caused the Senate so much anxiety that they were finally compelled to withdraw their troops from Egypt and to concentrate their attention elsewhere. Hope was thus restored to the Philhellenic party at Alexandria, and Auletes succeeded in collecting a considerable number of friends round him and driving Ptolemy XI. Alexander from the throne. This he accomplished in the spring of the year 678 (76 B.C.). A few months later he was solemnly installed on his father's throne, at Memphis, and took the name of Ptolemy XII. Auletes Nothus Dionysus.

When Auletes gathered the reins of the government of Egypt into his hands, he was already in the prime of life. Three daughters remained to him by his first wife: Berenice, who was by this time a young woman, Tryphæna, and Cleopatra, just entering on the age of puberty. In character, Auletes was neither worse nor better than his contemporaries; but Cicero, who knew him personally, and in whose judgment we may place every confidence, considered that 'this prince was a king neither by birth nor disposition.' For the rest, he was a man who had travelled far and seen much; he spoke several languages, and found pleasure in taking part in a philosophical discussion, no matter how abstruse the subject; he was extremely fond

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of music, and himself an excellent performer on the flute: it is, indeed, to this gift that he owes his name—Auletes, or flute-player. Luxury, show, magnificence, pomp, he adored, and he took care that the amusements of his court should be on a scale similar to his own. His entertainments were always crowded with members of the higher ranks of the society of Alexandria. He could willingly spend several hours in the company of the learned men of the museum, but he far preferred the society of musicians, actors, gladiators, and mountebanks, whom he collected from all over the world and paid royally for their service. Clad in women's garments, it was his habit to mix with the townspeople and play his flute to the Bohemians of Alexandria. He was very fond of animals; it was he who first built a menagerie. In order to enrich his collection with rare and unknown specimens, he would send expedition after expedition into the interior of Africa. In the protection of elephants he took a special interest, and passed a law forbidding them to be put to death and sold as food. Tame animals gave him infinite pleasure: his favourite amusements were gladiatorial shows and exhibitions of performing animals, to which he would invite the people. Absorbed as he was in this life of pleasure, he yet found time to see to the restoration of the monuments of the Pharaohs which had been destroyed under the Persian rule. But to do this, considerable sums of money were needed, and Auletes' way of living greatly encumbered the royal treasury, notwithstanding the

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important revenues it had at its disposal. Money was often wanted wherewith to pay the troops, and the soldiers began to desert from legions where discipline was unknown and which, compared with the Roman legions, did not merit even the name of army. And if, in the midst of this general confusion, the fleet did not also become thoroughly disorganised, it was only because of the excellence of its captain, Dioscorides, who appropriated a portion of the revenue that the ships of the royal navy brought to the treasury and used it to keep in good repair the vessels under his command. He even found means to increase their number.

At the beginning of the year 679 the death took place of Nicomedes, King of Bithynia, Cæsar's former ally and the best friend among the princes of the East that Rome had ever known. In his will he left his kingdom to the Republic. By this gain, that had cost her not a drop of blood, Rome's attention was attracted to the Levant, as the path along which she might extend her dominion to the northern coasts of Asia-Minor and open up a continental route to the East. Two proconsuls, Aurelius Cotta and Lucullus, were immediately despatched, one to Bithynia and the other to Syria, with orders to set about the conquest of Asia-Minor. But the task presented innumerable difficulties, for if Lucullus was one of the best generals of the Republic, Mithridates, the adversary whom he had to meet, was one of the most remarkable and eminent men of his time. King of Pontus and

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Cappadocia, and a most cultured and accomplished man, Mithridates was, *par excellence*, the representative of the Greco-Macedonian cause which was so soon to be destroyed, and the last hero of his race. His courage and tenacity were such that, even after several disastrous and bloody defeats, he refused to acknowledge himself vanquished; on the contrary, he contrived again and again to rally his men and lead them to the field, thus prolonging the struggle, and awakening the enthusiasm of his allies and the fears of his enemies. After an uninterrupted struggle of three years' duration, Lucullus at length succeeded, at the end of the year 682, in coming to terms with Tigranes and compelling Mithridates to retire to the mountains. The treaty was a death-blow to the Hellenic world, for all the neighbouring tribes, who had, without actually taking part in the struggle, rendered a certain amount of assistance, or preserved a neutrality which was sympathetic to the Greeks, now passed into the sphere of influence of the victorious Romans. At Alexandria, too, it was felt that something of very serious import had occurred. Henceforth the Alexandrians would have to live a life of peace and amity with the Republic, no matter what material sacrifices it might entail.

Following on the peace with Tigranes came the death of Ptolemy XI. Alexander, Auletes' predecessor. After his deposition, he had lived in complete retirement at Tyre, where he ended his days towards the close of the year 683, leaving no lawful heir. At Rome a report was spread that

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the former king of Egypt had bequeathed his claim to the throne of the Pharaohs to the Roman people, as well as his private fortune, which amounted to 12,000 talents, or £2,800,000. Although his will was never produced, and there was not wanting, even at Rome, trustworthy evidence that it had never existed, the Senate nevertheless lost no time in appropriating the fortune of the deceased. Voices were raised in the Assembly, calling, in the light of the supposed will, for the immediate conquest of Egypt. Julius Cæsar presented himself, and begged the Senate to charge him with the task. Thereupon L. Crassus claimed it as his due that so great a mark of confidence should be conferred on him. Finally, after several debates on the subject, to put an end to dispute and rivalry, the Senate decided to drop the matter altogether.

The news of these discussions at Rome were bound to cause grave anxiety to the people of Egypt, where the humblest citizen and the meanest peasant enjoyed a far better existence, even under the worst of kings, than that of the inhabitants of any Roman province. In this respect the Alexandrians shared the sentiments of their sovereign, and, although none had any idea of exposing their lives in defence of their country, all were ready to make any material sacrifice, no matter how great, to ward off the peril that was threatening them. Ambassadors were therefore sent to Rome to buy peace at all costs. Dioscorides and Serapio were chosen to represent Alexandria, and they spared neither money

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nor promises in the task. It would appear that their arguments were irrefutable and decisive, and that they even succeeded in convincing Julius Cæsar himself, for he seems to have forgotten his remarks upon the conquest of Egypt and his offer to undertake it, and to have appeased, at anyrate for the time, his thirst for fame and glory. Cæsar and Pompey were at this time all-powerful at Rome; to each the envoys of Ptolemy Auletes presented the fabulous sum of 6000 talents of gold, or £1,400,000 of our money. As the ambassadors had not so many millions in their possession, they departed in debt to Cæsar for a considerable amount, which he collected with his own hands some time later when he came himself to Alexandria. The desired result was gained, however, at any rate for the time, and the Egyptian envoys had succeeded in their mission, the proof of which was that, during the consulship of Pompey and Crassus in 683, the Senate concluded a treaty with Auletes, in which they recognised him as lawful sovereign of Egypt. The title of *amicus reipublicæ* was even held out to him, if in return for the honour he promised to help the Roman army in its struggle with Mithridates, and send 8000 horse to reinforce the troops in Judea.

In order to avoid any suspicion of connivance with Mithridates, Auletes broke off his engagement with Mithridatis, daughter of that king, and, to fulfil the promise he had made to Rome, joined forces with the Roman troops in the following year (684) and advanced with them as far as

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Damascus, being present at the taking of Jerusalem in 685. If this expedition brought neither money nor glory to Auletes—for his horsemen shamelessly took to flight at first sight of the army of Aristobulus, and the Romans allowed him no share whatever in the booty—it was fraught with very important consequences both for himself and for the fate of his kingdom. It was during this expedition that he met the great Pompey for the first time, and that he made the acquaintance of Antipater, who was destined to exercise so great an influence over his subsequent career. And shortly after the fall of Jerusalem, he fell in love with a beautiful young Idumean, a near relation of Antipater, married her and brought her to Alexandria.

A few months after his arrival in Egypt the Queen gave birth to a daughter, to whom Auletes gave the name Cleopatra, notwithstanding that it was already the name of his second daughter by his first wife. It was this Cleopatra who, when in after years she became Queen of Egypt, acquired such world-wide reputation, and became celebrated alike for her beauty, her wit, and the charm of her person, and it is she who is the subject of this study.

As the years went on, the Queen presented her husband with many children, much to the disgust of his daughters by his former wife. And when, at length, his marriage was blessed with two sons, these daughters were naturally compelled to renounce all hopes of succeeding to the throne. There was certainly no love lost between them and their

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half brothers and sisters; they even became secret enemies of the King, their father. The eldest of the daughters of Auletes' second marriage, the celebrated Cleopatra, was born in the year 686 of the Roman era, or 68 B.C.; nearly two years later Arsinoe was born, then Ptolemy XIII. Dionysus, in the year 63 B.C., and finally Ptolemy XIV., in the year 60.

At this time the finances of Auletes had fallen into a very bad state, both on account of the colossal sums which he had sacrificed in bribing the Roman Senators and by reason of the enormous expenses entailed by the expedition into Judea. It was not possible further to increase the taxes, but something had to be done to satisfy his creditors, who were, for the most part, Romans. In order to meet his engagements, Auletes was compelled, in 690, to farm out all the land-taxes to a Roman banker, Rabirius, who was, moreover, the King's principal creditor, and who undertook to meet all claims that were held against Auletes. Rabirius expected to reap a rich harvest from his appointment, and came himself to Alexandria. The unfortunate natives, who already considered themselves unjustly and immoderately taxed, now suddenly found themselves deprived of what little remained to them: they were not even allowed enough to live upon, and even their seed-corn was taken from them. Enraged at so cruel and iniquitous a proceeding, the rural population rose up against the tax-gatherers of Rabirius, and the latter only succeeded in saving his life by beating

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a hasty retreat. In 691 he left Egypt, never to return, with the result that the money market of Rome was thrown completely out of gear, for the majority of the bankers of the capital were involved in his speculations.

In the meantime peace had been restored in Egypt, and the rich harvest of the year 60 B.C. enabled Auletes to interest himself once more in what was going on outside his kingdom. Mithridates, the wise and valiant King of Pontus, the principal stay of the Greco-Macedonians, had himself, two years before, in the year 62 B.C., put an end to his days. The other princes of Asia-Minor and of Syria had submitted, one after the other, to the victorious armies of the Republic. In the whole of the East, there remained only Egypt that was independent, and Egypt was already a mark for the greed of the Romans. As the country was too feeble to dare to measure its strength against so powerful an enemy as Rome, and all the neighbouring states were already under the dominion of the Romans, the Egyptian government had no other choice than to purchase peace, which it thought could only be assured to it by earning the brave title of *amicus reipublicæ*. In order to gain his ends, Auletes employed as his agent with the Republic a certain Ammonius, who, by the aid of a tactful distribution of presents, succeeded, in 59 B.C., in prevailing upon the Romans to grant his master's request. The Senate conferred the title he so earnestly sought on the King of Egypt, and sent the Senators Cn. Fabius and A.

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Ogulnius to Alexandria, as ambassadors at the court of Auletes. The King had thus every reason to believe that he had assured himself a peaceful reign, and it is probable that it would have been so had his brother, the King of Cyprus, shown himself similarly generous, and not been niggardly over the bribes destined for the Roman Senators. The avarice of this prince cost Auletes misfortunes without number.

We have already said that the eldest son of Ptolemy Lathyrus, who also was called Ptolemy, had received the island of Cyprus as an independent kingdom, in accordance with the last wishes of his father. Egypt was much weakened by this severing of Cyprus from its rule, for the island was one of its largest, richest, and most important provinces; not only did it bring large sums of money yearly to the royal treasury, but it also assured to Egyptian princes, by reason of its geographical situation, an easy and direct means of intervention in the affairs of Asia-Minor and Phœnicia. On account of the fertility of its soil and the richness of its mines, the ancient Greeks had given to Cyprus the name *Macaria*, or 'happy land.' In the time of the *Lagidæ*, this island was very densely populated, and the towns of Paphos, Cythera, and Amathontos were busy centres of trade carried on with the mother-country. Wheat of a very fine quality was grown there in abundance; the northern slopes of the mountains were covered with thick forests of trees, which yielded immense sums of money, while the southern slopes produced

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an excellent wine, considered to be a great delicacy. And finally, from the interior of the earth an apparently inexhaustible supply of copper was extracted, which was one of the chief sources of income to the treasury of Egypt. The two countries had many interests in common, the same historical traditions and people of the same races, and it was in consequence of this that their former relations underwent no modification when the government of Cyprus became that of an independent kingdom. The trade between the two countries was as important then as it had been before, as the people of the island belonged to that same Greco-Macedonian race which prevailed in the land of the Pharaohs. The two nations were both equally dissatisfied with their rulers; the subjects of Auletes complained of his extravagance and indifference to their needs, while those of Ptolemy hated him for the opposite reason: his avarice and his niggardliness, which they thought unworthy of a king. He resided at Paphos and, being unmarried, led the life of a hermit. He did without both army and fleet, in order to save the cost of their maintenance. Seeing that he left it to every seaboard town of his kingdom to defend itself from the pirates as it best could, Rome began to suspect that he was in connivance with these robbers of the sea. The one occupation to which he devoted his life was the collection of taxes, and the money thus obtained he devoted to the purchase of gold and silver plate, costly tables, jewels, purple stuffs, and all manner of expensive and luxurious articles,

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which were buried in his treasure-house and guarded with jealous care. Honest Nicias, his faithful minister and treasurer, aided him in the task.

Not only did this King of Cyprus refuse to maintain an army and a navy, but he even grudged the expense of a diplomatic service; nor did his avarice fail him when, for certain sums of money distributed among Roman senators who were fond of a life of luxury and ease, he could have purchased the title of *amicus reipublicæ* and thus assured himself of a peaceful reign, as his brother Auletes had done before him. He had, moreover, no friends at Rome, for he had shut his gates not only to his subjects, but to such Roman knights as, being without resources in their own country, managed to discover all manner of pretexts for visiting the rulers of the East and receiving subsidies from them in exchange for diplomatic missions to the Senate on their behalf. A helpless victim to his own niggardliness, Ptolemy had not even consented to pay the ransom of Publius Claudius, one of Rome's most notorious and worthless demagogues, who had fallen into the hands of the pirates in the course of one of his journeys along the coasts of Cilicia, and had made an appeal to the generosity of the King of Cyprus. Publius Claudius took his revenge on Ptolemy, when, on his return to Rome, he succeeded in getting himself elected tribune of the people, and, seizing the first favourable opportunity, induced the Senate to vote for the conquest of Cyprus and its reduction to a Roman province. This was all the more easy in that it was generally

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understood that the King of Cyprus' meanness was only equalled by his enormous wealth, and the most extravagant accounts of his treasure reached the ears of every man in Rome.

In annexing this island, Rome would do more than gain a new military base for her operations in the direction of Syria; she would, most opportunely, be able to fill an exhausted treasury with Ptolemy's great wealth. But as, for this very reason, the Senate could provide neither troops nor money for the expedition, no one was found willing to take it upon himself, and, for the time, the matter went no farther.

When the Hellenes heard the decision of Rome concerning Cyprus, they were full of anger. The whole world was incensed at this blatant violation of the rights of man, the more so as the Senate had not even been at the trouble of finding a reason for their action other than that of an easy conquest and a timely acquisition of wealth to the Republic. Alexandria and Paphos were warned of the attempt that the Romans were contemplating, but no one dreamed of the possibility of offering any resistance. And, what was a curious thing, the man who troubled himself least about it was the King of Cyprus, whom it principally concerned; and he, instead of taking measures to defend his throne, contented himself with laying his case before his brother Auletes, and applying to him for help and protection.

Although for many years past Cyprus had been governed by an independent king, the people of

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Alexandria still continued to regard it as an Egyptian colony. The importance of the trade that was carried on between the island and Egypt, as well as the ties of relationship existing between the two peoples, were sufficient reasons for calling forth very lively sympathies at Alexandria on behalf of Cyprus, and, when the decision of the Roman Senate became known, the people clamoured for Auletes to take up arms and defend the island against the Romans. But this prince was far from anxious to compromise his friendship with the Republic, a friendship which he had bought at so high a price but a short time before, and, what was more, his army was utterly incapable of measuring its strength against that of the Roman legions. As he was, however, desirous of helping his brother, he formed an embassy of all the most eminent members of his court, provided them with large sums of money, and sent them to Rome to intercede on behalf of Cyprus and, if possible, induce the Senate to recall their decision. Auletes had such entire confidence in the success of his envoys that he took no steps whatever to strengthen his army. On the contrary, to escape the importunities of the people of Alexandria, who were fast becoming discontented and rebellious, and to avoid having to look upon any manifestations of their discontent, fanned as it was by the daughters of his first wife, Auletes took his wife and young children and went on a visit to the Upper Nile, where his workmen were engaged in restoring the historic monuments of the Pharaohs.

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But in this case his intercession did not have the desired effect, for even before Auletes' envoys reached Rome, Publius Claudius had succeeded in getting an assembly of the people to adopt a resolution confiding to Cato the conquest of Cyprus. The latter at first declined the honour entrusted to his charge, but soon after changed his mind, and, when the envoys of Auletes reached Rome, he was on the eve of departure.

The ambassadors returned to Alexandria without having accomplished anything. With their arrival came the news that the Romans had taken possession of the island without striking a single blow.

Cato, who had neither fleet nor army at his command, had not dared to make straight for Cyprus. He had contented himself with disembarking at Rhodes, whence he despatched one of his young friends, Canidius—who was destined later to play an important part in the history of Rome—to persuade the King of Cyprus to withdraw from the island without a fight. Canidius was to assure him that he would never in future want for riches or honours and that the Roman people were willing to confer upon him the office of high priest of Venus at Paphos. But the unfortunate prince, feeling his position hopeless, did not attempt a defence; when Canidius presented himself at his palace, he took poison before he had granted him an audience (in the year 698 of the Roman era). Thus Cato got possession of the kingdom of Cyprus, without the loss of a single man or the cost of a penny piece.

This bloodless victory exasperated the people of

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Alexandria, and they blamed Auletes for having in so mean-spirited a manner permitted so beautiful an island, the home of their brothers, to fall thus easily into the rapacious hands of the Romans. Not content to see men becoming more and more bitter against Auletes every day, the daughters by his first wife, who had remained in the capital, sought by every means in their power further to excite the popular fury, and very soon the citizens of Alexandria, losing all control, openly rebelled against the royal authority. Auletes was declared to have forfeited his crown, and his two daughters, Cleopatra and Berenice, were proclaimed Queens in his stead.

When the King heard of the events that had taken place in Cyprus and Alexandria, he realised that he was no more than a fugitive: he could look for support neither to his family, nor his army, nor his people, who had betrayed him. Even his suite had abandoned him. All the court functionaries, whose sympathies were Philhellenic, made common cause against him. The priests and the people received the news with complete indifference; if they did not actually side with his enemies, they did not in any way concern themselves with his fate.

It was only by leaving his family and keeping in hiding, and after suffering all manner of privation, that Auletes at length succeeded in getting clear of his dominions and embarking for Rhodes. It is not known exactly where his family rejoined him, but it is probable that they did not again set eyes on him until they too reached Rhodes.

CHAPTER III

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PTOLEMY AULETES had betaken himself to Rhodes because he thought that Cato, since he had taken Cyprus, must have a considerable force at his command, and would not hesitate to restore to the throne, even by force, a friend of the Republic. This little service was due to him, thought he, if only as a return for the colossal sums which he had paid for this sonorous and high-sounding title. Auletes forgot that if the Roman Senate was always ready to accept ready money or friendly offers of help, it never gave help unless it saw that some substantial benefit was likely to accrue. What benefit could Rome or the Senate derive from a fugitive king who was entirely without resources? And what was more, Cato had no troops at his disposal; Plutarch tells us that when he left Rome, he was only supplied with 'two secretaries, one of whom was a notorious thief and the other a client of Publius Clodius.'

When Auletes reached Rhodes, Cato was engaged in selling at public auction the treasures of the unhappy King of Cyprus. Roman authors tell us to his credit, that he proceeded in this work with the utmost care, so that nothing might be kept back or sold for less than its true value. And he sent

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home to Rome a sum so considerable (7000 talents, or £1,320,000) that Plutarch cannot refrain from exclaiming: 'When the people saw these immense sums of gold and silver carried through the streets of Rome, their astonishment was unbounded.'

Cato received the King of Egypt with all the arrogance of a great magnate. He did not consider it necessary to rise when Auletes approached, nor did he offer him a seat. He told him that he was not in a position to render him any help, and reproached him for having allowed himself to be dethroned so easily. According to Plutarch, Cato pointed out to Auletes 'what honour and happiness he was abandoning, and what humiliations and troubles he would run himself into; what bribery he must resort to, and what cupidity he would have to satisfy when he came to the leading men at Rome, whom all Egypt turned into silver men would scarcely content.' Finally he advised him to return to his kingdom and become reconciled to his people.

The unfortunate Auletes knew better than Cato that a reconciliation was no longer possible. Moreover, he had not journeyed to Rhodes for the sake of advice, but for effective assistance. Having come to the conclusion that he was only wasting time, he decided to go as far as Rome and lay his case before the Senate. But for a man destitute as he was, so long a journey was no easy task. He could not take his family with him, and yet he had no desire to leave them at Rhodes. At length he determined to send his wife and children to

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Ephesus, while he himself set out for Rome, and reached the capital in the course of the autumn of the same year.

At this period Rome was no longer a Republic in anything but name. The form and nature of the government was gradually being modified, both by reason of Rome's dominion over the nations she had conquered and also of the power delegated to individual citizens, which, considering the wide extent of the empire, it became more and more difficult to control. Roman society closely resembled that which is met with to-day in great commercial centres: there were, in the first place, the patricians and knights; then the freedmen who had amassed enormous fortunes by contracting for the taxes and revenues of the state, practising usury and oppressing the nations brought under the dominion of the Republic in the most shameful manner; and, finally, there were 520,000 citizens supported out of the public moneys. Mommsen says that the middle class had entirely disappeared, and there only remained in Rome lords and beggars, the one as cosmopolitan as the other. The whole of Italy had become the property of a handful of plutocrats who had taken over the reins of government. This is especially true of the distant provinces, which were publicly put up for sale and given to the highest bidder. It was believed that a very small knowledge of administration would enable a man quickly and easily to grow rich out of his purchase. For seventy-five years had this iniquitous struggle lasted, during which the plunderer and the plan-

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dered continued to shed torrents of blood in a well-nigh uninterrupted series of civil wars. Spartacus and the Gracchi had given their lives for the people in an attempt to vindicate their rights, and Marius had had recourse to every violence and every cruelty, and yet failed in his efforts after the triumph of definite liberal tendencies. Sulla alone, for a short time, succeeded in consolidating the power of the patricians and asserting it over this corrupt and vicious society. The honour of the statesman, the conscience of the magistrate, the honesty of the citizen, the virtue of the women, were worth no more than the price for which they could be bought. In the Senate, the interests of the people were no longer considered, but their time was given up to party intrigues that fired the blood and roused the temper; laws were now no longer made for the sake of equity in the government of the people whom Providence had placed under the dominion of the Roman, but solely for facilitating the cultivation of the lands of the nations that were brought under the yoke of the Republic and in order that the Senators might derive the largest share of the plunder. Men thought no longer of rewarding the services of the patriot, but of flattering the vanity of the powerful. Justice could be bought of the judges; the votes of the electors were given to the highest bidder; historians became simply the panegyrists of those who happened to be in power; poets no longer sang the muses, but their patrons at court. Those who were elected to rule, chosen as they were solely on

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account of the money they had expended on their election, devoted their lives to the pursuit of unbridled licentiousness, which was paid for by money extorted from the provinces, while the people of Rome lived in abject misery, except when the demagogues, for electioneering purposes, offered them banquets which were positive orgies of debauchery. Every man worked for his own ends, and, to understand the extent to which the Romans had become selfish and self-centred, one has only to read the biography of such a man as Cato of Utica, a prominent figure among the men of his time.

The triumvirate was already formed, although it was not, as yet, openly acknowledged. Pompey, in the zenith of his power, taking as his pretext the maintenance of order, had encamped with his army beneath the walls of Rome and was seeking to win the friendship of the patrician senators. He had collected round him all those who still upheld the old régime. Cæsar, the hope and pride of the younger generation, was engaged upon the conquest of Gaul, and covering both himself and his army with glory. Nevertheless he still found time to visit Rome twice a year and recruit friends to aid him in the future; his method was to construct magnificent buildings and to scatter money broadcast. His party, which was daily adding to its numbers, was silently preparing the ground for the foundation of a monarchy.

Crassus had returned from his province and was carrying favour by granting loans to those who wished to borrow, thus hoping to screen from the

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public gaze the millions that he had brought back with him. And, finally, Cicero, that paragon of virtue, who had fault to find with everyone with whom he came into contact, had no sooner returned from exile than he began to build houses, pay off his debts, and sell his eloquence to the highest bidder.

Such was the state of affairs at Rome when Ptolemy Auletes, poor and unattended, set foot on the shores of Italy. Had not one of his former friends recognised him and helped him on his way, he would have been compelled to perform the journey on foot. Once at Rome, he cast himself on the mercy of Pompey, whose acquaintance he had made in Syria during the war against Tigranes. Pompey received his friend very graciously and lodged him in his own house.

As soon as the arrival of the King of Egypt became known at Rome, numberless intrigues were woven round his person. One portion of the Senate was disposed to help the friend and protégé of Pompey and wished to entrust the latter with the task of re-establishing Auletes on his throne; but the plan fell through on account of the opposition of the friends of Cæsar, who feared that Pompey would only abuse a power so considerable, if it were put into his hands. Both parties were, at heart, anxious for Auletes' re-establishment, but neither was willing to relinquish an expedition which was likely to be both honourable and remunerative. As for Cicero—until the King of Egypt succeeded in winning him over—he would

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not hear of any intervention in his favour, and even sought to alienate him from his protector and friend.

Meanwhile the Senate deferred their decision from day to day, until the news reached Rome of the approach of an Egyptian embassy sent by Berenice to frustrate the overtures of Auletes and gain the recognition by the Senate of the new sovereign. The position of the ex-king became from that time very critical, and, as he was entirely without money, he could get nothing from men who were accustomed only to sell their favours. At length, after many efforts, he succeeded in gaining the support of Rabirius, his former creditor, who promised to procure him a considerable sum of money and, consequently, fresh friends. Thereupon Auletes sent in hot haste to meet the Egyptian embassy, and succeeded, by bribes, in corrupting the majority of the envoys and inducing them to abandon their project. Those who would not be bought, among whom we may number Dion, were murdered before Putiolanum, at Auletes' orders. Although bribery and murder were at that time the order of the day, this affair caused a great stir: a senator named Flavonius lodged a complaint against Auletes, and it was only thanks to Pompey's friendship that the ex-king escaped condemnation and punishment.

Notwithstanding all that had happened, the question of Auletes' restoration was still a matter of first importance with the Senate. The Sibylline Books were consulted, and in spite of the fact that

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the replies ought to have been kept secret, it was generally understood that the oracle had pronounced itself against armed intervention. As a consequence, the Senate resolved that 'the King of Egypt should be reinstated on his throne with the help of Roman functionaries, but without their having recourse to arms.' It is hardly necessary to say that no one was willing to undertake such a mission. Nevertheless Auletes succeeded in arousing the interest of Cicero, who set about to find means of restoring the King to his throne. He endeavoured to persuade the proconsul, Publius Lentulus, to help Auletes with the troops he had at his disposal, but this general refused.

Meanwhile the year 698 was drawing to a close ; in the course of it the three most influential men of the Republic, Pompey, Cæsar, and Crassus, had drawn up a convention in which it was decided to divide the power of government between them. In conformity with this arrangement, Pompey and Crassus became consuls for the year 699, following which Crassus was to receive the governorship of the eastern provinces of the empire, which he coveted on account of the glory and profit he hoped to derive from a fresh campaign against the Parthians.

At the beginning of the year, Scaurus had been recalled from Syria and Gabinius sent to take his place. Pompey advised his friend Auletes to waste no more time at Rome, but to go to Syria and so be in a position to profit by whatever sums of money Crassus could raise in the capital during his consul-

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ship and to recover his throne by the help of Gabinius. Realising that he could gain nothing further from the Senate, Auletes was persuaded to take the advice of Pompey, and, furnished with recommendations from the hand of the latter, he left Rome secretly, visited his family at Ephesus, and then set out for Tyre, with a view to meeting Gabinius there.

As soon as they had come into power, Pompey and Crassus had taken all the necessary measures for reinforcing the army in Syria under Gabinius. All the princes of the East who were in alliance with Rome either came in person to the latter's camp or sent ambassadors. Among them were Hyrcanus, High Priest and Prince of Judea, with Malichus and Pitholaus; Aretas, King of Arabia, and his brother-in-law, Antipater, the son of the King of Idumea, one of the first diplomatists of his time and the staunchest of the friends of Rome; and Archelaus, the son of the King of Cappadocia, a man of about thirty, brave, well informed, and a general of some renown. In addition to the Orientals, Gabinius was surrounded by a considerable number of young Romans who were attracted by a desire for fame and hopes of a rich booty; most remarkable among them was Mark Antony, who was destined to play so important a part in Roman history.

Mark Antony, grandson of the celebrated orator of that name and son of Cæsar's cousin Julia, was born in the year 83 B.C. He belonged to a noble patrician family which was as rich as it was

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illustrious, and the members of which claimed to be descended from Hercules. His father, a notorious drunkard and debauchee, succumbed to his excesses, leaving neither fortune nor name; his mother's second husband, Cornelius Lentulus, was convicted of complicity in the intrigues of Catiline, and died on the scaffold. When little more than a child, young Antony, who was brave and of a kindly disposition, endowed with exceptional intelligence, great talent, remarkable beauty, and a truly herculean strength, fell in with the worst society in Rome; the two most abandoned debauchees of the time, Curio and Publius Claudius, were among his greatest friends.

At twenty-seven, he had run through all his fortune and, as he filled no public office, was utterly destitute; his high spirits did not forsake him, however, and no feast was considered complete unless he were present; he soon acquired the reputation of a man well practised in the art of living. Towards the end of the year 57 B.C., the demands of his creditors became so pressing that he decided to go to Athens to complete his studies. But it would seem that he failed to make friends with the arts and the sciences, for the following year we find him in Syria in the camp of Gabinius. Antony was then twenty-eight and considered the handsomest man of his time; sculptors used him as a model for their statues of Apollo. In build and strength he was compared to Hercules, his imaginary ancestor. Brave to the point of rashness, he possessed a heart of gold and a disposition at once joyous,

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light-hearted, and cheerful. In character he was unquestionably upright and sincere; and although he had never devoted himself to study, he had acquired much knowledge from his wide experience of life. Gabinius seems to have read below the surface and been conscious of the good qualities hidden there, for, as soon as Antony presented himself, he confided to him the command of a body of cavalry.

About the middle of the same year, Ptolemy Auletes reached Tyre, with his whole family. Cleopatra, his eldest daughter, had just completed her twelfth year and, if we take into consideration the precocity of the Oriental races, we may suppose that she was already sufficiently developed to observe and notice all that was passing around her. It is even possible that the heart of the young girl was filled with admiration for the youthful hero, beautiful as a god, the rays of whose glorious achievements shone forth so brilliantly.

Ptolemy XII. immediately laid his case before Gabinius, and handed him the letters in which Pompey recommended him to the solicitude of the Roman general. The latter received the friend of his all-powerful patron with every kindness and began forthwith to enter into negotiations with him. Antipater, who was friendly towards Auletes and in high favour at Rome, lent his personal support to the king's cause, while Auletes himself promised everything that was demanded of him, if only he regained his throne. Gabinius was very

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loath to forego so fair an opportunity of capturing a rich prize; but, as he was hourly expecting to receive orders to march against the Parthians, he did not dare to engage his army on another expedition, but had to content himself, in the meantime, with treating with Berenice, to whom he sent ambassadors with letters from himself, in the hope that the headstrong woman would in the end consent to abdicate from power and restore the throne of Egypt to her father.

During the course of these negotiations, Archelaus left the army and journeyed to Egypt. Some writers say that he had taken refuge in flight, while others assert that he was sent thither by Gabinus at the request of the Egyptian government, with a view to his offering himself as a husband to Berenice; the most plausible reason seems to be that Gabinus and Ptolemy sent the diplomatic and wily Greek to Alexandria for the purpose of discussing with Berenice the terms of her abdication. In the meantime the Roman troops were by no means idle, and Mark Antony did not fail to distinguish himself in every encounter with the enemy. Jerusalem was taken, and, after many defeats, Aristobulus at length fell into the hands of the Romans. All the towns that had held out against them were compelled to pay heavy war indemnities on their capitulation. In this way passed the summer and part of the autumn; Antipater continued to help Auletes in every way he could, supplying him with money and constantly intervening on his behalf with Gabinus. He even

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enrolled soldiers for the benefit of the exiled king and came to a secret understanding with the Jewish colonies established in the vicinity of Pelusium, with the result that when Auletes made his attempt definitely to recover the throne, they lent him money without stint. All these preparations go to prove that even before Gabinius refused his help, they had decided to take action, and that the restoration of Auletes was planned for the following year, whether the Romans lent their aid or not.

No sooner had the two daughters of Ptolemy XII. ousted their father from power, than Cleopatra died suddenly, and Berenice took the reins of government into her own hands. But since the exile of Auletes was at the same time the triumph of the Hellenic party, the Queen considered that her throne was not assured to her without formal recognition by the Roman Senate, and, having learnt that her father had himself applied to Rome for help, she listened to the advice given by Dion and decided to send an embassy to the Senate and get herself acknowledged by the Romans. The most notable citizens of Alexandria were sent as envoys, Dion among them, and Berenice despatched them with every confidence in the success of the mission. That she was grievously mistaken in her hopes she realized when the news came of the assassination by Auletes of certain of the envoys and the successful bribery of the others. It was rumoured that the Senate had decided unanimously to reinstate Auletes on the throne, and that

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the only difference of opinion was as to the manner in which the restoration should be carried out.

At this juncture (in the beginning of the year 698 of Rome, 56 B.C.) there came to Alexandria Coccus Seleucus, second son of Antiochus X., King of Syria, and of Selene, a princess of the house of the Lagidæ. Several years before, Seleucus had spent some considerable time at Rome with his brother, Antiochus XIII., who subsequently formed an alliance with Tigranes and assisted that prince in his struggle against the Republic. But the King of Syria had suffered defeat at the hands of the Romans and had been deprived of his kingdom, and compelled to beg for mercy of the Senate and submit to many bitter humiliations. At the same time, the two brothers laid claim to the throne of Egypt, to which they had pretensions on their mother's side. Their petition was disregarded, but the Senate handed over the throne of Syria to Antiochus XIII., who hastened to return to his country and regain possession of power. Seleucus settled at Syracuse, where he had the misfortune to make the acquaintance of Verres, one of the vilest and most grasping of the Roman knights. Verres, who was at that time Praetor of Sicily, having heard that Seleucus had very valuable treasure in his possession, laid a trap for him and deprived him of all he had. The unfortunate prince then betook himself to Alexandria.

He could not have arrived at a more opportune moment. Berenice and her advisers, thinking that he would prove a firm upholder of the

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throne which was threatened by Auletes, kept him in Egypt and persuaded him to marry the Queen.

The new king was neither young nor handsome, nor was he a good man: his appearance was repulsive and his manners unbearable; an unbounded avarice was his chief characteristic. He had one thought, and one only, to amass new riches and build up afresh the fortune he had lost at Syracuse. He began by laying hands on the royal treasury, and levied taxes on his new subjects which were even more extortionate than those formerly levied by Rabirius. He refused to pay the mercenaries, and his cupidity even led him so far as to remove the remains of Alexander the Great from the golden sarcophagus in which Ptolemy Lagus had laid them and melt down the precious metal of which the coffin was composed.

The farmers and peasants in the provinces soon found that they could not tolerate the tyrannous cruelty of Seleucus' tax-gatherers; they rose in rebellion and the people of Alexandria immediately threatened to follow their example. What was more, Berenice had come to hold her husband in abhorrence. In order to free herself from him and escape from the dangers that seemed gradually to be hemming her in, she caused him to be assassinated a few months after her marriage. At the same time the Queen continued to keep a very careful watch over the movements of Auletes. The news that Flavonius had lodged a complaint against him with the Senate, demanding the punishment of the murderers

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of Dion and the other envoys, inspired her with fresh hope; she felt that when once Auletes had been censured and condemned to pay a penalty for his deed of treachery, he would lose all chance of regaining his throne. We have seen how she was disappointed in this hope. Meanwhile, although her position was very far from easy, Berenice governed with a considerable amount of ability; and her people held her in high esteem. During her reign she sought to maintain firm discipline in the army and to increase trade in her kingdom.

Suddenly, in the spring of the year 69 (55 B.C.), she heard that her father was in Syria. Shortly after, Gabinius sent to her, recommending her to become reconciled to Auletes. But the Hellenic party who held sway at the court of Egypt would have nothing to do with this prince. They knew of the decision of the Roman Senate, and did not imagine that Gabinius would dare to cross the frontier with his army, in opposition to the express wish of the Republic. At the beginning of the summer of the same year, Archelaus came to Alexandria, and, shortly after, married the Queen. This prince, who was himself of royal blood, had the reputation of being a fearless, resolute man and an excellent soldier. It is probable that he aspired to the hand of Berenice from motives of ambition as much as sympathy for a princess who was as beautiful as she was energetic, and the Queen of Egypt, in her turn, might consider herself fortunate to have won the heart of a man at once so noble and so wise.

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The Greek, brave and just man that he was, was not long in winning the affections of the people; and hope, which had almost abandoned them, began to revive in the Hellenic party, and the outlook to become more cheerful. The energy and activity of Archelaus filled even the most pessimistic with confidence. He wished to serve the country and the throne; not, indeed, by the protection of Rome and the help of his neighbours, but by his own unaided efforts and the many resources of his vast empire. To begin with, he concentrated in one spot the army that had, up to then, been scattered to the four corners of Egypt, and submitted it to a very severe discipline. Then he recruited more troops, armed the fleet, and repaired the fortifications of Pelusium, the eastern rampart of Egypt.

Gabinus had just gone into winter quarters with his army at Tyre, when he heard of the marriage of Archelaus and Berenice. At the same time, he received from Rome news of a still more serious character. Crassus had decided to direct the campaign against the Parthians in person. He had left Rome seventeen days before the kalends of December and, without touching Palestine, had reached Mesopotamia by the shortest route. The command of the army in Syria was thus taken out of Gabinus' hands, and he was expecting to be summoned to attend on Crassus at any moment.

Both these pieces of news had their effect on Gabinus and Auletes, and decided them in coming to a definite understanding as quickly as possible.

Ptolemy, who felt that this was his last chance,

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offered Gabinius 10,000 talents of gold (£2,000,000) in return for his help. The latter, thinking that his army would now no longer be called upon to do battle with the Parthians, came to the conclusion that it could not be better employed than in assisting Ptolemy, nor, indeed, to a greater advantage to himself. He therefore accepted the offer and, in spite of the Senate's resolution, determined to lead his men into Egypt with all haste.

He quickly brought peace to Judea, established Hyrcan on the throne, and appointed as governor of Jerusalem the same Antipater who had served as intermediary in his negotiations with Auletes. He then sent King Aristobulus a prisoner to Rome and, leaving his two sons in Judea with a body of troops sufficient for the maintenance of order, set out with his army for Egypt, in the year 700 of Rome (54 B.C.). The legions stationed in Syria had to cross the desert, while those from Palestine followed the coast and proceeded towards the Egyptian frontier by forced marches. The advance-guard was led by Mark Antony, already a cavalry general (*præfectus equitum*), who distinguished himself in this campaign not only by his matchless courage, but by his skill as a general. It was then that he laid the foundations of his brilliant military career.

Archelaus had not succeeded in organising any serious resistance, a task which required far greater time and men of an entirely different stamp. Nevertheless, knowing very well that a compromise was no longer possible, he did not

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attempt to parley with the enemy: for him it was simply a matter of conquering or dying for the woman he had married. He put himself at the head of his army and advanced to meet the Romans as far as Arabia Petraea; but when the Egyptian forces, in a series of fights, had shown themselves quite unable to hold their own against the legions of Mark Antony, he retired behind the walls of Pelusium. The Romans, to whom victory was the order of the day, pressed on and laid close siege to that town. Antony led the operations in person. Pelusium surrendered in the beginning of the year 54 B.C., after a short but dogged resistance, in which the brave Archelaus lost his life. The youthful victor did not pursue the Egyptians, but awaited the coming of Gabinius and the main body at Pelusium itself, where he interred with regal magnificence the body of his intimate friend and former companion-at-arms, who had, with his heroic death, paid dearly for his short-lived royalty.

The fate of the campaign was decided by the fall of Pelusium. The Egyptian army, deprived of its leader, was not even pursued by the Romans; it dispersed in a headlong stampede, like a flock of frightened sheep. The road to Alexandria lay open to Gabinius from that moment. The Hellenic party was vanquished, and the very men who had taken part in the deposition of Auletes, now handed the unfortunate Berenice over to him, in the hope of currying favour with the conqueror. Gabinius conducted Ptolemy XII. to the capital of his kingdom, and there, after an exile of three years,

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he was solemnly reinstated on his throne. Gabinius did not linger when once his task was accomplished. He left behind him two legions, under Mark Antony, to protect Auletes, and conducted the rest of his army by forced marches across the desert. The campaign had been brought to a close with such rapidity that Gabinius did not think it necessary to render an account of his doings to the Senate.

The news of Berenice's second marriage could hardly have reached the borders of the Egyptian Empire before the Queen was again a widow. The fugitives of the Egyptian army announced the accession of Archelaus to the throne and the news of his death. The restoration of Auletes concerned Alexandria alone; outside the capital, the event seemed of no importance to anyone. The Jewish and Arabian population of the eastern portion of the empire had been, as we have already seen, won over to the cause of Auletes; as for the Copts established along the banks of the Nile, they troubled themselves not at all about the vicissitudes of their rulers' fortunes. In silence did the race bear the rule of the Greco-Macedonians who infested the court in their thousands, without in any way sympathising with them or considering that they had any interests in common.

No sooner had Gabinius departed, than Auletes began to take measures to satisfy his hatred and his wrath, and although the presence of Mark Antony had the effect of somewhat moderating his violence, the Roman general was not able to

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prevent him from putting Berenice to death; her ambition to reign as Queen of Egypt thus cost her her life. The executioners were, moreover, constantly at work, for the King had need of money, and the fortunes of the victims paid the price of his restoration. The peace that was at length restored in Egypt lasted for the three years that followed.

Auletes now reverted to the habits of his youth, for age had only served to increase the violence of his passions. All his days were spent in the company of courtesans, in drunken merriment, surrounded by his friends, each of whom was as great a debauchee as himself. The learned men of the museum were only honoured by his favour when he could hold his own against them, and it is a fact that he refused to admit Demetrius, a famous philosopher of the Platonic school, to his court, solely because he was no drinker of wine. Affairs of state no longer troubled him in the least. The legions left behind by Gabinius kept his subjects in check and assured him the taxes and custom dues. The administration of his finances he entrusted to the eunuch Pothinus, whom he had brought with him from Phœnicia. The task of paying the expenses incurred by the king, settling the pay of the army, and from time to time meeting the various claims of the Roman creditors, he found an almost impossible one. On the departure of Gabinius, Mark Antony took over the command of the legions left in Egypt, but he only remained there for a few

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months, and then, without returning to Rome, joined Cæsar's army in Gaul. At his departure, the command of the army passed into the hands of a certain Achilles, an Egyptian general of Greek origin, whose appointment caused great discontent among the Roman troops. It was in vain that he strove, with gentleness and amiability, to win the soldiers' hearts, in vain that, with an indulgent eye, he looked upon their shortcomings: he was unable to gain their sympathy. Discipline soon became relaxed, and the disorder caused by the excesses of the legions, who had lost even the most rudimentary notions of the duties of a soldier, made the last years of Auletes' reign anything but peaceful.

The King had confided the education of his children to Anchoreus, one of the intimates of his youth. When his son and heir-presumptive was entering upon adolescence, he appointed as his instructor Theodotus, one of the most celebrated orators of his day: he was a Greek of the island of Chios, a man of rather loose character, but cultivated and refined. Meanwhile Cleopatra, his favourite child, had grown to be a young woman. Her beauty was such that men boasted of it in the most distant lands of the Roman Empire. The poets and historians of the day, Greek as well as Roman, sang of Cleopatra as of a living Venus, a second Helen, the Aphrodite of the Nile. Since neither portrait nor statue of the princess has come down to us, it is impossible for us to decide how far such opinions were impartial and sincere.

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A few cameos roughly chiselled, a small number of coins on which the name of Cleopatra surrounds the head of a woman of action, a gigantic high-relief cut out of the rough stone of a ruined temple at Dendera, a village on the edge of the desert, such is all, or very nearly all, that remains at our disposal, if we would form an estimate *de visu*, so to speak, of the beauty of Cleopatra. Nevertheless, this princess must undoubtedly have been extraordinarily beautiful, for, after two thousand years, her beauty still lights up the page of the historian, and will continue, until the end of time, to shine forth as an ideal of loveliness. Thus Cleopatra has become a type, a type of a woman whose love is worthy of the bravest deeds and the noblest enterprises, and for whom the greatest of mankind are ready to sacrifice their lives.

All the poets and historians of antiquity, of the Middle Ages, and of modern times, who have concerned themselves specially with her personality: Plutarch, Dion Cassius, Vaillant, Shakespeare, de Dairval, Baron Prokesch, Adolphe Stahr, all speak of her with the enthusiasm that only perfect beauty can inspire.

Here, for example, is what Baron Prokesch writes concerning the portrait of Cleopatra discovered at Dendera: 'Both (Cleopatra and her son Cæsarion) are in the prime of life, and their mien is proud without being haughty, strong, and noble. Cleopatra, as a priestess of Isis, is arrayed in a tasteful garment of rich and costly material. But far richer is her own lovely person: the charms of her mag-

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nificent body, its beautiful shape, its warmth, and its loveliness. . . . As I contemplate this Cleopatra, how well can I understand Cæsar's weakness! Her hair ornaments are in exquisite taste and very handsome. Part of her hair falls in ringlets about her neck and shoulders, while the rest surrounds her head like a halo. Two wings caress her temples and a little serpent rears its head from off her limpid brow. Her arms and bosom are bare, and decked with precious stones. A magnificent belt encircles her body below the breasts, to which is attached the clinging robe that reaches to her ankles. The material of the garment seems to be fashioned in silver scales, in a symmetrical pattern which is very pleasing to the eye. The feet are adorned with jewels similar to those worn by the Arabian women of Egypt at the present day.' In terms such as these does Prokeseh describe the portrait of Dendera. Nor must we omit to add that nineteen centuries cannot have passed without leaving their traces on the image, and the traveller who regards it to-day sees only the imperfect remains of what was once a living image.

Plutarch did not himself know Cleopatra personally, but, founding his facts upon tradition and the works of contemporary authors, he describes the Queen as follows:—'Her beauty, it is said, was neither astonishing nor inimitable; but it derived a force from her wit and her fascinating manner, which was absolutely irresistible. Her voice was delightfully melodious, and had the same variety of modulation as an instrument of many strings. She spoke

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most languages; and there were but few of the foreign ambassadors whom she answered by an interpreter.'

This beautiful and charming creature was, then, in addition to her loveliness, endowed with mental attributes which were quite exceptional. She spoke seven or eight languages: besides Greek, Latin, and the language of the Copts, she was perfectly acquainted with Arabic, Hebrew, and Persian. Among her contemporaries, no one had a better knowledge of the history of Rome, of Greece, and of her own country. Although she had inherited the hot blood and voluptuous temperament of her race, there could be no greater error than to suppose, on the authority of the shameless recitals of writers of the time of Augustus, that she was no better than a harlot, living for the pleasures of the senses alone. Those contemporary authors who were not blinded by passion—and, among them, the most celebrated Latin authors—are compelled to bow before the superiority of her intellect. Lucan, who probably heard his uncle Seneca speak of her, displays great animosity in writing of Cleopatra, but even he cannot help praising the beauty and the wit of this wonderful woman, and that with so great an enthusiasm that he was obliged to burn the finest portion of his magnificent *Pharsalia*, in order to escape the persecutions of Nero. As for Horace, who doubtless knew Cleopatra personally, for he was already twenty at the time of her residence at Rome, where she held a court frequented by all its choicest spirits, he dedicates to her some

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of his most glorious lines in the triumphant song composed on the fall of this queen whom Rome had once such cause to fear.

And, as a fact, all the witnesses to the life of Cleopatra that have, after so many years, been collected, are unanimous in speaking of her as a woman of marvellous beauty, of an ardent and proud disposition, and possessed of high intellectual powers. Universal admiration alone did not content her: she desired love as well as respect, and the two greatest men of her time considered her affection more precious than any treasure or the gratification of any desire. Her people and her soldiers were passionately devoted to her, and her friends worshipped her as a goddess. For the rest, Cleopatra was no ordinary coquette, but a woman who only gave herself for love, and who thus became the slave of the two men whom she in her turn subjugated. And these men were not of those who are met with every day, but the conquerors and masters of the Roman world.

Her sister Arsinoë, her junior by two years, a less beautiful and a less clever woman, was both envious and jealous of the noble physique and brilliant intellect of her elder sister. But she was herself a woman of courage who, brought up under the influence of the Hellenic party of the court, had imbibed a spirit that was purely Greek, and she hated from the depths of her soul anything that was Roman. Ptolemy XIII. Dionysus was heir to the throne, and at this time about eleven years of age, a handsome child, brave and shrewd, but,

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through the influence of his surroundings, jealous of power, ambitious, and vindictive. Theodotus assiduously imparted to him Philhellenic sentiments and ideas, and inculcated a bitter hatred against Rome. Auletes' fourth and last child, Ptolemy XIV., was not yet eight years old, a weakly child from birth, and very often ailing.

The beautiful and brilliant Cleopatra was her father's favourite. She was allowed to accompany Auletes not only into the presence of the learned men of the museum, but even into the society of gladiators and play-actors. She followed the history courses of Diodorus, the literary conferences of Didymus, the lessons on astronomy given by Sosigenes, and was also present at the gymnastic displays held in preparation for the Olympian games. The young princess completed her education and refined her tastes by conversing with the scholars, poets, artists, and actors that were daily visitors at the court. In later years, when there was no longer any need for her to disguise her contempt for the meanness and presumptuous vanity of the Greeks of Alexandria, she preserved her respect for Hellenic learning and never lost an opportunity of honouring and protecting the wise men of her capital. Her true sympathies lay, however, with the Copts, her future subjects, who worshipped deities chosen from nature and whose religion was better suited to her temperament than that of Greek mythology. She delighted to appear in public arrayed as a priestess of Isis, and it was from the Copts that she always chose her personal

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attendants. Her father could refuse her nothing, and it was not long before the statesmen and politicians of the court gauged the influence exercised by the young princess upon Ptolemy XII, already an old man, and visibly becoming feebler every day. While they fully appreciated her many gifts and talents, they hated her and feared her.

Cleopatra had had, during her stormy childhood, opportunities for learning many things, both at Ephesus, where she had lived with her mother in exile, and later, in Syria, whither she accompanied her father: she had a very accurate knowledge both of mankind and the world. She must have heard how the Romans had deprived her father's predecessor of all his possessions by drawing him into an ambush at Tyre; how they had taken his kingdom and his wealth from her uncle, Ptolemy of Rhodes; how they had pillaged Jerusalem and robbed the vanquished Jews. She must also have seen how the princes of the East, and among them her own father, were forced to humble themselves before the arrogant and avaricious Roman knights, and how the latter, with well-disciplined legions, long inured to war, at their command, bartered the kingdoms that the poor-spirited and pusillanimous nations of the Levant were unable to defend. And finally she saw how the Roman soldiers had, at Pelusium, crushed the far more numerous army of Archelaus, and it is probable that, from that moment, she realised that the empire of the Ptolemies could only hope to regain anything of

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its former power by availing itself of assistance from Rome. But on the other hand, Cleopatra made no attempt to conceal the contempt in which she held the people of the court at Alexandria, who were not conspicuous for anything but an utter want of energy and a cringing hypocrisy; and they, on their side, who considered the minority of Ptolemy XIII. a very favourable opportunity for doing exactly as they pleased in Egypt, soon saw that their best planned schemes would be thwarted by the young princess. With her unique advantages, both physical and intellectual, and the charm that emanated from her person, nothing would have been easier than for Cleopatra to have become the idol of the court, for—in the words of a trustworthy historian—‘no one could resist her charms; a look or a word from her captured the heart of the coldest man, the most hardened misogynist.’ And yet she numbered not a single friend among the courtiers; on the contrary, the energies of all were devoted to injuring her, and at times they would even have recourse to slander in their attempts to embroil her with her father. But all their intrigues were of no avail. In the year of Rome 703 (51 B.C.), Auletes made a will in which he named his daughter Cleopatra and his eldest son, Ptolemy XIII., as his heirs, and entrusted the duties of executor to his old friend Pompey, and those of the guardianship of his children and the government during their minority to Pothinus, Achilles, and Theodotus. A copy of this will was sent to Rome and deposited in the public treasury.

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Another copy, identical with the first, was kept at Alexandria, where, later, it was presented to Julius Cæsar. Not long after, Auletes' health began to decline, and towards the end of the same year he died.

CHAPTER IV

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SCARCELY had the mortal remains of Ptolemy XII. been deposited in the Sema, and the funeral ceremonies come to an end, than the court of Alexandria became the scene of countless intrigues, all of which ostensibly had in view the establishment of a single sovereign upon the throne. The will of Auletes was a source of annoyance to all four children: to Cleopatra, because she saw that she could never hope to impose her will on, and realise her ambitious schemes by the side of, a brother who was both mistrustful, jealous of power, and dominated by his counsellors; to Dionysus, because he had to share his rule with a sister of whose intellectual superiority he stood in awe; and to the two younger children, because their father had excluded them from all participation in affairs of state. According to the terms of the will and following the custom long established in the family of the Lagidæ, Cleopatra should have become the wife of the King, her brother, a lad barely fourteen years of age. Historians do not tell us whether this marriage took place; but it is certain that although the King and Queen dwelt together in the royal palace of Alexandria, they were never at peace with one another, and there were no children from the union, whatever its

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nature may have been. With the death of Auletes, Anchoreus lost his influence over the young King entirely ; the latter became from that time the tool of his two shrewd and grasping counsellors, Pothinus and Achilles, and of his master Theodotus, who had but one idea, that of transforming the ancient empire of the Pharaohs into a Greek colony, independent of Rome. The troubles at Rome, excited and increased by Clodius and Milo, the desperate struggle between Cæsar and Pompey, the shameful defeats incurred by Crassus in his campaign against the Parthians, all seemed to justify a hope that this conception might be realised ; what was more, the star of Hellenism was already in the ascendant at Alexandria and favoured his projects. The Copts in the provinces were a negligible quantity : no one concerned himself with them in any way. Hence the only obstacle to the realisation of his plans was Cleopatra.

At all costs was it necessary to exclude this wise and ambitious princess from the government, in order that the Greeks might, in the name of the feeble youth, Ptolemy XIII., hold unrivalled sway at Alexandria. But this was easier to contemplate than to accomplish, for Cleopatra would not suffer herself to be put on one side. Moreover she, too, was finding the yoke of the Roman Senate too heavy, and was beginning to hate to the depths of her soul the idle, ease-loving knights who wandered over the country with an air of ownership, ransoming its rulers under cover of friendship, giving orders wherever they went, exacting ample provision for

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their maintenance, and even demanding presents into the bargain ; but her plans were very different from those of the courtiers who encompassed the King. The Queen had a very thorough knowledge of the history of her country, the people who inhabited it, and the Greco-Macedonian race that predominated at Alexandria, and she could not fail to realise that so heterogeneous a nation could not hold its own against the ever-increasing power of the Roman Republic. But she also knew the Romans and she must have felt that, with their energy and their national strength—which, it is true, was being ousted in civil conflicts and which, when ill directed, could yet be made to taste defeat—they were the only power at that time capable of founding or maintaining a mighty empire. Cleopatra, by her whole life, shows us that her dream, her ambition, was to transfer from Rome to Alexandria the centre of gravity of the Roman world, or, if that were not possible, to divide the empire into two parts, of which the eastern half, with its Hellenic civilisation, was to pass under the suzerainty of Egypt, or, better still, beneath the sceptre of the Ptolemaic dynasty. In her attempts to carry out these plans, however, the Queen was obliged to act with care and circumspection, for her position, even in Egypt, was far from being a safe one. If, on the day after the death of Auletes, she was not cast from the throne, it was certainly only due to her own cleverness, and also, it must be borne in mind, to the protection of the Roman Empire.

Auletes, as we have already said, had entrusted

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the guardianship of his children to the Republic, and sent a copy of his will containing a clause to this effect to Rome. No sooner was the King dead than the Senate, seizing the opportunity to interfere in the internal affairs of Egypt, hastened to send thither Marcus Emilius Lepidus, the future triumvir, with the title of guardian to the princes and princesses. Lepidus exerted all his authority to safeguard Cleopatra's rights, in virtue of her father's will; and, thanks to the legions that Gabinius had left behind, he succeeded in defending the Queen from the intrigues to which she was daily being exposed. Peace reigned throughout the land until the middle of the year 704, when the King attained his majority; meanwhile the harvest of 702 had been a very bad one, and the treasury, exhausted by the heedless extravagance of Auletes, was being but very slowly replenished, while the troubles that convulsed Rome paralysed trade and filled the merchants at Alexandria with feelings of discontent. During the whole of the winter, the army received not a penny of their pay, and the Egyptian troops were scattered to the four corners of the earth; the legions themselves, who had completely lost sight of Rome and abandoned all thoughts of discipline, and who, married in opposition to the prescriptions of the Roman law, had nothing but their pay upon which to support themselves and their families, began to mutiny, and it was only due to the personal intervention of Lepidus, whom they esteemed and respected, that they did not rise up in open revolt. Thus was order maintained at Alex-

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andria; and thus was it possible, in the year 704, solemnly to proceed to the installation of Ptolemy XIII. Dionysus, at Memphis, as King of Egypt.

But scarcely was the coronation at an end and Lepidus on his way back to Alexandria, than fresh disturbances broke out. The Roman legions demanded the immediate payment of all arrears, and, when no attempt was made to settle their claims, they sacked the state granaries. The Egyptian government had great difficulty in putting down the insurrection, and only at very great expense did they succeed in restoring peace.

The agreement made with the Republic in former years by Auletes had been interpreted by the Romans as an arrangement by which Egypt became a vassal state, liable to be called upon by the senate to furnish troops in time of need. And although the payment and general maintenance of the legions left at Alexandria by Gabinius was entirely in the hands of the Egyptian government, the Senate still continued to regard them as part of the Roman army, at their command, and they really only formed a division of the main body stationed in Syria. At the end of the year 702, Pompey, who was at the time consul at Rome without a colleague, sent Calpurnius Bibulus into Syria in the capacity of proconsul, to reform and reorganise the troops originally stationed there, but scattered far and wide since the death of Crassus. Bibulus considered that the legions quartered in Egypt belonged to the forces of which he was in command, and having learnt—very probably through the instrumentality

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of Cleopatra—of their pitiable condition, he handed them over to the command of his two sons, to whom he gave instructions that they should prevent the soldiers from completely dispersing and later transfer them to the army in Syria. The two young knights, in their inexperience, no sooner set foot in Alexandria than, rigorously and severely, they set about the re-establishment of discipline, such as was understood by Roman legions of days gone by. But they were unable to succeed in any of their measures, since the soldiers, already accustomed to a civil life and attached to their families, could not change their manner of living, while the people of Alexandria looked with a favourable and a grateful eye upon them for having adopted their manners and customs. The Egyptian government looked on jealously when this army was put directly under the command of Rome, and they had good reason to fear lest these troops, which they had come to look upon as their own, should be removed from Egypt.

Whilst the two young generals at Alexandria were struggling against difficulties such as these, a great change was coming over the aspect of affairs at Rome: a rupture between the Senate, with Pompey at its head, and the democratic party that took its orders from Cæsar, was inevitable. Fifteen days before the end of the year 50 B.C. (seven days before the kalends of January 705) an ultimatum, addressed by Cæsar from Ravenna, reached the Senate as they were about to install the two newly elected consuls: Caius Claudius

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Marcellus and Lucius Cornelius Lentulus. Shortly after, Cæsar crossed the Rubicon, and civil war broke out. Pompey and his party were in anything but a position to repulse Cæsar's attack, and sought for aid in every imaginable quarter. At Rome, the treasures of the temples were confiscated, and an attempt made to raise soldiers by ordering the citizens to arm themselves and form a body; the Roman troops stationed in Spain, Macedonia, Asia, and Africa were hastily recalled, and all the vassal princes of the empire were summoned to render assistance to Rome, now threatened with such dire calamity. Nor was Egypt forgotten; in the spring of the year 49 B.C., Cneius Pompey, son of Pompey the Great, came to Alexandria, with orders to lead the legions stationed in Egypt with all haste into Thessaly. The Senate further enjoined the government to send a large sum of money as a subsidy.

The people of Alexandria received Cneius with great coldness; they refused to discuss the question of money at all, and expressed themselves very ill-content with the removal of legions that they now looked upon almost as a national army, seeing that it was through them that the Egyptian government was assured of its dominion over the other nations of the Levant. Moreover, the troubles that were stirring Rome to its depths had aroused a spirit of resistance in the Greek world: petty Eastern princes, who had once been Rome's most obsequious servants, now began to dally and delay and some even went so far as to neglect the orders of the Senate altogether. The Egyptian government doubtless also

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thought that the moment had come for ridding itself of the tutelage of Rome.

Cleopatra alone gave a gracious welcome to Cneius Pompey, the envoy of the Roman Senate and the son of her father's friend. With her inborn talent for ruling, she saw at once that the Copts, the native people of Egypt, were not capable of forming the foundation of a firmly organised state, and the great Queen saw also that the Greco-Macedonian element that prevailed in Alexandria was equally incapable of transforming the ancient population of the country, on account of their utter inability to blend with the Copts; as for counting on these Greeks to defend the Egyptian Empire against its enemies, it was not even to be thought of. The throne of the Lagidae relied on the support of the Roman legions, and the dynasty could only be consolidated and flourish by very prudently propping itself against the power and strength of the Republic. Moreover, Cleopatra suspected that the safety of her own position depended largely on the friendliness of her relations with Rome, and she based her plans for the future on her friendship with the Republic. It was, however, impossible for her will to prevail, for her enemies were in the majority at court. She therefore contented herself by treating Cneius Pompey with every mark of deference and respect, and her beauty and address did not fail to make a profound impression upon him. The young patrician was, moreover, a *persona grata* with Cleopatra, a fact that explains why he stayed at Alexandria for

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two whole months, although he must have been convinced of the fruitlessness of his mission as soon as he arrived there. In spite of his desire to prolong his stay, Cneius was compelled to leave: Cæsar was rapidly advancing into Italy, and had already laid siege to Brundisium, where Pompey himself was confined. The young man dared not fail on a field of battle which was to decide the fate of one or other of the combatants, hence he left Alexandria without having accomplished anything.

From this moment the Egyptian government had but a single thought: to find some means of subjugating Cleopatra. The King's mistrust had already been aroused, and the young prince feared nothing so much as the thought of losing his authority through the intrigues of a sister far more capable than himself. Cleopatra had at this time no supporters save the two sons of the proconsul Bibulus; and their aid was of little avail, so long as the advisers of the King devoted themselves to sowing discontent among the legions, whom they urged not to submit to the stern discipline imposed upon them by their new commanders, nor to follow the two brothers into Thessaly. The measures dictated by the military authorities with a view to maintaining order in the streets irritated the population of Alexandria to such an extent, that about the middle of the year 705 (49 B.C.) the citizens rose in revolt, and, uniting with the mutinous legions, invaded the residence of the Calpurnii and put them both to death. Cleopatra would have shared their fate, had she not contrived to make good her escape.

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While the struggle was raging fiercely in the principal streets of the Bruchium, the Queen left the palace with a small escort and embarked on a vessel that bore her to the Phœnician coast, whence she sought refuge with her allies in Syria.

As soon as order was restored to Alexandria, the Egyptian government endeavoured to exculpate themselves from the murder of the two sons of the proconsul. The assassins were arrested and taken to Bibulus, who, however, did not deign to revenge himself on mere tools, but sent them back to Egypt. At the same time, Rome was asked to recognise Ptolemy XIII. as the only sovereign and ruler of Egypt; and when, in due course, the petitioners heard that Cleopatra was collecting an army for the purpose of recovering her throne, an embassy was sent in all haste to Pompey. Pompey and those senators who had followed him to Thessaly, agreed to recognise Ptolemy, and in return the Egyptian government promised to place at their disposal the Mediterranean fleet and to uphold the patrician party by every means in their power. The Egyptians did not, however, hasten to carry out their promises, and some considerable time was allowed to elapse before they despatched fifty galleys to Thessalonian waters. These vessels arrived too late to take any part in the naval operations and returned to Alexandria immediately after the battle of Pharsalia. As for land forces, all available men had been sent to the eastern frontier of Egypt, in order to defend the throne of Ptolemy against the attacks of his sister Cleopatra.

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Driven from her native land by her sister and her brothers, the Queen refused to resign herself to her fate, but, at the same time, she refrained from asking for help from Rome, as indeed she was entitled to do in virtue of her father's will, and as her predecessors had never failed to do. She fully realised the political situation at Rome, and knew that the two hostile parties had taken arms and were about to encounter each other among the mountains of Thessaly; but it was impossible for her to estimate how long the struggle would last and what its issue would be, as far as the empire of the world was concerned. Cleopatra saw at once that she could expect no help from the Republic. She therefore addressed herself to her kinsmen in Syria and to the Arab tribes, who were kindly disposed towards her, and begged them to help her to regain the throne. Her hopes were not disappointed: Antipater and his allies received her eagerly, and she succeeded, thanks to her beauty and her wisdom, in winning the friendship of all of whom she asked for aid. Barely a year after her flight from Alexandria, Cleopatra was already at the head of an important army, composed for the most part of Arabs, and marching towards the Egyptian frontiers.

Realising the gravity of the peril by which they were menaced, the King's party placed Achilles in command of the royal troops and charged him to encompass Cleopatra and vanquish her. At this time of year, that is to say in the month of September, the Nile was at its height: the Delta was sub-

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merged, and it was therefore only necessary to bar the road which led to Memphis. Achilles hastened to transport the Roman legions who were in the pay of Egypt to Pelusium; then, returning, he recruited new troops and sent them, too, to Pelusium, at which town Cleopatra's advance-guard had already arrived.

The forces of Achilles occupied Pelusium and the region that extends from the Mediterranean as far as Lake Serbonis, while Cleopatra's army had taken up its position between the northern border of this lake and the sea. Cæsar gives us a very minute description of the composition of the army of Achilles, and estimates it at about 20,000 men. The troops consisted of the legions of Gabinus, and a collection of robbers and brigands from Syria, Cilicia, and the neighbouring countries, as well as a contingent made up of condemned criminals; yet these troops were not unworthy of respect, both on account of their numbers and the experience of the majority of the soldiers. Cleopatra's army was of about the same strength.

Scarcely had the troops left Alexandria for Pelusium than, towards the end of August, the fleet returned from Thessaly with the news of the battle of Pharsalia. At the same time it was announced that the army of Cleopatra, after marching day and night, had drawn up under the walls of Pelusium. Ptolemy and his court immediately left the capital and betook themselves to the seat of the war. The two armies were preparing to fight when suddenly the rumour spread throughout the camps that

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Pompey was in sight: after the battle of Pharsalia Caesar had pursued him into Egypt and he, having recruited some 2000 men at Cyprus and at Lesbos, had come to take refuge there together with his wife and the senators Lucius Lentulus and Publius Lentulus. Pompey's sudden and unexpected arrival stopped the battle, for neither side knew whether the Roman ships were bringing friends or enemies, nor what were their intentions. No one had expected to see either the vanquisher or the vanquished so soon, for, although all the world knew of Caesar's great victory at Pharsalia, no one could have imagined that Pompey was already seeking safety in flight, and moreover in flight so ill-directed. In short, the Egyptians could not understand what his plans could be; and the more despondent even went so far as to imagine that the little Roman army was about to effect the conquest of Egypt.

The vessels, however, did not enter the harbour; Pompey contented himself with sending Publius Lentulus on an embassy to Ptolemy. The aim of this mission was to remind the King of the bonds of friendship that had existed between his father and Pompey and of the great services the latter had rendered Auletes at the time of his negotiations for the recovery of his throne. The ambassadors were to obtain for Pompey and his army the right to land at Alexandria and settle there for an indefinite period. This request threw the King's advisers into great embarrassment. Although the humility in which Pompey had couched his

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demands had dissipated their fears, the Egyptians were far from pleased at the arrival of such a visitor. On the one hand, they were afraid of invoking the anger of Cæsar; on the other, they did not dare to refuse Pompey's entreaties, for fear he might join hands with Cleopatra and revenge himself cruelly upon them for their lack of support. They were the more justified in dreading such an occurrence, in that the Egyptian army included a number of legionaries who had formerly fought under Pompey's orders and shared in his glory, for which reason the King could not feel overconfident in troops composed of such very uncertain elements.

A Council of State was called with all haste to deliberate upon the question, and Anchoreus, once the faithful servant of Auletes, was the only one who, in memory of the services rendered by Pompey in former days, considered that he ought to be received into the kingdom. But his advice was not heeded, while that of the rhetorician Theodotus was adopted, who held that the best course would be to find a means of putting Pompey to death, adding with a smile, according to Plutarch, that 'dead men do not bite.' Pothinus and Achilles both approved of this plan, and the latter was charged with carrying it out: he had need of haste, because Pompey's envoys had already begun to tamper with the legionaries of the Egyptian army, seeking to start a movement among them in favour of their former general. In order to gain time and remove the ambassadors

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out of the camp, the King was sent back to the capital, whence he sent answer to Pompey that he must come to Alexandria for the reply to his mission. In the meantime Achilles lost no time in obtaining confederates to help him in the execution of his plan; he chose a certain Septimius, a superior officer of the Roman legions, who had once served under Pompey as a military tribune, and another officer, Salvius, who also was well acquainted with the famous general. When Pompey's ambassadors had left the camp, Achilles, accompanied by Septimius and Salvius, stepped into a fishing-boat and pulled out to where the Roman vessels lay at anchor, under the pretext that Septimius wished to do homage to his old general. Thanks to his former acquaintance with Septimius, Pompey was persuaded to land, accompanied by only a few men, until such time as the King should authorise the disembarkment of the whole fleet. And since Pompey's galley could not enter the shallow waters near the coast, Septimius offered to take him off in the boat which had brought the assassins. Suspecting nothing, Pompey accepted the offer and descended to the fishing-boat in which Achilles and Salvius were already impatiently awaiting him. No sooner had they pushed off from the galley, than Salvius drew his sword and plunged it into Pompey from behind. Mortally wounded, Pompey covered his face with his robe and sank down in the bottom of the boat, where the murderers put an end to his life, in full view of his wife and his soldiers, who, helpless witnesses of

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the cowardly act, uttered loud cries of anger and of grief. The event took place on the 29th of September 706 (48 B.C.). Having achieved their task, Septimius and Salvius cast the body on the beach, at the feet of Pothinus, Theodotus, and others of the king's advisers. The head was severed from the body and immediately despatched to Alexandria, and presented to Ptolemy. The trunk was abandoned to the curious gaze of the people. Towards evening, when everyone else had gone, there remained by the side of the mutilated body a certain Philip, a freed slave of the hero who had just met so tragic a death. The fellow dragged the boat in which Pompey had been murdered to land, and knocked it to pieces, building a funeral pile on which he burnt the great man's body. The head was buried at Alexandria by Caesar's orders.

Pompey's ambassadors had no sooner reached the capital than they were cast into prison and their leader, Publius Lentulus, put to torture at the King's command. Ptolemy's advisers were very well satisfied with what they had done, for they thought they had once and for all removed all danger of a Roman occupation. How little they were justified in these surmises, we shall soon see.

CHAPTER V

JULIUS CÆSAR AT ALEXANDRIA

ONLY a few days had elapsed after the assassination of Pompey when Roman ships were again sighted off the coast of Alexandria. This time it was Julius Cæsar's fleet that drew near: ten galleys from Rhodes, and others from Asia, bringing 800 horse and two legions mustering some 3200 men.

Even before the fleet had cast anchor the Egyptian government sent Theodotus on an embassy to Cæsar, bearing with him the head of the murdered Pompey and his seal. The people of Alexandria deluded themselves into thinking that Cæsar only wished to assure himself of the death of his rival, and that, when he had done so, he would immediately retrace his steps. But they were destined to a cruel awakening. The great conqueror came neither as a friend nor as a guest, nor had he need of help; he was a victorious general, and it was in this capacity that he now set foot on African soil. It did not even occur to him to ask permission for his army to disembark; no sooner had his vessels cast anchor than he leaped ashore, and, preceded by his lictors armed with fasces, directed his steps to the royal palace. The crowd that filled the streets resented this display of authority, which seemed to them insulting to the royal dignity, and

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endeavoured to stop the advance of the procession. Reinforced by the troops of the garrison, who came running from all sides, the populace attacked the handful of men Cæsar had brought with him, and, in the short struggle in the streets of Alexandria, several of both parties were killed and wounded. Nevertheless Cæsar reached the royal palace in safety, and immediately took up his quarters in a part of the building.

Julius Cæsar was no longer young: he was fifty-two when he first set foot on African soil. Born in the year 654 of the Roman era, just a hundred years before Christ, he belonged to one of the most distinguished families of Rome. His education had been directed entirely by his mother, Aurelia, a woman of exalted character and austere morals. When barely sixteen, Cæsar lost his father, C. Julius Cæsar, and completed his studies under the direction of Marcus Antoninus Gniphō, the celebrated philosopher and rhetorician. One of the famous man's most conscientious biographers, the Emperor Napoleon III., has said of him: 'His education had made of Cæsar a distinguished man in the first place, and in the second a great man. To goodness of heart were united in him great powers of mind, an invincible courage, a winning eloquence, a wonderful memory, and a boundless generosity; he possessed besides one very rare quality, the capability of preserving a calm demeanour when in anger.' Suetonius has described his appearance for us as follows:—'He was said to have been a tall man of

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fair complexion, with well-moulded limbs, an open countenance, piercing black eyes, and a robust constitution. He attached great importance to the care of the body; not only did he trim and shave his beard, but he had a way of constantly pulling his fine locks of hair to the front, in order to conceal his baldness. . . . He was skilled in the handling of weapons and the management of a horse, and his powers of endurance were incredible. His disposition was very gentle, even when seeking vengeance against a foe.'

In short, both physically and morally Cæsar was an extremely remarkable man, and we can readily believe Plutarch when he says that 'his geniality, his politeness, the kindly welcome that he gave to all, quickly won for him the affection of the Roman People.'

He married, at the age of eighteen, Cornelia, daughter of Cornelius Cinna, who, in the course of a year, presented him with a daughter, Julia, who later became the wife of Pompey the Great. But Cæsar was not permitted long to enjoy his conjugal felicity, for his relationship to Marius, who was his uncle, and his friendship with Cinna, caused Sulla to look upon him with suspicion and he was obliged to fly from Rome. He contrived for a time to live in concealment in Italy; subsequently he betook himself to Asia, where he made a long stay at the court of Nicomedes, King of Bithynia. It was at this time that he took part in the war against Mithridates and especially distinguished himself at the siege of Mitylene. Later he joined the pro-

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consul P. Servilius, and assisted him in his war against the pirates (676).

His wife had died in his absence, and, on his return to Rome, he married a second time, choosing as his wife Pompey's niece, Pompeia. He now began to take a part in the public life of the state, and soon became famous in the forum alike as a shrewd politician and a brilliant orator. His second marriage was no happier than the first, and later, when his wife's intrigue with P. Claudius became known to all the world, he was obliged to divorce her (692). As he was unwilling to become involved in the party struggles by which Rome was divided and, it may be, on account of his unfortunate marriages, he again, in 681, betook himself to Bithynia. Nicomedes had died in the meantime, bequeathing his country to the Roman people, who had placed the government in the hands of Aurelius Cotta, Cæsar's great-uncle.

During his second stay in Bithynia his friends at Rome had secured his election as pontiff, in 680; and Cæsar returned to his native land in order to undertake his new duties. From this moment, one after another of the offices of the state fell to his lot in quick succession: military tribune in 684, questor in 686, curule edile in 689, *judex questionis* in 690, high priest in 691. He became praetor in 692 and, in the following year, proconsul of Spain. The brilliant victories that he gained in that country won him the title of 'Imperator,' and the Senate voted a holiday in his honour and accorded him the honour of a triumph. It was at this time

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that, marrying for the third time, he espoused Calpurnia, the weak and sickly daughter of Lucius Piso. Finally, in the next year, he was elected consul, thus having reached the pinnacle of the republican hierarchy; but he also experienced the two greatest sorrows of his life by the death of his mother Aurelia and his daughter Julia, to both of whom he was very warmly attached; they died within a short time of one another. A few months later, at the age of forty-two, invested with great power and confident in the future, he set out to effect the conquest of Gaul. The nine years that followed were the most brilliant of all his career; during this time, in fact, did he complete the conquest of Gaul and consolidate the dominion of Rome. He subdued the Batavians, conquered a part of Germany and Britain; then, returning to his own country, he drove his enemies out of Spain and Italy, and succeeded in annihilating Pompey and the patrician party, after a campaign fraught with wearying delay and unheard-of privations. At the same time this period was the saddest of his life. His marriage with Calpurnia had been nothing but an act of policy, in which feelings of affection played no part. It may safely be asserted that Cæsar never enjoyed the rest and peace of connubial felicity and family life: he was always on the march, and spent his time in giving battle to the enemy or in celebrating his well-earned triumphs. Women were ever ready to smile upon this conqueror of nations; and he accepted favours wherever they were offered,

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without being in any way seriously affected. We may be sure that the years had not come and gone without leaving their traces upon him: wearying labours and licentious pleasures without number had left their mark upon his face. The statues raised to him at this time of his life show us a man with drawn features and hollow cheeks.

In his commentaries, Cæsar pretends that it was the west winds that prevented him from leaving Alexandria; but, in the next sentence, he adds that the dispute between Cleopatra and Ptolemy seemed to him to warrant the intervention of the Roman people, or, in his capacity of consul, of his own. Yet Cæsar seems to have had a third motive for lingering in Egypt; and, although he makes no mention of it, his conduct from this time is a proof that this reason was to his mind by far the most important: he wanted money. Then, as now, and always, war was an extremely expensive thing, and Cæsar hoped to obtain from the Egyptians sums necessary for the continuance of his campaigns.

As a fact, west winds were not a sufficient reason for keeping him bound in Alexandria, for they had not prevented his envoys, among whom was Mithridates of Pergamus, from leaving the port, nor, some time later, did they prevent the ships of Asia-Minor from seeking reinforcements and provisions. As for the disputes between the children of Auletes for the throne of their father, it was for the Senate to decide them, not for him, a mere consul; and further, even if he had arrogated to himself the right to put the matter in

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order, he could very soon have settled it and returned to Rome. But Cæsar was determined that the Egyptians should pay the large sum he needed, and he remained at the capital meanwhile. The result of his stay was a struggle, rendered inevitable by his presence, which historians call the War of Alexandria. It was the most difficult of all Cæsar's campaigns, and it finally decided the fate of Egypt.

At Alexandria, neither the government nor the people could understand Cæsar's conduct. The court could hardly imagine that he would have dared to land with so few troops, when his rival lay dead and matters as important as they were urgent summoned him to Italy. Nor had they thought either to fly before the conqueror, or to close the harbour against his ships, or even, by means of the fleet anchored in the harbour and the town garrison, to prevent his landing: the road to the royal palace was not even barred against him. On the contrary, Pothinus and the other advisers of the king who had remained at the camp at Pelusium now hastened to Alexandria in order to meet the great man. When Cæsar came to take up his abode in one of the wings of the palace, he found gathered beneath its roof all the members of the royal family, with the exception of Cleopatra, and all the advisers of the court save Achilles, who was still at Pelusium. That the people of Alexandria were sluggish and lazy, cannot be denied, but Cæsar had imagined them to have far less spirit than they actually possessed, when, at the head

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of his little army, he made an entry into their great town. It was with a curiosity mingled with wonder that they watched Cæsar wandering through the streets without the least constraint, paying visits like any ordinary sight-seer to the Sema, the museum, and other places of interest. He demanded that the will of Ptolemy XII. should be shown to him, and, having carefully examined it, he called upon both Achilles and Cleopatra to disband their armies and submit their differences to him; at the same time he secretly commanded the young Queen to return to Alexandria.

Cleopatra found herself in a most embarrassing situation. If she failed to respond to Cæsar's invitation, she ran the risk of being treated as a rebel, and of having to combat not only the Egyptian troops, but the legions of Cæsar as well, thus entering upon a struggle in which there could be no possible chance of success. On the other hand if she were to disband her faithful Arabs, she bound herself hand and foot to the court party, whom she in no way trusted, for they had not ceased to conspire against her during her absence from Alexandria. In these circumstances she was not long in realising that Cæsar alone could help her out of her difficulties. She knew him well by reputation and counted alike on her beauty, her ready wit, and the charm of her conversation to win him to her side. She felt confident that she had but to come into the presence of the hero, and he would be unable to resist her. She therefore decided to throw herself at his feet, in the hope that by so doing she

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would gain her end and be enabled to realise her ambitions. This princess, spoiled by her parents as she had been, and persecuted by her brothers, who in the end had driven her out of the country, was now about to act in exactly the same way as an elegant young woman of our own day acts when, desirous of shining in the world, she marries a man whom she does not love, for the sake of his fortune. Cleopatra had at least the excuse that he to whom she was about to give herself was *Cæsar*. And, besides, did not many of the young girls of that time, and even virtuous Roman matrons, act under the influence of similar motives? Was not Cæsar's daughter, Julia, married to Pompey, a man much older than her own father? Had not the austere stoic, Cato, given his daughter to old Bibulus, and had he not delivered over his wife Marcia to the rich Hortensius, one of his own friends, and taken her back again after his death, when she inherited the wealth of her paramour? It is true that this is not quite the same as abandoning oneself to a man without any thought of marriage, but, after all, what value could the institution of marriage have had in the eyes of Cleopatra? In Egypt, as throughout the East, marriage for the women meant only slavery, and a married woman was not entitled to any privileges, nor had she any respect shown to her. What could have been the nature of the marriage tie that bound the queen to her brother, Ptolemy XIII? Her husband had dismissed her from his presence and completely and effectively severed their union. Moreover, at Rome

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also, marriages were made and unmade with or without motive; the desire of the husband was law, no matter how humble his position in the state. Cleopatra knew this, and she must certainly have thought that love was a far stronger tie than any marriage, and that if Cæsar were to fall in love with her, she would soon become mistress of the Roman people, of whom he was already absolute master. And what was more, the Dictator had no children; the marriage contracted with his fourth wife, Calpurnia, had been a cold and barren union of policy, while the Queen of Egypt felt herself fully capable of becoming the mother of heroes. She felt certain that she would succeed in winning Cæsar's love and that at no very distant time.

Without saying a word to her officers, and accompanied only by one of her faithful friends, Apollodorus of Sicily, Cleopatra left her camp; she journeyed on foot as far as the sea-coast, and then set sail in a little boat and arrived at the royal palace of Alexandria in the evening of the following day. With her thorough knowledge of the palace, it would certainly not have been difficult for her to have gained admission, or even an audience with Cæsar, by bribing the sentinels posted at his quarters. But Cleopatra wished her coming to be known to no one, and, to succeed in her intention, she hid herself in a bale of goods which Apollodorus tied round with a rope, and was thus carried in at the gates of the palace to Cæsar. Once inside, Cleopatra extricated herself from

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her wraps and entered the room of the conqueror alone.

It is probable that Cæsar had already heard reports of Cleopatra's incomparable beauty; but he must nevertheless have been filled with wonder and admiration upon finding himself suddenly in the presence of the Aphrodite of the Nile.

A modern writer, Adolphe Stahr, describes the interview in the following terms:—'Cæsar was a great favourite with the fair sex, and Dion Cassius reports how, when in camp, he enjoyed all who came his way. Now we see him with the crown of her sex, with such a creature as he had never before even dreamed of; and the most beautiful of women stood in the presence of the most remarkable man of the century. And this woman, in all the radiance of early youth, came to ask his aid and protection. Is it to be wondered at that the conqueror of half the world was incapable of resisting the Queen, as, beautiful in her grief and holding her head proudly erect, she advanced towards him, and he caught the accents of the soft caressing voice which cast an irresistible spell on all who heard it?'

Cæsar kept Cleopatra by his side, and she stayed with him throughout the war, sharing all his troubles and tribulations.

Cæsar's decision it is easy to foretell: he confirmed the will of Auletes and ordered Cleopatra and Ptolemy Dionysus to reign together and maintain friendly relations with one another; then he summoned the young King to his presence and

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endeavoured to reconcile him with his sister. Dionysus and his advisers realised that Cleopatra had been cleverer than they; and, in their impotent rage, they knew not what course to adopt. The King went out into the street and, throwing down the crown he wore, cried out at the top of his voice that he had been betrayed and his throne torn from him. Cæsar sent his soldiers to drag him back into his apartment by force; but the people were beginning to bestir themselves and, urged on by the King's advisers and a few of the members of the Philhellenic party, they ran to arms and made as though they would attack the palace. But Cæsar, recognising the gravity of the situation, taking the King and Queen with him, went out on to a balcony and harangued the mob. He began by recommending them to control themselves, assuring them that he was their friend. He then went on to say that his actions had been guided by his desire to carry out the last wishes of Auletes, avoid civil war, and to reconcile brother and sister. As soon as peace was partially restored, he betook himself to the gymnasium in company with Ptolemy and Cleopatra: there he caused the will of the late sovereign to be read aloud, and he solemnly declared that, by virtue of what was contained therein, Dionysus and his sister must reign together as husband and wife, according to the custom of the country. But he hastened to add that, so long as the sovereigns were minors, they were under the guardianship of the Roman people, and that he himself, acting in the name of the Republic, would

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take all the measures that the situation rendered necessary. He also announced that the isle of Cyprus had been handed over to the two other children of Auletes, who would thenceforth reign there together.

Cæsar's conduct calmed the people for some time, at anyrate outwardly. The King even made some pretence of acceding to the views of the Dictator, and desired to celebrate the reconciliation by a great public feast. But there was no sincerity on either side. Cæsar only wanted to gain time, until the reinforcements he was expecting arrived, when he counted on exacting the sum he was so greatly in need of and enforcing his demands by the presence of troops. The King, on the other hand, hoped that Cæsar would now return to Italy and that he might profit by his absence to restore the old order of things. Pothinus even went so far as to urge him to depart in order to see to his important affairs at Rome, assuring him that on his return the money would be ready for him; but Cæsar told him drily that he had no need of Egyptian counsellors.

Seeing that matters were not shaping themselves as they wished, the Egyptian government concluded that their best course would be to rid themselves of Cæsar, but they were uncertain how to proceed; they finally decided to poison him during the great feast given on the occasion of Cleopatra's reconciliation with Ptolemy. But their plan was not destined to succeed, for Cæsar's faithful barber heard of it and hastened to warn his master. In

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the meantime Cæsar continued to demand the payment of the money he needed, and Pothinus got together all the crown jewels and openly stripped the temples of their ornaments, telling the people that it was done to satisfy Cæsar's insatiable cupidity. He also spread the report that the Dictator's decision was nothing but a trick, and that in reality he meant to deprive Ptolemy of his throne. At the same time, he implored Achilles to lose no time, but to come to Alexandria with his army as speedily as he could and attack Cæsar.

The topographical conditions peculiar to the country had up to then prevented the Egyptians from taking action against Cæsar. The waters of the Nile still covered the lower-lying districts and the Delta was entirely submerged, with the result that communication with the capital could only take place by sea. Moreover, Cleopatra's army had not dispersed, even after the Queen's departure: the Arab chiefs remained encamped before Pelusium and Achilles' army was held there, incapable of moving. But towards the end of the month of October the situation changed. As winter was approaching, the Arabs wished to draw nearer to the tribes that supplied them with provisions, and pitched their tents on the borders of the Arotus. The waters of the Nile were beginning to go down and the river would soon re-enter its banks and assume its normal course. Seeing that he had nothing to fear from the Arabs, at any rate for the moment, and having assured himself that the roads of the Delta were passable once more, Achilles

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made ready to start in the beginning of January 707 (or about the middle of November of the year 48 B.C.); and, leaving but a very small garrison at Pelusium, he directed his steps towards Alexandria. The movement was executed with such rapidity that Cæsar scarcely had time to concentrate his forces round the royal palace, where a defence could most easily be organised. Wishing to gain time, he despatched to Achilles two of the King's counsellors, Dioscorides and Serapio, who commanded the Egyptian fleet, to say that it was Ptolemy's desire that matters should be brought to an amicable conclusion. But Achilles did not believe the speeches of the envoys, and, to prevent dissension in the ranks of his army, he did not allow them to mix with the soldiers, and gave orders for their assassination. Dioscorides perished on the spot, but Serapio, who had been struck down and left for dead, was found by his people, who took him and carefully dressed his wounds, so that in time he recovered. We hear of him later in the service of Cleopatra.

From this moment, Cæsar seized the King's person and virtually held him prisoner, while the court was closely watched by men in whom he had the utmost confidence.

The troops of Achilles occupied the whole of the town, with the exception of a part of the Bruchium and the approaches to the palace, where Cæsar had massed his soldiers. No sooner had he reached Alexandria, than Achilles determined to surprise Cæsar by an attack on all sides: his own troops

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attacked both by land and sea that part of the palace where the Roman soldiers were stationed, but the legionaries drove them back. The assault on the barricades of the Bruchium occupied by Cæsar met with no better success. In the same way, the sea-fight that took place in the great harbour brought no advantage to the Egyptians, for, although all Cæsar's ships were destroyed, their own fleet was likewise entirely burnt out. Cæsar had realised, moreover, that with so few men he could not hope to hold so vast a country, so he set fire to his galleys and immediately descended upon the island of Pharos. The burning ships, driven against the quays of the town by a favourable wind, set fire to the buildings by the water's edge, and as, in the midst of the struggle, no one thought of stamping out the conflagration, the greater part of the Bruchium, situated near the harbour, fell a prey to the flames. The palace was saved; but the arsenal, the royal granaries, the museum, and the celebrated library were burnt to the ground. The struggle cost Cæsar thirty ships, as against the fifty-two that the Egyptians left in the waters of the harbour; but the loss was more than compensated for by the occupation of Pharos, which rendered the Romans masters of the entrance to the harbour, and considerably strengthened their position.

The few days' respite that followed this attack was employed by both armies in making preparations. Cæsar now saw that although he had succeeded in repelling the Egyptian army, it was by

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no means so negligible a quantity as he had supposed, and that all his powers and presence of mind would be needed to prevent a defeat. Achilles, on his side, realised that it would be no easy task to vanquish Cæsar, and that he must make preparations for a prolonged siege. Thus the two combatants confined themselves to daily skirmishes in the streets of the town, and refrained for some considerable time from definitely giving battle.

Achilles called all the available population of Alexandria to arms, reorganised the fleet, and prepared himself generally for a siege. Cæsar raised entrenchments wherever it was possible and fortified that part of the town where he lay: the buildings that had been burnt in the great battle furnished him with ample material.

During all this time Cleopatra remained by Cæsar's side, giving him not only her love, but also the benefit of her advice. As for the other members of the royal family, they acted as if they felt no enmity towards Cæsar, and, having become reconciled to their sister, were submitting to their fate with resignation. Their apparently peaceful attitude seems to have had the effect of lessening the vigilance of the guards surrounding their persons, for one of the royal prisoners, Arsinoë, managed to escape with one of her eunuchs, a certain Ganymede, and reach the camp of Achilles. The people received her with shouts of joy and proclaimed the brave young woman Queen of Egypt, and Arsinoë immediately took over the command

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of the newly recruited troops. Achilles yielded it to her with pleasure, only keeping under his direct command the Roman legions that remained to him.

Arsinoë's presence brought no happiness to the Egyptians; on the contrary, it cost them two of their wisest counsellors. The flight of the princess had aroused Cæsar's suspicions against Pothinus, and acting on information probably furnished by Cleopatra, he proceeded to inquire into the matter more minutely. The cunning eunuch was submitted to a formal interrogation, in which his complicity with Achilles was proved, and he was beheaded. At the same time, a serious disturbance broke out in the Egyptian camp, where the princess was doing her utmost to deprive Achilles of his superior command. The quarrel became in a very short time so bitter that Arsinoë caused Achilles, the best and bravest of her generals, to be assassinated by Ganymede. She herself then took over the sole direction of the army, and entrusted Ganymede with the command of the troops. The latter, seeing that the numerous attacks that had been made on Cæsar had availed nothing, thought that he might perhaps reduce him by thirst; and as Alexandria had no wells wherewith the Roman soldiers might be supplied with water, Ganymede put his plan into execution by causing some of the conduits to be destroyed, and the water in the others poisoned. Cæsar, who was bravely defending himself in the heart of the great city, although he lacked the most necessary provisions and most indispensable materials for war, was taken by surprise by these

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tactics of the enemy; his situation was indeed extremely precarious, for it was mid-winter, and the Romans, cut off from all possibility of communication, could have but little hope of success. A part of the troops, who were already too few in number for a proper maintenance of defence, had now to be employed in digging wells; and it was with great satisfaction that they at length found, on a memorable evening, a spring that yielded water as pure and cool as it was abundant.

It was about this time—the middle of January, in the year 47 B.C.—that Cæsar received his first reinforcements from without; he heard that Domitius Calvinus had arrived, and lay off the coast of Africa with the thirty-seventh legion, which had once formed part of Pompey's troops, and was abundantly provided with provisions and materials of war. But as the east winds prevented his vessels from entering the harbour, Cæsar determined to go himself and join them. The Egyptians, perceiving this, immediately made a combined attack on him with all their forces, and Cæsar was so hard pressed that he only saved himself by leaping into the sea and swimming out to the Roman ships. He nevertheless succeeded in bringing into the town both the soldiers and the supplies with which they were equipped. But, in the meantime, the Egyptians had concentrated round the town and occupied the harbour of Alexandria with their fleet, which was for a second time the scene of a naval battle. It was viewed from the tops of their houses by the entire population, confident that the victory would

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be with the Egyptians. Cæsar's bravest admiral, Euphanor, perished in the fight, and the troops of Arsinoë succeeded in retaking the island of Pharos, greatly to the delight of the inhabitants of that part of the town.

All now felt sure of success, and, if anyone had any apprehensions at all, it was not concerning the issue of the war, but solely as to the fate of Ptolemy, who, as Cæsar's prisoner, was liable to be put to death at any moment. The Egyptians therefore exerted themselves to the utmost to deliver their sovereign, and were anxious to defer the decisive engagement until later. As, meanwhile, they had succeeded in driving back a party of Romans into the town, Cæsar thought fit to enter into negotiations with Arsinoë in order to gain time, and one day when the crowd was seething round the palace in greater numbers than usual, he compelled the King to go out on the balcony and calm the excited populace. And yet, at the same time, the Egyptians sent messengers to Cæsar, to assure him that the war was in no way a struggle between Hellenism and the people of Alexandria, but simply the consequence of the personal ambition of Arsinoë and of Ganymede. If therefore, added they, the King were to appear before the army and spontaneously declare that he did not wish the war to continue, the hostilities would immediately cease. As for Ptolemy, he pretended, before Cæsar, to be completely reconciled with his sister and quite to have accepted the idea of the Roman protectorate. He swore to be faithful, and, with tears in his eyes,

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offered to intervene on behalf of peace: nothing short of his presence, said he, would suffice to allay the fratricidal strife and calm the hatred that had arisen on either side. The clever child was such an adept in the art of hypocrisy that the old Roman soldier, completely trusting in his good intentions, allowed him to join Arsinoë in her camp.

The people of Alexandria received their sovereign with shouts of gladness, and the army gave him a most enthusiastic reception. Ptolemy thought no longer of fulfilling the promise he had made to Cæsar; on the contrary, this prince of fifteen years took the command of the troops into his own hands. His presence encouraged the Egyptians still further in their hopes, and victory seemed now more certain than ever. Cæsar's position, on the other hand, appeared to be quite untenable when, about the beginning of spring, it was announced that Mithridates and Antipater were hastening with all speed from Syria to the help of Cæsar.

As we saw above, Cæsar had sent to Mithridates for reinforcements, immediately on his arrival at Alexandria. The latter had betaken himself first into Asia-Minor, and then to Judea, and had enrolled a small army which he intended to lead by land to Alexandria; as his troops could not hope to take Pelusium, however, he contented himself with remaining encamped in the neighbourhood of Ascalon, and awaiting events. Thereupon Antipater, who, after the death of Pompey, had embraced Cæsar's cause, seized this occasion to prove to him how great were his military capacities and

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how true his devotion. Having succeeded, thanks to his eloquence, in persuading the lesser princes of Syria and Asia-Minor, as well as the Arabs encamped along the banks of the Arotus, to join forces with Mithridates and to proceed together to the help of Cæsar and Cleopatra, he himself joined Mithridates with his 3000 Jews, and the latter, thus opportunely reinforced, invested Pelusium, and the town capitulated after a short resistance.

The news of the approach of reinforcements reached the rival camps at about the same moment. As soon as Cæsar heard that his allies were drawing near, he decided to go and meet them in person; but, as the Egyptian fleet opposed his vessels, when they were about to get under weigh, another great battle took place at the entrance to the harbour, in which the Romans were again repulsed. Ptolemy, thinking that Mithridates had but a very small army under his command, sent out only a contingent of Jews and the troops of Memphis to meet him, confident that they would be able to arrest his march; at the same time, the Jewish tribes of the Delta took up arms against the invader. But here Antipater's great talent for diplomacy came to the help of the Romans: with well-chosen and persuasive words he succeeded in drawing the men sent out by Ptolemy away from their master, so that they let Mithridates pass by with his troops, and even supplied them with provisions.

When the King heard of the defection of his soldiers, he immediately sent an army, under the

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command of Dioscorides, to stop Mithridates, and when, shortly after, it was reported to him that the enemy had taken up their position at a place called the *castra Judeorum*, after having defeated the troops under Dioscorides, he took the greater part of his forces and marched out against Mithridates in person. The royal army was embarked on the ships of the Nile and quickly conveyed to the field of battle. But Cæsar also had cognisance of what was happening: he hastily left his quarters, and, taking the shortest route across the Delta, he sped to the coast and sought to effect a junction with Mithridates. Thus it happened that Ptolemy suddenly found himself face to face with Cæsar, before he had had time to attack Mithridates. The two camps were only separated from one another by an arm of the Nile; upon Cæsar's attempting to cross the river, which was, at the time, very low, the battle began, on the 27th of March. Cæsar's German horse swam across the Nile and covered the approach of the legions, who immediately made an attack on the Egyptian camp, and, in spite of a desperate resistance on the part of the royal troops, succeeded in capturing it. Ptolemy's army, composed for the most part of Greek mercenaries, was incapable of withstanding the onslaught of the Romans and scattered in all directions in great disorder. The majority of the fugitives took the road to Memphis, or threw themselves into the boats of the Nile fleet. The King himself took refuge in one of these vessels; but so many others had done the same that the overburdened boat soon sank and the

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young prince met his death in the waters of the river. His body, clad in a cuirass of gold, was only found after a prolonged search in the muddy bottom of the Nile.

The battle of the Delta put an end to the war: no one thought of making any further resistance, and the Egyptian legions went over to the conqueror. With the exception of the valorous Arsinoë, all the abettors of the war against Cæsar and those principally responsible for the rising against Cleopatra sought safety in rapid flight. Theodotus took refuge in Asia-Minor; and if the Hellenic party, now definitely overthrown, did not entirely lose all hopes of happier days, it was only because they were now nursed on illusions which were never destined to be realised. At the head of his cavalry, Cæsar re-entered Alexandria, passing through the suburbs that, but a few days before, had been occupied by the troops of Ptolemy. The populace, preceded by the idols of their temples, came forth in procession to meet the conqueror and beg for mercy. Cæsar was not by nature vindictive, and seldom tarnished his glory by acts of cruelty. At the same time, lest the presence of Arsinoë might provoke fresh disturbances in a town inhabited by a people on whom little reliance could be placed, he sent her a prisoner to Rome, where, later, she figured in the triumph of her vanquisher.

Egypt was conquered, Alexandria had laid down its arms, the whole country lay at Cæsar's feet: there was not a man but would have considered his slightest wish a command. The fate of the

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empire of the Lagidæ hung on his will alone, and that empire was ready to become a Roman province such as no one could find reason to censure. But Cæsar did not will it so, for he thought that Rome would reap a greater advantage if the country remained in the hands of its own rulers, under the protection of the Roman legions: at least, so we are told by Hirtius, one of his most famous generals, who was at Alexandria at that time. It is, however, not unlikely that the love and gratitude felt by the Roman hero towards Cleopatra may to some extent have influenced his decision, and, moreover, Cæsar was too chivalrous and too generous to oust from the throne a woman who had not only given him her affection, but remained by his side when fortune was going against him. He therefore consolidated the sovereignty of Cleopatra and, always anxious to safeguard appearances by executing the last wishes of Auletes, he gave her for her consort and her spouse the youngest of the late king's sons, Ptolemy XIV. Dionysus, a child of twelve years of age.

Having in this way fulfilled his task in Egypt and received from the royal treasury the sum promised long ago by Auletes, Cæsar was in a position to return to Rome, leaving behind him a peaceful and submissive country. The weather promised fair and the winds were favourable. Yet Cæsar lingered, for he could not tear himself away from Cleopatra. Stahr tells us that 'this man of fifty-two was captivated by the seductive Egyptian, to whom not one of the Roman ladies who had in

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earlier days bestowed their favours upon Cæsar could in any way be compared, either for beauty or wit.' In fact, no other reason is forthcoming to explain his conduct, beyond that of the charms and fascinations of Cleopatra, which she exercised with all her skill to induce him to remain by her side.

The ruins caused by the war still lay scattered about the town, and no one had yet thought of attempting to clear them away, when the festivities given in Cæsar's honour were inaugurated. The magnificence and pomp displayed surpassed Cæsar's fondest dreams of luxurious entertainment. The Queen wished thereby to prove to her lover that Alexandria lent itself far more than Rome to the pleasures derived from power and wealth. But wishing also to show him her kingdom, the land of Egypt that was at once so beautiful and so enchanting, she took him up the Nile in a splendid *thalamego* (or nuptial galley), magnificently decorated, accompanied by 400 other vessels, as far as the first cataract. They were received with a great show of ceremony wherever they went, and, on their return to Alexandria, met with a most enthusiastic reception. Thus did Cæsar linger in Egypt; and as he wished in some way to justify his prolonged stay in a land where nothing remained for him to do, he built, at the entrance to the town, a temple, in which he interred the head of the murdered Pompey. Then, with the assistance of Cleopatra, he drew up plans and projects for the reconstruction of

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the ruined quarters; at the same time he paid constant visits to the museum, and the inventive spirit of the Queen was ever finding new reasons for deferring his departure and new pleasures to induce him to remain. At length summer arrived, and the rising under Pharnaces broke out in Asia-Minor. Cæsar's presence in Syria grew indispensable, and he was obliged to make preparations for his departure. Although Cleopatra was very loath to part with him, she did not insist upon his staying: she already felt the pledge of Cæsar's love stirring within her womb, and knew that their separation could not be of long duration. The great conqueror left Alexandria on the last day of May, taking with him only the veterans of the sixth legion; the other troops remained behind, in Egypt. These forces comprised the veterans he had himself brought with him from Achaia, the thirty-seventh legion sent from Rhodes by Domitius Calvinus, the thirty-first legion that had come by land from Syria, and, finally, the two legions that Gabinius had originally left in Egypt, and the 800 German horse that had come with Cæsar's fleet. He entrusted this army to Rufus, one of his most faithful and trustworthy officers, and, leaving Cleopatra under his protection, Cæsar left Egypt towards the end of the summer and journeyed with all haste to Syria.

After his departure, the Queen entirely changed her behaviour. Since she now felt sure of her power and had taken up her residence at her capital,

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she desired to win the affection of her people and employed, to gain her ends, all the wisdom, restraint, and kindness of which she was capable. She chose Apollodorus for her treasurer-general, restored order to the public finances, and put an end, for the time, to all banquets and feasts. Workmen were employed to reconstruct the buildings destroyed during the war, to restore the museum and the harbour. At the same time, the trade of Alexandria thrived and very soon assumed the importance for which in earlier days it had been famous. The Queen entrusted the command of the fleet to Serapio, now healed of his wounds, who repaired the damaged ships and built several new ones. Cleopatra, young as she was, played her part with due seriousness, and took a very real share in the direction of the affairs of state; in addition, she was present at the legal debates that took place in the gymnasium and herself judged, in public, all the more important cases. And, finally, she drew up the plans of all the building that went on in the town and supervised it with great care and attention to detail.

In her capacity as high priestess, she presided in person over the ceremonies in the temple of Isis: the mystic charm of these functions added to her beauty and shrouded her in a supernatural atmosphere in the eyes of her people, who could see her daily performing religious sacrifices in the great temple.

In this mighty edifice, which the first of the Lagidæ had reared in the centre of the Bruchium, a huge statue of Isis, painted in many striking

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colours, stood, clad in gorgeous golden drapery and studded with jewels; the head, neck, and hands of the goddess were loaded with precious stones of wonderful brilliance; her right hand held the *sistrum* and her left the winged cross. From an altar of white marble, placed in front of the statue, rose a sparkling flame, amid a cloud of scented fumes. On one side of the sacred table stood the god Anubis, with the head of a jackal, on the other the god Apis, with the head of a bull. A group of priests, with shorn heads, robed in immaculate garments, chanted hymns to a flute accompaniment in slow and mournful strain: they maintained the sacred fire with pious care and brought the objects for the sacrifice. Upon the flagstones of the temple, in front of the altar, were engraved the twelve signs of the zodiac in a circle surrounded with mystic signs. No one might set foot within this circle, were he king or high priest himself. All around, beneath the massive pillars, and stretching as far as the walls of the temple, the people, awed and subdued in the presence of such awful mystery, lay prostrate, silent and fearful. Suddenly the human mass began to move: the Queen's chair stood at the door of the temple. The people ranged themselves respectfully on either side of the procession that was advancing with slow majestic step. A long purple mantle hung from the shoulders of Cleopatra; her neck, breast, arms and feet were bare, but on them sparkled precious gems, that alone were worth whole kingdoms; on her head rested a golden crown fashioned to represent a

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water-lily, and from the calyx of the flowers a serpent, studded with magnificent stones, reared its head. The tight-fitting *calasiris*, with its scales of gold, adorned the slim figure of the Queen, displaying its graceful curves with every movement that she took. Her whole person was, as it were, the very incarnation of beauty, youth, and grace. Cleopatra stepped over the sacred circle, while trumpets and timbrels sounded a solemn air; then, folding her arms across her breast, she prostrated herself at the feet of the goddess, while the priests chanted a grave melopœia and sprinkled her with costly perfume. Then she rose slowly to her feet and, taking the objects destined for the sacrifice, consecrated them to the goddess, beseeching her, in a loud voice, to hear her. The music began again; the chanting of hymns was mingled with the sounds of the instruments, and the Queen, ascending the steps of the altar, placed the offerings upon the sacred fire. At this moment silence was restored, and all waited reverently for the flames to do their work, while Cleopatra kept a careful watch upon the signs appearing in the fire and drew from them omens concerning the fate of the empire. When the sacrifice was consummated, the trumpets rang out afresh, and the Queen, turning towards the people, explained to them the oracle; then, raising her arms to heaven, she asked a blessing for her country and her people. With slow, majestic step she then quitted the temple, leaving by the door which lay behind the statue of the goddess.

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In this way passed the summer, autumn, and part of the winter. The rainy season was not over before the Queen gave birth to a son, to whom she gave the name Cæsarion, with Cæsar's formal consent. The event was hailed with joy not by Cleopatra alone, but by the whole town. Great festivities were organised in honour of the new-born child, of whom it was said later by many Greek historians that he had both the figure and the gait of his father.

In the meantime Cæsar had effected the conquest of Syria with extraordinary rapidity; it was with reference to this campaign that he used the famous words: 'Veni, vidi, vici.' Thence he returned to Rome and restored order to the capital; and then, in the spring of the year 46, he set sail for Africa, where he defeated Sextus Pompey and King Juba, whose son he brought back with him to Rome. During all this time Cleopatra was in constant communication with Cæsar, who, at the end of the African campaign, invited her to follow him to Rome. The great general apparently wished the Queen of Egypt to be present at his triumph and the festivities given in his honour. Cleopatra naturally hastened to carry out his wishes and, towards the end of the summer, hardly a year since Cæsar had left Alexandria, set sail for Italy with her husband Ptolemy Dionysus, her son Cæsarion, several of her advisers, and many of the learned men of Alexandria, among them Sosigenes. Her suite comprised a whole army of court functionaries and servants,

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and a fleet of ships escorted the royal galley. Her father, Ptolemy Auletes, had once come to Rome, poor and needy and on foot, to implore aid of the Republic; Cleopatra, his daughter, appeared there in all the pomp and dignity of a queen, dazzling all not by her charms alone, but also by the striking display of her sovereignty.

CHAPTER VI

CLEOPATRA AT ROME

WHEN he returned from his campaign in Africa, Cæsar was already at the summit of his power. The news of his rapid and decisive victories over Cato, Scipio, and Juba had preceded him. The Senate voted him everything that the most fertile imagination could conceive in the way of honours and flattery; and the people, who worshipped him as a god, abdicated several of their rights in favour of their favourite general. For a period of forty days thanks were offered to every one of the gods in turn; for his triumph, white horses were requisitioned, and he was allowed as many lictors as he pleased; he was elected censor for three years and dictator for ten; in the Senate a curule chair was erected for him and his vote preponderated in all deliberations; in addition to this, a place of honour was reserved for him at the circus and he had the right to give the signal for the performance to begin. And, as though these honours were not in themselves sufficient, he was accorded the privilege of naming men of his own choice to all those public offices which were usually filled by election, and of settling the annual recruiting of the soldiers, and even the right to dispose of the receipts and expenses of the treasury

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as he wished. It was further decided to place his triumphal chariot in the Capitol, opposite the statue of Jupiter, and to erect a bronze statue to the popular hero, the base of which should be in the shape of a sphere, and bear the inscription: 'Demi-god'; and finally, to engrave his name upon the front of the Capitol.

Rome was now, in fact, witnessing the establishment of an absolute monarchy, for Cæsar's power extended throughout the empire; and if the Dictator refused the outward sign of kingship, the diadem, when it was offered him, his action can only be attributed to that moderation which was the mark of his character, and which urged him, in spite of all his ambition, never to risk the substance for the form. But, with the exception of this detail, he exacted all the honours due to a king and the investment of every dignity authorised by the traditions of the Republic. He omitted no single one of his triumphs; having the right to four, he celebrated them all, one after the other.

Cæsar returned to Italy on the 14th of June, of the year 46 B.C., and the preparations for the festivities organised in his honour had just been completed, when Cleopatra arrived at Rome. Cæsar, who had been anxiously awaiting her, installed her and her suite in a villa belonging to him across the Tiber. It was, no doubt, one of the largest and most magnificent houses of the Eternal City, but, for all that, it was no more than the house of a private citizen compared with the royal palace at Alexandria, either

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in size, or convenience, or luxuriousness. But Cleopatra was none the less comfortable for that reason, and took care to conform as far as was possible to the habits and customs of the Romans.

The whole of the royal family of Egypt—all the living members of the dynasty of the Lagids—was thus congregated at Rome. The weak and ailing King Ptolemy XIV. Dionysus, and Cæsarion, had come with Cleopatra, while Arsinoë, brought thither a year ago, was awaiting in prison the fate of all captives—to be dragged ignominiously behind the chariot of her triumphant vanquisher and then tortured to death.

Cleopatra had hardly settled in her new residence, before the festivities in Cæsar's honour began. First was celebrated the triumph for the campaign against the Gauls, and the people of Rome watched the noble Vercingetorix following on foot in the procession of the conqueror, by whom he had been so utterly defeated; a few days later came the second triumph, in which the unfortunate Arsinoë trod the same path, loaded with heavy chains; the third triumph exhibited Pharnaces to the gaze of the citizens of the Republic, and, in the fourth, was seen the son of King Juba. Of all the captives, Arsinoë alone aroused the compassion of the Roman people, accustomed though they were to such scenes. Thanks, too, to the intervention of her sister, Cleopatra, the princess was even set at liberty, while the other prisoners, with the exception of young Juba, were handed over to the

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executioner after they had, in their shameful march through the streets of Rome, borne witness to the glory of the great Cæsar. Then the Dictator, amid great rejoicings, opened the public market that bears his name, as well as a new temple to Venus, in which, later, he placed a portrait of Cleopatra side by side with the statue of the goddess. He then gave a great feast to all the people, distributed among his soldiers lands in the provinces that had fallen into his hands, and shared among Rome's 150,000 citizens the greater part of the booty won during his campaigns. As was natural, the Queen of Egypt was present at all these festivities, and took part in the various ceremonies.

The official reason for Cleopatra's journey to Rome was that she desired the Senate to bestow upon her the title of *socius reipublicæ*; but her amour with Cæsar was known to all the world, since, indeed, neither hesitated from publicly avowing it. The Queen had not long to wait before her wish was granted: she obtained the title of *socius*, without being compelled, as her father in his time had been, either to flatter or to bribe the Senators. When once the matter was settled, Cleopatra's social position was recognised and the dignity worthy of her rank assured her, and from that time the Queen kept open house at Rome, being careful, however, not to indulge in too great a show of luxury nor to behave in a manner that might be considered eccentric. The chief man of her court was the same Ammonius who had been sent as ambassador to Rome by her father, Auletes;

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it was he who attended to all affairs of state, and, with the help of the Roman banker, Atticus, provided for the Queen's expenses. Thanks to the order that reigned in her household, which, though magnificent, was never regal, Cleopatra was enabled to put aside large sums of money, the greater number of which were employed upon the completion of the important public works begun by her in her kingdom, principally at Alexandria. As an instance, one among a hundred that could be mentioned, the boring of a canal between the Nile and the Red Sea was started, but it had later to be abandoned.

Theopompus, a member of the Egyptian court, soon became Cæsar's favourite, and Sosigenes, though at this time engaged upon the direction of the studies of the young Ptolemy, was asked by the Dictator to settle several matters of scientific interest, among which may be mentioned the Roman calendar, which Cæsar, by the work of Sosigenes, was thus enabled to reform. The calendar was, indeed, in a state of such disorder, occasioned by the abuses of the priests in the matter of intercalations, that the festival of the harvest no longer fell in the summer, nor that connected with the grape-gathering in the autumn. In the following year Cæsar turned his attention to the course of the sun, and apportioned to it a period of 365 days—as in Egypt—suppressing the intercalary month, and adding a day to every fourth year; then, so that the civil year might be made to coincide with the astronomical year, he added sixty-seven days to the year 708, which should have ended on the 1st

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of November 46 B.C., and thus it came to pass that the first day of the year 700 coincided exactly with the beginning of the astronomical year, 45 B.C. While these reforms were being carried out, the Senate decided that the seventh month of the year, which fell during the celebration of Cæsar's triumphs, should thenceforward bear the name of the hero, and be called 'Julius' (July).

Roman society, and particularly the female element of that society, had very little sympathy with Cleopatra. Her passionate nature, her simple manners, her whole conception of life were so entirely different from the manners of the Roman matrons, with their comparatively humble upbringing and their uneventful lives, that the Queen of Egypt, in spite of all her efforts to conform to their way of living, never succeeded in doing so, and remained a stranger in Rome to the end. Moreover, the society of the Eternal City could never understand that Cleopatra preserved her dignity as a queen, in spite of all her kindness and affability. Every word she spoke, every gesture that she made, were commented upon and severely criticised; and, in truth, Cleopatra must have been a model of virtue to have escaped from the strictures of this society and this community of gossips, animated by hostile feelings as they were, and many of whom were ready to hand down to posterity all that they thought blameworthy in her behaviour. The only thing for which they could reproach her was the fact that she sought to become Cæsar's wife. But this by itself was enough to fill the heart of every

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man and woman in Rome with jealousy and hatred. Some were angry at what they considered to be an overweening presumption, while others sought to insinuate themselves into her good graces, and lavished upon her the most fulsome of flattery.

For the rest, Cæsar had at that time none but friends at Rome, all his adversaries having been crushed and scattered, and the most distinguished among them having found refuge in Spain. Cleopatra met with several old friends: the historian, Hirtius, whom she had seen at Alexandria with Cæsar, and who had been one of his ablest generals, and, later, was elected consul; Gabinius, who had, by an exile of several years, atoned for the help once given to Auletes, and whom the Dictator now permitted to return to Rome; and finally, the *præfectus equitum*, Mark Antony, who had added considerably to his glorious achievements since the day on which he left Alexandria, and who was now, after Cæsar, the most powerful and most popular man at Rome. Antony professed a deep and sincere admiration for the hero, and it was for this reason that, on quitting Egypt, he had forthwith betaken himself to Gaul, in order that he might serve under Cæsar's orders. The latter was not slow to recognise that Antony possessed the marks of a first-rate general, nor to appreciate his reckless courage, his sure eye, and his fidelity, which had been tried again and again, and he entrusted to him the command of an armed body of men and charged him besides with many important political missions. Thus, during the last year of the cam-

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paigned against the Gauls, since Cæsar could not himself go to Rome, he had procured Antony's election as tribune of the people in order that he might defend his interests with the Senate, at that time ill-disposed towards him, and Mark Antony fully justified the confidence of his chief, carrying out his mission with as much ability as courage. Then came the civil war, and the battle of Pharsalia, for the victory of which this young and indefatigable captain, commanding the left wing of Cæsar's army, was largely responsible. And still later, during the whole of the time Cæsar was at Alexandria, Antony acted as his titular representative at Rome. And in spite of the fact that the young man displayed a certain amount of ill-temper at the preference shown by the Dictator to Lepidus, Cæsar still possessed in Antony a fervent admirer and a faithful friend.

Since his sojourn at Alexandria, Mark Antony had changed neither in appearance nor behaviour; he was still the most handsome man in Rome and as fond of women as ever, although he had for some time been married to his cousin, the daughter of Caius Antonius. But as his wife had for some long time openly accepted the homage of Publius Dolabella, he repudiated her, and entered upon a life so irregular and so extravagant that not only the moralists and matrons of the city were scandalised, but even Cæsar himself, who was not a man likely to be very severe upon excess and riotous living. Antony scattered his money right and left and passed most of his time in feasting and drinking in

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the company of parasites and women of the streets. He would walk through the most crowded streets of Rome, dead drunk, singing and shouting at the top of his voice, and one day he so far forgot himself as to sully the chief seat in the Forum with his vomiting. He bought the house of Pompey the Great at a public auction, and the patricians were disgusted to see this residence made the headquarters of his orgies, even before he had paid the quaestors the price demanded. Nevertheless, in spite of his scandalous behaviour, Antony fulfilled his duties in a perfectly capable manner, no easy matter in the circumstances. During Cæsar's absence, and while the most contradictory news was arriving from Alexandria concerning him, announcing at one time that he had been defeated, at another even that he had been assassinated, Antony succeeded in maintaining order not only in Rome, but throughout the whole of Italy. No one dared to move, and not only did the enemies of Cæsar give him no trouble whatever, but the number of his friends increased from day to day.

When Cæsar, on his return from Egypt, pressed for payment for Pompey's house, and when, later, in 708, the Dictator chose another man to be his second consul, Antony quarrelled with his master. He did not go so far as to range himself on the side of his enemies, nor did he take part in the intrigues directed against his life, as did most of the Dictator's courtiers and flatterers; but, that Cæsar might know that he was ill-content, he refused to follow him into Egypt and left Rome

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in the company of his mistress, the courtesan Cytheris. With her he travelled through the whole of Italy, making a short stay at every town; and, wishing to scandalise the worthy citizens of the provinces, he treated Cytheris with the respect that was paid to royalty. 'The people were offended,' says Plutarch, 'at the pomp of his travelling plate; at his erecting tents on the road by groves and rivers, for the most luxuriant dinners; at his chariots drawn by lions; and at his lodging his ladies of pleasure and female musicians in the houses of modest and sober people.' Yet, he did not envy Cæsar the glory and the power he had won; and, when the latter returned to Rome, Antony also hastened thither in order that he might witness the triumph of his former master.

It was at this time that the character and conduct of Antony underwent a sudden and complete change: he became grave and serious, abandoned evil company and riotous living, and sought to enter again into Cæsar's good graces. It is also probable that Antony did not lose much time before paying a visit to the Queen of Egypt,—the acknowledged lover of his general,—whom he had known as a child; and, in that case, we can hardly fail to admire the handsome young man and the lovely woman who, while experiencing one for the other very lively feelings of sympathy, would not allow themselves to be carried away by them into relations of a more intimate nature.

All the great men of Rome hastened to pay their respects to Cleopatra: Cicero, Atticus; Lepidus,

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Lentulus, Dolabella, and many others visited her and paid her homage. A large crowd of flatterers and courtiers assiduously frequented the villa across the Tiber, and there were to be seen all those who, having anything to ask or hope for from Cæsar, thought to gain their ends more rapidly by flattering Cleopatra and endeavouring to interest her in their affairs or in their intrigues. In spite, however, of the undoubted influence she possessed, the Queen of Egypt found herself in a very disagreeable position, inasmuch as she concealed from no one her ardent desire to become Cæsar's wife, according to the Roman law, and to legitimatise her son Cæsarion. And the more likelihood there seemed of the Dictator accomplishing the wishes of his mistress, the greater was the hatred of the Roman people for this daughter of an idolatrous nation, this foreigner, this 'Egyptian monster,' who sought to insinuate herself into the *gens Julia*, the chief patrician family in Rome, and who, forsooth, presumed to dictate to the Roman world.

If we consider the conduct of Cleopatra in the light of the morality of our own time, we must admit that she was far more worthy of respect than the majority of the Roman matrons of her day, of whom Seneca says that, 'heroines of virtue as they were, they did not consider adultery as an act of which to be ashamed.' Things had come to such a pass that young women only married for the sake of increasing desire in their lovers, and chastity was looked upon as a proof of ugliness. Cleopatra, on the other

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hand, was ever Cæsar's faithful companion, imitating neither the conduct of his second wife, Pompeia, nor Mark Antony's first wife, nor Pompey's third wife, nor Scribonia, the second wife of Octavius, all of whom deceived their husbands openly and without restraint. And then Cleopatra was a woman in every sense of the term, resembling neither the Fulvia whom Antony had just married, whose charms were of the masculine order, nor Calpurnia who was so acrid and so cold that she failed to win the affection of any man, her husband included. Moreover, it was not the virtue of the Queen of Egypt that was the objection to her marriage with Cæsar, but simply her origin, for the Romans looked upon the whole world as belonging to them, and,—in their opinion,—if any among them took a wife from another land, he brought into their midst a foreigner who would want her share of the common patrimony, which would only be the less for having to be divided among a greater number. In the eyes of the people it was an awful thing, and a sacrilege, that the head of the *gens Julia*, the absolute Dictator of the Roman Empire, should espouse an idolatrous woman and set her by his hearth, that hearth that he had till now kept sacred to his household gods.

When, a few months later, Cæsar was obliged to go and restore order in Spain, where matters had taken a very serious turn, and the Queen remained behind, at Rome, although all were expecting and longing for her departure, countless intrigues, which had their origin in jealousy, were openly

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directed against her, and Cleopatra was not slow to recognise that the capital of the great Republic was hardly the place for the realisation of her great schemes. It would seem that from this moment she used all her powers to create work for Cæsar in the East, in order by so doing to attract him once more to Alexandria and keep him by her side.

During the winter that followed, Rome was in a comparatively tranquil state. The people from the provinces, who had come to witness Cæsar's triumphs, had returned to their homes, and all were impatiently awaiting the issue of the campaign in the Iberian peninsula. In the meantime Antony had married again, possibly at the suggestion of Cleopatra, choosing as his wife Fulvia, the widow of Curio, one of Cæsar's lieutenants who had perished in the African campaign. Fulvia was at this time no longer in her first youth; she had had a former husband in Publius Clodius, whom Milo had put to death some twelve years before. She had married again, after having been left a widow, the debauched Curio, and, when he met his death in Africa, she did not even wait for the end of the year before taking to herself a third husband, Mark Antony, to whom she brought a girl of thirteen, her daughter by her first husband. Fulvia was what is known as a well-made woman, but her features were of a masculine type and her manners those of a trooper: she never allowed herself to be contradicted, nor did she suffer anyone connected with her to act contrary to her wishes. There was nothing womanly about her, and she was in no way

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fitted for domesticity or the cares of a housewife: her chief characteristics were ambition, utter absence of affection, and coarseness. According to Plutarch, Fulvia would have thought nothing of being able to tyrannise over a husband who was only a private individual: 'her ambition was to govern those who governed, and to command the leaders of armies.' In vain did Antony endeavour to amuse her and steal a kind word from her, 'by many whimsical and pleasant follies': it was impossible to soften this inflexible nature, and all Rome laughed at the poor success that crowned his attempts.

In the meantime, news of Cæsar's victories in Spain reached the capital, and when, finally, towards the end of March, the defeat of Oneius Pompey at Munda was announced, a fever of madness seemed to take hold of the people: all vied with one another in inventing some new means of glorifying Cæsar, to whom the Senate decreed the dictatorship for life. He was also styled 'Imperator,' and that dignity was extended to his descendants, if he had any. A temple was erected in his honour, and on the base of the bronze statue representing him was chiselled the inscription: 'To the God of Mercy.' In place of the modest house in which Cæsar had till then resided, in the Suburra, the Senate ordered a sumptuous palace to be built at the expense of the state. And finally, he was given an exceptionally magnificent triumph.

When it was understood that Cæsar was returning from Spain, most of the principal citizens went

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some days' journey to meet him, in order that they might be the first to congratulate him. Those who stayed behind in the capital thought only of how they might give him a reception worthy of his glorious achievements: all the houses were decorated, triumphal arches were erected in all the principal streets, and there were hustings at every street corner for the enthusiastic orators of the crowd.

It is probable that good places were reserved for Cleopatra and her suite, and that she was present at the triumphant entry of the hero. Amid a crowd mad with excitement, she must have seen the first chariot, in which sat Cæsar, with Mark Antony by his side, and behind him Brutus Albinus and his niece's son, Octavius, at that time a lad of seventeen, who was destined later to play a part fraught with such baneful consequences to herself. The future emperor of the Romans had been careful to go forth to meet his uncle with the rest; for it was thought that Cæsar, being already advanced in years and childless, might perhaps bequeath to him his riches and his power. Nevertheless, the fact that Cæsar chose Antony to sit beside him in his chariot and not Octavius, provoked much comment, which increased in bitterness when, in the year 710, the Dictator chose Antony as second consul. Certainly the young Octavius, whose vanity was only equalled by his ambition, was deeply mortified at having a place allotted to him in the second chariot, and it is not unlikely that it was this that gave birth to his antipathy for Mark Antony, and that

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it was from this slight cause that there arose that irreconcilable hatred which, gradually increasing as time went on, was only extinguished by the death of Antony himself. The Queen, too, could not have failed to notice, both at the time of Cæsar's entry into Rome, and later, during the public entertainments given in his honour, that the absolute power of the Dictator and the excessive honour paid to him, had aroused not only in the aristocracy of Rome, but also among his immediate followers, sentiments of jealousy and mistrust which they were at little pains to conceal. She must certainly have observed indications of a reaction, already smouldering, directed against Cæsar's omnipotence, as well as a manifest antipathy to his person and his projects and ambitions.

Moreover, these symptoms became so evident that other friends took it upon them as a duty to warn Cæsar. But the Dictator attached no importance whatever to these intrigues and replied that 'it was not of those fat, sleek fellows that he was afraid.' Seeing, too, that the Romans were in no way well disposed towards Cleopatra, he proceeded to distinguish her from others even more than in the past: he had her portrait painted by Timomachus of Byzantium, the most famous painter in Rome, and placed it in the temple of Venus, by the side of the image of that goddess, itself a work by the same artist. At the theatre and other places he made his appearance in company with the Queen of Egypt; he spread the report that he desired to render his son

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Cæsarion legitimate. Further, although there was nothing for which he had to reproach his wife, the faithful, but barren Calpurnia, unless it were that she had failed to make him love her, he now thought seriously of deserting her, and marrying the mistress who had not only made him a father, but whose beauty and wit rendered her worthy of a place by his side. He therefore commanded the tribune of the people, Helvius Cinna, to propose a law to the Senate permitting him to marry Cleopatra, in order that he might render his son legitimate and remain no longer without an heir.

Cæsar never concealed his designs: on the contrary, he spoke of them himself to his friends, and thus it soon came to be understood that the Dictator wished to introduce into the Senate all the notabilities of the countries he had conquered, to the end that its political character might be changed, and it might become a body representative of the whole vast empire. It was likewise known that as soon as Cæsar departed from Rome, on a campaign against the Parthians, the Senate would pass the law authorising his marriage with the Queen of Egypt.

We cannot estimate to-day, twenty centuries later, which of these two plans was the more offensive to the narrow and jealous patriotism of the Romans. In the first place, they were hostile to all foreigners, because they could see the time was not far distant when they would have to divide their power with them and grant them a share in the direction of affairs. In the second place, they

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could not tolerate the woman Cleopatra, who had completely turned the head of their hero; and the more Cæsar loaded her with honours, the more did he aggravate the hatred they had for this foreigner, who seemed to them about to become absolute mistress of the empire and the world. The Roman aristocracy doubtless did not dare to make their feelings public, and many of them even went so far as to lavish upon Cæsar and Cleopatra all manner of flattering attentions; but it was no easy matter to deceive the Queen of Egypt, who was not slow to remark the discontent that was brewing in the city. For this reason she felt ill at ease and was only waiting for a favourable opportunity to return to her own land. Cæsar's love was very precious to her, that at least is certain, yet she preferred to enjoy it at Alexandria, and, in the meantime, set about making preparations for her departure. Moreover, she had no doubt that, once she had returned to Egypt, her lover would not be long in joining her.

During the whole of the summer and autumn, Cæsar was occupied with important affairs of state. The reform of the administration, the government of the provinces, and various other works of general utility, occupied his days; and at the same time it was necessary for him to prepare for the coming war with the Parthians, upon which the Roman people were becoming more and more anxious to enter. As a fact, it was principally Cæsar's ambition that urged him to undertake this war; nothing was easier than to stir up the Romans against these

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long-standing and bitter enemies of the Republic. And what was more, if they hoped, on the one hand, that Cæsar would take a signal revenge on them for the defeats inflicted upon Crassus, and thus wipe out the disgrace inflicted on Roman arms, on the other hand they thought of the triumph that would follow the victory, of the feasts and spectacles that would be given, and of the rich booty of which every citizen would have his share. For the rest, the aristocracy were also desirous that this war should be waged, but only so long as the victories gained might not add further to Cæsar's popularity and power. At length it was decided that the campaign should be undertaken, and that the Dictator should put himself at the head of his legions: his departure was fixed for the end of March 710.

The turn of events suited Cleopatra very well indeed, for she thought only of attracting Cæsar into Egypt, and considered that her task would be far easier once the Dictator was removed from Rome and its intrigues. But disquieting news reached her at this time from Alexandria: a bold impostor, who pretended to be Ptolemy XIII., sought to make the Egyptians believe that he was their lawful sovereign and that, having succeeded in making good his escape at the time of the battle of the Delta, he was now coming to take possession of his throne. As is usual in such cases, the false king had collected round him a certain number of partisans, and a disturbance broke out, only to be put down immediately by the energetic action of

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Rufus; but the news served to hasten Cleopatra's departure from Rome. And as she was anxious to be gone before Cæsar's departure, she gave orders for her fleet to come into the waters of the Adriatic, and made all preparations for a speedy departure.

In the meanwhile, lowering clouds, black with danger, were massing over the head of Cæsar, against whom his enemies had awakened both jealousy and mistrust in the hearts of the people. He had been invested with all the power of an absolute monarch, he had been rendered honours till then reserved for the gods alone, and now he was blamed for having accepted such flattery and compliments without a protest, and his detractors even went so far as to accuse him of coveting a king's crown. They let it be understood that if Cæsar set out against the Parthians, he would not return, but would transfer the seat of government to Alexandria, after having drawn all the soldiers away from Italy and left the capital in the hands of his friends. Such rumours were naturally only spread under cover of the greatest secrecy, yet Cæsar knew that his life was in serious danger. He consequently desired to hasten his departure, but could not: it was already too late. The conspiracy that had been hatching since his return from Spain had by this time become fully organised, and it was decided to assassinate him before his departure from Rome; for if he were allowed to return from the East crowned with fresh laurels, his popularity and his power might become so great that it would no longer be possible to approach his person. The

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conspirators, with several of Cæsar's most intimate friends at their head, were only waiting a convenient opportunity for putting their plan into execution: especially was it necessary to separate from the Dictator his close and faithful friend, Mark Antony, who went everywhere with him in his capacity of second consul, and whose herculean strength was a source of dread to the conspirators. At length the opportunity offered. On the 15th of March, Antony was detained on some pretext or other, and, as Cæsar entered the Senate-house alone, Brutus and Cassius fell upon him and stabbed him.

No one deplored Cæsar's death more bitterly than Cleopatra, who lost all in him—a lover, the father of her child, the husband that was to be—and who now saw all the ambitious schemes, which were founded upon the Dictator's love, fall headlong to the ground. The struggle between the various factions would now begin again, and who knew but that even her right to the throne might not be questioned. In the circumstances, the Queen of Egypt could not stay an instant longer in Rome without endangering her personal safety, all the more in that, as soon as the first moments of stupor at the horror of the deed were passed, a revolution burst upon the capital of the Republic. Profiting by these disturbances, which diverted the attention of the Romans, Cleopatra left Rome with what haste she could and returned to Alexandria. She was not the only one who left under cover of

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the general disorder and confusion; her sister Arsinoë, who had stayed by her side since her release, also managed to escape, and betook herself first to Greece, and later, after the battle of Philippi, to Ephesus, where Megabysus, the high priest of Diana, not content with affording her a refuge, received her with royal honours.

At Rome, where the Queen of Egypt had no friends, unless it were Mark Antony, her hasty departure was looked upon as a flight: at the time of the disposal of Cæsar's wealth, Antony was the only man who defended Cleopatra and dared to lift his voice in favour of Cæsarion, There is no need to add that his efforts were utterly useless, for, consul though he was, and in spite of his great popularity, his advice could not prevail against the unanimous opinion of the citizens. In short, everyone was glad of the departure of the Egyptian, and the Romans were pleased to think that they had done with her for ever.

CHAPTER VII

CLEOPATRA, QUEEN OF EGYPT

CLEOPATRA had quitted Rome deeply afflicted by Cæsar's death and anxious concerning the state of affairs at Alexandria. But on hearing of her arrival, Ptolemy the pretender hastened to leave Egypt and withdraw to Phœnicia, with the result that no really serious trouble arose from his impudent assumption. The Queen had therefore nothing to fear on that side; but, anxious to prevent any similar usurpation in the future, she lost no time in getting her husband, Ptolemy XIV., crowned, according to the Egyptian custom, although the young prince was not fourteen years of age. The formality was the more urgent, as the King was always ailing, and his death expected from day to day. The coronation took place towards the end of the year 710. The winter following was quiet and uneventful: the intestine strife that was harassing the Republic had not as yet made itself felt in Egypt; and, moreover, the continual warfare in Syria and India was, perforce, an advantage to the country of the Pharaohs, quietly occupying itself with agricultural and commercial pursuits. Nevertheless, the island of Cyprus, which dominated the coasts of Asia-Minor, as well as those of Phœnicia, had become a strategic position of

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extreme importance, and it was to be feared that one or other of the parties disputing for supremacy at Rome would succeed in gaining possession of it, by treachery, or otherwise. For this reason Cleopatra entrusted the command of the island to Serapio; he was one of the few in whom, judging from the past, she felt she could place perfect confidence. She invested him at the same time with the command of the squadron of the Mediterranean.

During the years that followed, Egypt enjoyed the blessings of peace, order, and tranquillity. The population increased; many canals were cut, with a view to enlarging the area of arable land; the gold mines of Berenice, for a long time abandoned, were now being worked again; Egyptian merchantmen pursued their traffic as far as the Red Sea and farther, towards the south and the east; the port of Alexandria became the busiest port of the world. Cleopatra took care to see that both the lives and the property of her subjects were protected. At the same time, strict discipline was maintained both at the court and in the interior, while no expense was spared in the celebrating of a great festival or the display of the Queen's own splendour. She kept a stern hand upon the governors of the provinces, tolerating no abuses, and punishing the least extortion. Thanks to her rigorous administration, the imposts and taxes came in regularly, the revenues from the customs increased, and the treasury was never in want of money, notwithstanding the enormous sums that

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were devoted to the rebuilding of public monuments, to the erection of a temple dedicated to the memory of Cæsar, and to various other works of general usefulness. And yet the Queen did not grind down her subjects, or strip them of half their wealth; the Roman authors themselves, her worst enemies, can find nothing to reproach her for on this head: on the contrary, all are obliged to admit that Egypt was never in a more flourishing and prosperous condition than at this time and that the people were devoted to their sovereign. The empire of the Lagidæ thus presented once more an appearance of prosperity such as it had shown in ancient times, although its bounds were now limited to Egypt proper and its authority no longer extended to the neighbouring peoples. But, while possessing a crowded population, this nation was still in no way a homogeneous people, able to defend itself and preserve its independence in the struggle then raging among its neighbours and rivals. The Queen was soon to suffer grave anxieties and to pass through trials in which she felt her isolation and the absence of support very deeply.

At the beginning of the year 711 (43 B.C.) died the husband, brother, and prince-consort of Cleopatra: young Ptolemy XIV. Dionysus, still in his fifteenth year. Writers, both ancient and modern, assert that his was not a natural death, and some go so far as to maintain that the Queen disembarrassed herself of him by poisoning him. Yet, as contemporary writers make

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no mention of a crime, this assertion need only be considered as one of the many calumnies with which Roman writers of later years, carried away by their blind hatred for Cleopatra, sullied her memory. The fact remains, however, that Ptolemy Dionysus bore the title of King for only three years and a half, and with him were extinguished the male descendants of the Ptolemaic dynasty, once so powerful and so brilliant. There remained only the two daughters of Ptolemy Auletes: Cleopatra and Arsinoë, to bear the name of the Lagidæ, and since, by the custom adopted in this family, brothers and sisters always intermarried, the Queen had relations neither in Egypt nor among any of the neighbouring princes. But if she had had any, it is not likely that she would have been on good terms with them. The Seleucids, for example, behaved towards her as though they themselves had claims to the throne of Egypt. As for the family of Mithridates, to whom Cleopatra was very nearly related on her mother's side, it was already extinct. The only one of her relations on whom she might in any way have counted was Antipater, King of Idumea, and he died in this very year.

Cleopatra's sister, Arsinoë, was no support to the Queen; on the contrary, she did all in her power to embarrass and persecute her. Not only did she detest her elder sister, but she had neither patriotism nor pride in the famous dynasty to induce her to second the efforts of the Queen and assist her in her endeavours to

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consolidate her country, threatened as it was by such great peril. With no thoughts other than regaining favour in Egypt, and regarding Cleopatra,—a more beautiful and a cleverer woman than herself,—as the chief obstacle to the realisation of her ambitions, Arsinoë, although hating the Romans from the depths of her soul, did not hesitate to make application to Cæsar's murderers, Brutus and Cassius, and beg them to restore her to the throne. But the heads of the republican party were so much occupied with their own affairs that they neither could nor would attack Egypt without good reason, having no wish to increase the number of their enemies: on the contrary, they begged Cleopatra to send them money and troops.

Since her flight from Rome, Arsinoë had been living at Ephesus, and Cleopatra had been vexed and even disquieted to hear of the royal honours accorded to her by Megabysus, which the young princess had accepted as her due. The Queen of Egypt was especially fearful lest intestine strife might spoil the chances of her son Cæsarion and perhaps overthrow the empire, already suffering severely from the fact that this year the Nile had failed to overflow its banks. The winter of the year 711 had been a very dry one in Central Africa and the great river had not left its bed, and as, in the preceding year, the rising had been far less extensive than usual, this country, accustomed as it was to such blessings at the hand of nature, now looked in vain for even a scanty harvest. Egypt,

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that ordinarily supplied both Greece and Italy with its surplus grain, was, on this occasion, incapable of feeding its own people, and was stricken with famine, and its usual companion, the plague. All who could hastened to leave the country; and if the towns were not quite emptied of their inhabitants, it was only thanks to the peace and tranquillity that reigned in them, while every other corner of the world was the scene of war and massacre.

Cleopatra was indeed master of the situation; in spite of famine and plague, she remained steadfastly at Alexandria, and did all she could to relieve the misery of her people by importing corn from the Far East. Although she did not doubt that the struggle for the empire of the world would soon be decided on the field of battle, and that she lacked the support of a man capable of giving a vigorous turn to the wheel of fortune, yet she made every effort to save herself from falling a victim to her own impotence.

At Rome, a fierce and bitter civil war had followed Cæsar's murder: the whole of Italy was on fire, the soil drenched in the blood of her people. Not long after the death of the Dictator, Mark Antony, who was then consul, became master of the situation. His first and chief care was to remove Cæsar's murderers from the capital. His influence with the Senate was unbounded, and he persuaded them to send Brutus into Lower Gaul, Cassius into Syria, and Trebonius to Cilicia, in the capacity of proconsuls: and, in order that there might be a power in the East to counterbalance their influence,

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he established a new proconsulate, that of Phœnicia and Judea, to which his friend Dolabella was shortly afterwards nominated.

By actions such as these Antony hoped to secure for himself the first place in the Republic, which had been rendered vacant by the death of Cæsar, and to which no one else was likely to aspire, since, after the removal of the Dictator, he was undoubtedly the foremost man in the eyes of the Romans. But, suddenly, there appeared a rival to his claims, from the quarter least suspected of harbouring such a candidate for the highest honours of the state. Cæsar's nephew, Octavius, a young man not yet twenty, who was pursuing his studies at Athens, hastened to Rome and put in a claim not only for his share of his uncle's fortune, but also for his political heritage. Antony at first troubled himself but little about this beardless youth, but he was not long in realising that in this young man were united all the qualities necessary for success, and that he was as ambitious as he was wise, calculating, cold, and taciturn. Sparing no one in his efforts to attain his end, Octavius concealed his lack of personal courage beneath a very carefully assumed manner, while his invariable good luck made up for the absence of military talents. Of feeble physique, and with the look of a man in constant pain, he yet enjoyed good health and a constitution that no amount of hardship seemed to impair. In short, he was in every respect the exact opposite of Antony.

When his overtures to the latter were repulsed,

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Octavius addressed himself to Cicero, the consul's most formidable enemy, and to the patricians who had grouped themselves around the person of the great orator; and, thanks to their co-operation, he was soon able to oppose Antony with a party comprising all the members of the conspiracy against Cæsar. The greater number of the legionaries of the Dictator also embraced the cause of Octavius, while D. Brutus betook himself to Lower Gaul and prepared to make a descent into Italy and crush Mark Antony. War was now inevitable and both parties began to make active preparations: Antony's efforts were concentrated upon securing Cæsar's political heritage, while Octavius and his allies were pledged to drive Antony out of Italy and take his place in the capital.

Antony left Rome and journeyed through the provinces, collecting forces as he went. His opponents were organising their men in the capital itself and had placed at the head of the army the two consuls at that time in office: Pansa, and Hirtius, one of Cæsar's ablest generals. The decisive battle took place near Mutina (the Modena of our own day): Antony's forces were completely cut to pieces, and their leader only just managed to make good his escape with a handful of his friends and rejoin the army under Lepidus, then encamped in Gaul. He succeeded in winning over this general to his side, and, placing himself at the head of troops who were fresh for the struggle, and numbered 17 legions and 10,000 horse, he returned to Italy, where his opponents' army had in the

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meantime, in spite of the victory of Mutina, been disbanded; for in that battle both the consuls had perished, and Octavius, as inefficient a general as he was a soldier, had not been able to prevent his army from scattering over the plains of Lombardy. Hence, when Lepidus and Antony arrived in Italy, Octavius did not even attempt a resistance; on the contrary, abandoning Cicero and his other allies, not only did he become reconciled with Antony, but he even came to an agreement with him and with Lepidus in which it was decided to divide the power between the three parties. In this compact they promised to hand over to one another their personal enemies, and to deal with the utmost severity with the assassins of Cæsar as well as the patrician party. And that the alliance might be still more close and sealed with the bonds of parentage, Octavius solemnly affianced himself to Antony's ^{step-}~~daughter-in-law~~ Clodia.

In this way was formed the third triumvirate, and the triumvirs hastened to return to Rome, in order that they might take full revenge on their enemies. The history of the world contains nothing which can in any way be compared with the awful cruelty of which Rome now became the scene, and to which the most eminent men of the country—Cicero among others—fell victims. 'I believe there never was anything so atrocious or so execrably savage,' says Plutarch, 'as this commerce of murder; for while a friend was given up for an enemy received, the same action murdered at once

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the friend and the enemy.' The whole of Italy was delivered into the hand of the three slaughterers, who, according to Appian, did away with as many as 300 senators and 2000 knights. Most of the proscribed were, moreover, only put to death for the sake of their wealth and property. And as if this were not enough, the triumvirs proceeded to lay hands upon all the money and precious objects confided to the care of the Vestal Virgins. They divided the booty among themselves, just as they had already divided the army and the empire. At the same time, the provinces were not yet by any means all under their dominion: in the West, Sextus Pompey, and, in the East, Brutus and Cassius, still held sway.

Each of the parties who were cutting one another's throats in their attempts to gain the dominion of the world addressed themselves in turn to Cleopatra for help. Cassius begged for money and provisions, while Dolabella, whom Cassius had driven out of Judea, appealed to her on behalf of Antony. Among such enmity and such rivalry, the position of the Queen was difficult and even dangerous, for in helping one of the supplicants she inevitably made an enemy of the other, who, if he happened to succeed, would not fail to avenge himself upon her. Yet she was unable to remain a neutral spectator of this pitiless struggle: cost her what it might, she felt obliged to take sides in the conflict. In the East, Brutus and Cassius were incontestably the stronger; therefore in intervening in favour of Antony,

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Cleopatra could certainly only have been influenced by personal motives. She took his part because he had been Cæsar's friend and because, in daring to defend the interests of Cæsarion in spite of the opposition of the Senate, he had shown himself well disposed towards the Queen; at the same time he naturally shrank from making common cause with her against the murderers of Cæsar, although their success might well prove fatal to him. In spite, therefore, of Antony's defeat at Mutina, and the successes of Cassius in Syria, Cleopatra decided to send to the aid of Dolabella, whom Cassius held shut up in Laodicea. She sent him money and ships, as well as four legions in the command of Alienus, only keeping for herself at Alexandria one of the legions of Gabinius and the German horse left by Cæsar. The Egyptian troops did not reach Laodicea: warned of their departure, Cassius went out into Palestine to meet them, and Alienus, whether from cowardice or treachery, delivered the whole army into his hands. Cassius, thus finding himself at the head of twelve brave legions, was enabled the more easily to surround the besieged town. In the meantime Serapio, governor of Cyprus and commander of the Mediterranean fleet, without waiting for an order from Cleopatra, sent Cassius every available vessel he had, with the result that the assassin was able completely to invest Dolabella both by land and by sea.

These events, which frustrated all her plans and hopes, compelled Cleopatra to look to the defence

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of her own territories. Cassius knew very well that the legions handed over to him by Alienus were not intended to succour him, nor was he ignorant of the fact that the Queen of Egypt had sent help to Dolabella. He therefore prepared to punish Cleopatra for her intentions; and if he did not immediately put his plan into execution, it was only because of the arrival of winter. The Queen employed the precious time thus gained in recruiting new troops to replace those that had gone over to the enemy and in equipping a numerous fleet to protect her kingdom from the north. But as Egypt was at this time in a very precarious condition, the Queen found that she could not make these preparations with as much despatch as she could wish; and, while she was putting forth all her resources to organise her country's defence, the political situation at Rome underwent such a momentous change that Egypt was for the time being out of all danger.

The three most powerful men in the Republic: Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus, who had shared the empire of the world between them, had decided to join forces and extirpate the leaders of the republican party: especially in their mind were Brutus and Cassius, the chief conspirators in the plot against Cæsar, who were at this time in the East. On hearing of the intentions of the triumvirs, Cassius was perforce obliged to abandon his projected campaign against Cleopatra, and think only of defending himself against the imminent attack of his powerful enemies.

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In the struggle with Brutus and Cassius, the triumvirs counted on the assistance of the Queen of Egypt, and it seems that they were perfectly correct in their estimate of her good feelings towards them. To reward her they erected at Rome, in the year 711, temples dedicated to Isis and to Serapis, and, in return for the services rendered to Dolabella, they agreed in 712 to recognise Cæsarion King of Egypt. In exchange for these marks of favour, they demanded from Cleopatra that she should supply the troops sent into Macedonia and Thrace with provisions; but the Queen excused herself, pointing out that her country was still a prey to famine and plague. At the same time, she promised the triumvirs the support of her fleet in so far as that was compatible with her plan of defence against Cassius.

Having consolidated their power in Italy, the triumvirs set out with their armies for the East. Lepidus remained at Rome, to maintain order in the capital, while Antony and Octavius, with every available man from the western provinces, crossed the Adriatic and directed their course to that part of Europe where Brutus, having quitted Asia-Minor, had encamped his forces. As his army was much too feeble to withstand the shock of his opponents' legions, Brutus summoned Cassius to join him with what speed he could, and the latter, regretfully renouncing his hopes of effecting a conquest in Egypt, hastened by forced marches to where Brutus lay, in Macedonia, in the neighbourhood of the town of Philippi.

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As soon as Cleopatra was convinced that she had no longer anything to fear from Cassius, she decided to embark with her whole fleet and go herself to the help of Octavius and Antony. She started, but the north winds threw her vessels out of their course, and a violent tempest tried them to so great an extent that the Queen was obliged to return to Egypt, there to await more favourable weather. But, before she could again get under way, the aspect of affairs was entirely changed. The Egyptian ships sent into Thracian waters by the Queen out of gratitude brought back to Alexandria, about the middle of the year 712, both the news of Antony's victory at Philippi and the death of Brutus and Cassius. At this the Queen put a stop to further preparations for war and remained quietly in her own country. Later, she took occasion to excuse herself, stating that the storm had thrown her fleet into confusion and had been the cause of a very serious illness to herself, the consequences of which were such that she was unable to put to sea again. It is, however, more probable that Cleopatra considered it beneath her dignity to appear on the field of battle after the event and be seen to be a witness to Antony's triumph, however great her cause to rejoice at this victory of one of her few friends.

Octavius was also present at the battle of Philippi; but he feigned indisposition and kept himself in the background, with the result that he took no part whatever in the direction of the fight. Moreover, the right wing of the army, which

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was under his command, had been put to flight by Brutus on the first day of the battle; and it is to Mark Antony alone that the credit for this brilliant victory belongs. But this did not prevent Octavius later from enjoying a triumph for the battle of Philippi and attributing to himself the glory of it in his memoirs; but, at this time, all the world knew exactly what to think. At all events, the victory over Brutus and Cassius increased Antony's power and popularity to such an extent that he became indubitably the most important man of the mighty Roman Empire; and when Octavius hastened to Rome after the battle, it was Antony who undertook the task of pacifying the East and directing the war against the Parthians. It was at this time, too, that the two triumvirs divided the world between them. Leaving Africa to Lepidus, Octavius took the western half and Antony the eastern half of their possessions, whilst Italy alone was undivided.

Antony, having become absolute master of the East, was now, although not yet forty, at the height of his power. Neither the fatigues and privations that he had endured, nor the excesses and debauchery to which he had given himself up in his youth, had been able to impair his iron constitution. His strong and manly beauty and his prodigious physical strength seemed to confirm his supposed relationship to Hercules. Heaven had endowed him, besides, with a number of truly remarkable qualities: he was an excellent general, adored by his soldiers and subordinates; Seneca

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himself speaks of him as '*magnum virum ingenii nobilis.*' Had self-restraint and sobriety been added to his other brilliant qualities, Antony might easily have become master of the world; but unfortunately he was incapable of controlling his hot and intemperate blood, and when he was on the point of satisfying his ambition, when he held in the palm of his hand the fate of great countries and many millions of men, his unbounded pride and his thirst for pleasure led him to lose sight of all restraint and moderation and to commit follies and imprudences of the very worst order. He wished to drain the cup of pleasure to the dregs. His journey across Greece and Asia-Minor was a triumphal march from province to province. Nowhere did he meet with the slightest resistance. He was everywhere received with almost unheard-of honour, and, from every town as he approached, a magnificent procession would file out to meet him. 'He began to enrich himself with the wealth of the country,' says Plutarch — 'his house was the resort of obsequious kings and queens contending for his favour by their beauty and munificence.' Antony accepted this homage eagerly, and greedily inhaled the incense of flattery, enjoying to the full the privileges which his glory and his power conferred upon him. At length, about the beginning of the autumn of the year 712 (42 B.C.), he arrived at Tarsus, a town situated on the Cydnus amid the most enchanting scenery, the seat of the proconsuls of Syria; he wished to remain at Tarsus until the spring, to

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prepare for the proposed campaign against the Parthians.

His court soon became the resort of the princes of the East. To it came Antiochus, Antigonus, Sisinnus, Pacorus, and Herod, together with the most beautiful princesses of these lands: Glaphyra, whose beauty was only equalled by her wantonness; Queen Alexandra, the widow of Aristobulus II.; and lastly Mariamne, Herod's lovely young wife, who, after the death of Antony, paid with her life for the favours she had bestowed upon him. In a word, Tarsus received within her walls all whose consciences were not perfectly at ease, or those who had some favour to ask of the conqueror. Antony gave, took back, and restored at pleasure towns, provinces, and kingdoms. But she, the most beautiful of all women, whom the triumvir would most gladly have welcomed to Tarsus, Cleopatra, the Aphrodite of the Nile, alone kept away; yet, careful not to violate the rules of international courtesy, she sent ambassadors to Antony, to offer him her congratulations and good wishes for the future.

The envoys returned to Alexandria bearing the Queen an invitation to come herself to Tarsus, but Cleopatra refused. Later, she received many pressing letters from Antony and his friends, soliciting her to undertake the journey with all speed, but she did not respond to them. Cleopatra perceived that the Roman world was already effectively divided into two halves, a state of affairs which coincided with her own political ideal; but she de-

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sired further that Egypt might become the centre of gravity of the eastern half of the empire, Alexandria its capital, and the Ptolemaic dynasty mistress of all the countries it contained. As, however, the transformation of the Roman world had been effected without any intervention whatever on her part, she was not without anxiety concerning the part she would be expected to play in the altered state of affairs. Had Cæsar lived, he would have been sole master of the world; and she herself would certainly have become its mistress. But it might, perhaps, be that Antony also was capable of consolidating his power and gathering the reins into his own hands. From the point of view of courage and genius, he yielded nothing to the Dictator; and could she but attach him to her person, the weaknesses that characterised the man would doubtless only render him a more willing instrument in her hands. Cleopatra had not seen Antony since Cæsar's tragic death; but she knew him well, and she probably felt—for was she not a woman?—that the triumvir, as unhappy in his second wife as he had been in his first, would aspire to take the place of his old master not only in the empire of the world, but also in the heart of Cleopatra. Nor is it at all improbable that the beautiful Queen had long had a certain tenderness for this brave and handsome soldier, and had hitherto only been prevented by circumstances from establishing more intimate relations with him. It might even be that a dream of their youth was about to be realised. . . .

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But however that might be, a Queen, and a woman of twenty-six, would not now offer herself to Antony, as she had in earlier days offered herself to Cæsar. Then she was little more than a child, a humble fugitive, and Cæsar himself in an extremely precarious situation; while now Antony was at the height of his glory, and Cleopatra, reigning Queen of Egypt, had to think of the prestige and dignity of her crown.

Since the battle of Philippi, the Queen had followed Antony's movements with the closest attention. She had heard of the splendid festivities held at Athens and at Megara in his honour, of the magnificence of his reception at Ephesus, where he had been worshipped as a new Dionysus; she knew that the princes of the East had hastened to Tarsus to render homage to the victorious triumvir. If Cleopatra also were to go and humble herself before this man, who had had honours lavished upon him without stint, he might become still more presumptuous and insolent; and it was for this reason that she refrained from going to Tarsus, notwithstanding that all her advisers were of the opinion that it would be unwise to decline Antony's invitation, for fear he should vent his anger upon Egypt and the Ptolemies.

While they were thus exchanging letters and messages, came the spring of the year 713. At this moment there arrived at Alexandria a certain Quintus Dellius, a messenger from Antony, who enjoyed the reputation, richly deserved, of being

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one of the most skilful mediators of his day. A modern French writer, Blaze de Bury, sums him up in these terms: 'This Quintus Dellius was one of those fine fellows who, without character or morals, live a life of luxury and ease by betraying all who put their trust in them. . . . He died the intimate friend of Augustus, while at this time he had Antony for master, and Antony was his treasury, whence he drew large sums for the services he rendered him.' The official reason for the visit of Dellius was to invite Cleopatra to come to Tarsus, that she might answer some accusations which had been brought against her of assisting Cassius in his campaign against Dolabella. But this was but a pretext; for—as we have seen above—the triumvirs were correctly informed both as to her acts and her intentions; and Antony himself certainly knew that Cleopatra had aided Dolabella and not Cassius, in the first place with money and in the second by putting her army at the disposal of his envoys. Rather it is to be believed that the triumvir had charged his friend to persuade the Queen, at all costs, to come to Tarsus and respond to his advances.

The majority of historians who have concerned themselves with these events assert that Cleopatra caught Antony in her net by feigning resistance, in order, later on, to overcome him with her love, and, finally, ruin him completely. But, as a fact, it was Antony who desired Cleopatra, whatever the cost of her capture. He thirsted for her charms, and for caresses which he had been denied both in his

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own family and in his numberless adventures; and it is probable that for many years, perhaps since their first encounter in Syria, he had yearned to clasp in his arms the lovely child of his earlier days, now grown to be a woman, beautiful, witty, and accomplished.

According to Plutarch, 'Dellius no sooner observed the beauty and address of Cleopatra, than he concluded that such a woman, so far from having anything to apprehend from the resentment of Antony, would certainly exercise a great influence over him. He therefore paid his court to the amiable Egyptian, and solicited her to go, as Homer says, "in her best attire," into Cilicia, assuring her that she had nothing to fear from Antony, who was the most courtly general in the world.' Plutarch is mistaken in thinking that Dellius now saw Cleopatra for the first time. As he had been one of Caesar's courtiers, he must certainly have known the Queen at the time of her sojourn at Rome, a fact which is borne out, moreover, by letters which he wrote to her, and which are quoted by Seneca. Rather is it to be supposed that Antony chose Dellius in preference to any other ambassador because he already knew the Queen. It is at any rate not to be questioned that it was his arguments and his solicitations that determined Cleopatra to make the journey to Tarsus, with a suite as numerous as it was brilliant. But, for the moment, she did not promise to comply with what he asked, nor did she refuse, although her mind was doubtless already made up. The beautiful Queen

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could not be ignorant of the fact that Antony was in love with her, and she counted on his passion to aid her in the realisation of her ambitious schemes.

Hardly had Dellius departed, than Cleopatra began to make preparations for the journey. Plutarch says that 'she took with her such treasures, ornaments, and presents as were suitable to the dignity and affluence of her kingdom, but she chiefly relied on her personal charms and based her fondest hopes on them.' She set out upon the journey without telling anyone, and arrived at Tarsus quite unexpectedly.

CHAPTER VIII

CLEOPATRA AT TARSUS. ANTONY AT ALEXANDRIA

CLEOPATRA'S visit to Tarsus, in the spring of the year 713 (41 B.C.), marks the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the world. Antony was not expecting the Queen of Egypt, when, suddenly, the rumour spread that she was entering the town. Carrying out the advice given her by Quintus Dellius, Cleopatra had taken care that her arrival should be in every way worthy of her.

'She sailed along the River Cydnus in a most magnificent galley,' says Plutarch. 'The stern was covered with gold, the sails were of purple, and the oars were silver. These, in their motion, kept time to the music of flutes and pipes and harps. The Queen, in the dress and character of Venus, lay under a canopy embroidered with gold, of the most exquisite workmanship; while boys, like painted cupids, stood fanning her on each side of the sofa. Her maids were of the most distinguished beauty, and, habited like the Nereids and the Graces, assisted in the steerage and conduct of the vessel. The fragrance of burning incense was diffused along the shores, which were covered with multitudes of people. Some followed the procession, and such numbers went down from the city to see it, that

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Antony was at last left alone on the tribunal. A rumour was soon spread that Venus was come to feast with Bacchus for the benefit of Asia. Antony sent to invite her to supper; but she thought it his duty to wait upon her, and to show his politeness on her arrival. He complied. He was astonished at the magnificence of the preparation; but particularly at that multitude of lights, which were raised or let down together, and disposed in such a variety of square and circular figures that they afforded one of the most pleasing spectacles that has been recorded in history.

‘The day following Antony invited her to sup with him, and was ambitious to outdo her in the elegance and magnificence of the entertainment. But he was soon convinced that he came short of her in both, and was the first to ridicule the meanness and vulgarity of his treat.’

The writers of antiquity give us glowing accounts of the splendour of the banquets and feasts given by Cleopatra in Antony’s honour, as well as of the presents made to the generals and the attendants of the triumvir. Socrates of Rhodes, among others, whom Adolphe Stahr has taken as his authority for this portion of his work, makes it very clear that, when once the Queen had decided to become the mistress of Antony, she was lavish of her treasures and endeavoured to gain the support of all the Roman dignitaries then at Tarsus. She loaded them with presents in a manner that was truly regal, displaying in her choice the ex-

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quisite tact of a noble lady. As for the accusations made concerning the assistance given to Cassius against Dolabella, it was all the more easy for her to justify herself in that all the world knew the manner in which she had comported herself on that occasion, and the triumvirs themselves were quite satisfied as to her behaviour. On the other hand, we find her demanding satisfaction for certain offences, imaginary rather than real. The Queen saw at once that Antony had conceived an ardent passion for her and that she could obtain all she wanted from him ; but she showed great restraint and moderation in not at once yielding to the triumvir's importunities, and in asking nothing that might compromise her and make her appear grasping and self-seeking. She sought above all to consolidate her power and secure the throne for her son ; and what she asked cost Antony nothing at all. All her wishes were therefore granted as soon as they were stated. In the first place, Ptolemy XIII., the pretender, who had withdrawn to the town of Aradus, in Phœnicia, was put to death ; then death was meted out to Arsinoë, who, fearing the risk she ran, had left Ephesus and taken refuge at Miletus, in the temple of Diana. At the same time the Egyptian admiral, Serapio, who had handed over his fleet to Cassius without waiting for orders from Cleopatra, was dragged out of Tyre, where he had taken refuge, and put to the torture. Nor would Megabysus, the high priest of Ephesus, have escaped punishment for his suspected good-will towards Arsinoë had not the

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Ephesians sent an embassy to Cleopatra, and thus won her pardon for his guilt.

The historians who relate these punishments and executions conclude from them that Cleopatra was even more cruel than she was ambitious. Certainly it was no small thing to put to death three people, of whom one was her own sister, but, in the higher spheres of government, such matters are differently regarded. The conduct of Arsinoë would have been looked upon as high treason, even in our own day; and no monarchical government would hesitate to remove all who conspired against the reigning sovereign. Even in France, if, for example, an adventurer were to succeed in passing himself off as the late Prince Louis Napoleon, son of Napoleon III., and to excite serious trouble, would he not be consigned to the guillotine as soon as the fraud was discovered? And if a superior officer of the French marine had taken it upon himself, without orders from his government, to deliver his ships into the hands of the Turks or the Greeks, in the war of 1807, would he not have been shot immediately?

But that which shows most plainly the character of the hatred borne towards Cleopatra by the Romans—a hatred of which the diatribes of historians are but a feeble echo—is the fact that they attribute such protective measures to the Queen's cruelty, while, on the other hand, they extol Octavius Augustus as a model, a paragon of virtue and moderation: that Octavius who put to death thousands of good citizens, including Cicero, Lepidus,

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and so many others who were not even his enemies, but with whom he had no other fault to find save that they were rich; that Octavius who sent to the scaffold the sons of Cæsar and Antony: Cæsarion and Antyllus, who had been delivered into his hands by traitors.

Moreover, if we compare Cleopatra's government in Egypt with the administration of affairs at Rome, either at this time, or during the reign of Augustus, it is impossible not to observe a striking contrast between the humane and thoughtful conduct of the Queen, who saw to the personal well-being of her people, and protected the property of her subjects, and that of the chief men of the Republic, in whose hands Rome became the scene of perpetual civil war, of massacre, extortion, and proscription.

Cleopatra only remained at Tarsus for a few days. Her galleys awaited her at the mouth of the Cydnus, and she took her departure with as much satisfaction as she had felt when, in all her magnificence and splendour, she set out. She was once again secure upon her throne; her sovereignty over Cyprus had been confirmed; the dominion of Egypt over Arabia Petraea, the Arab tribes of Nabathæa, and the shores of Cyrene recognised without opposition. Never, since the days of Ptolemy Physcon, had the empire of the Lagidæ owned so many lands or possessed frontiers so vast. Commercial relations, which had either been interrupted or abandoned, could now be resumed, and the traffic between West and East, North

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and South, re-established. And now the Queen's thoughts began again to dwell upon the great schemes which were hatching at the time of Cæsar's death.

Plutarch is mistaken when he says, in his life of Mark Antony, that the triumvir was carried off to Egypt by Cleopatra, that, in fact, she 'led her amorous captive in triumph to Alexandria.' During her short stay at Tarsus, the Queen's conduct had been far too dignified and reserved to allow of her committing so gross an error on her departure. It is an acknowledged fact that Cleopatra and Antony had come to an understanding, and that the latter had promised to visit her in the following winter, and it is equally certain that Cleopatra returned from Tarsus to her capital alone. It would also seem that, on the way, she stopped at Cyprus, and that bronze medals struck at that time in her image commemorate her visit to Paphos.

In order that he might not have to go very far from Egypt, Antony deferred the war against the Parthians to a later date, and, leaving Tarsus and journeying across Judea, he came to Syria at the beginning of the winter. His generals had occupied Armenia and the valley of the Euphrates, and were wasting time over the siege of Palmyra. The triumvir, for his part, demanded heavy war contributions from Judea and Palestine, and from all the princes of the East, and chose Herod to be King of Judea. This Herod was the son of Antipater, and related to Cleopatra. Then, before

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the beginning of the rainy season, Antony went into winter quarters; and, entrusting Syria and Asia-Minor to two of his generals, he set out, with a numerous suite, for Egypt. It was not Antony the hero, the victor, nor even Antony the Roman triumvir, that came to Cleopatra's door, but simply Antony the lover, who, when he made his entry into Alexandria, the better to please the woman he so fondly loved, assumed the simple dress of the Greek and the white buskin of Athens and conducted himself throughout his visit as a noble attendant on the Queen.

Cleopatra, whose mode of living when she was alone was as peaceful as it was unpretentious, gave her guest a magnificent reception. Feasts and banquets followed one another without intermission; and, as in earlier days, when Julius Cæsar was in Egypt, the jewels and precious objects belonging to the royal treasury were requisitioned to help to adorn the halls of the palace. Thus was it made known to Antony that Alexandria was a capital in which the greatest luxury reigned, that the Queen's residence was the noblest in the world, and that she herself could, did she wish it, eclipse everyone in the splendour of her entertainment. Moreover, the promise given at Tarsus was fulfilled at Alexandria: Cleopatra now gave herself to Antony without a moment's hesitation. And as she wished to captivate the triumvir not by her caresses and charms alone, but also by means of the refinements of Egyptian civilisation and the delights of Alexandria, she endeavoured

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by every means in her power to prepare her lover's mind and tastes for the task for which her ambition destined him.

The triumvir had already strong Philhellenic tendencies; but Cleopatra wished to make him wholly Greek, in order that he might the more easily break the bonds that bound him to his former life. And it is very possible that she would have attained her end, had she been no more than a clever woman and not a woman in love. But she began by admiring and even spoiling the hero, lavishing upon him all the tenderness of a great love; very soon, Antony was incapable of doing anything without Cleopatra, while the Queen was unhappy when he was away from her, if only for an instant. They were never apart; day and night saw them together; together they visited the theatres and the hippodrome; together they attended the lectures given at the museum. Antony accompanied Cleopatra in her daily visits to the gymnasium, where she was wont to occupy herself with affairs of state. They were to be seen side by side fishing in the lake, hunting, and even, in the night-time, amusing themselves in the streets, playing pranks which the Alexandrians, always ready to laugh, took in very good part: they said 'that Antony presented his comic parts in Alexandria, and reserved the tragic for Rome.' To banquets, given in her lover's honour with every imaginable luxury, Cleopatra invited all the notabilities of the scientific and artistic world of Alexandria, with the result that these repasts were

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the meeting-place of the most brilliant and cultured men of the time. To obtain an idea of the sumptuousness of these feasts, we have only to read Pliny's account of how the beautiful Queen one day made a wager with Antony that she would spend over a single banquet as much as 10,000,000 sesterces (£300,000 of our money). The triumvir would not admit that it was possible, and Cleopatra offered to prove to him that it was. The repast, although magnificent, proved to be only such as they were in the habit of enjoying, and Antony, who thought the wager was already won, asked, in a mocking tone, for the account. 'This is only a preliminary supper,' said she, 'the other will cost the sum agreed upon, and at it I, alone, will eat to the value of 10,000,000 sesterces.' She then gave orders for the next course to be put before them. Her attendants, who had received their instructions, then placed before her a vessel full of vinegar, a liquid capable of dissolving pearls. The Queen was wearing in her ears two of the largest pearls that had ever been seen, an inheritance from the Kings of the East. While Antony, on fire with impatience, was eagerly watching her movements, she removed one of the pearls and threw it into the vinegar; and, as soon as she saw that it had dissolved, she drank the contents of the vessel. She had the second in her hand, and was about to dispose of it in the same way, when Plancus, who was the arbitrator of the wager, stopped her, saying that Antony had already lost. After Cleopatra's death, this second pearl was brought to Rome,

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cut into two, and fashioned into earrings for the Venus of the Pantheon. 'And thus,' adds Pliny, in melancholy strain, 'the half of one of the suppers of Antony and Cleopatra now decorates a goddess.'

The weeks and months of their honeymoon sped by in pleasure and amusement, and the winter passed while the lovers were only intent 'on offering at the shrine of luxury . . . the greatest of all sacrifices, the sacrifice of time.' In the meantime, events urgently demanded Antony's presence, both in the East and in the West. In the East, an army of Parthians, led by Labienus, was advancing with all haste into Syria; in the West, serious disturbances had broken out in Italy, owing to the machinations of Fulvia. Octavius, in accordance with the agreement made by the three masters of Rome, had been obliged to marry Claudia, Fulvia's daughter by Publius Clodius, quite a young girl; but he had repudiated his wife the day after the marriage, and, refusing to have anything to do with her, had sent the maiden back to her mother. Fulvia was so enraged at this that she immediately summoned her husband to come and avenge the affront put upon her daughter; but Antony had no wish to leave the delights of Alexandria and do battle with Octavius. He had given himself up to the seductions of love, and it seems that it was Cleopatra herself who tore herself from his arms and bade him remember that a man in his position has certain duties that must be fulfilled. This at least is to be inferred from

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one of Plutarch's tales of a fishing party at Alexandria. 'Antony was fishing one day with Cleopatra and had ill success, which, in the presence of his mistress, he looked upon as a disgrace; he therefore ordered one of his assistants to dive and put on his hook such fish as had been taken before. This scheme he put in practice three or four times, and Cleopatra perceived it. She affected, however, to be surprised at his success; expressed her wonder to the people about her; and, the day following, invited them to see fresh proofs of it. When the day following came, the vessel was crowded with people; and as soon as Antony had let down his line, she ordered one of her divers immediately to put a salt fish on his hook. When Antony found he had caught his fish, he drew up his line; and this, as may be supposed, occasioned no small mirth amongst the spectators. "Go, general!" said Cleopatra, "leave fishing to us petty princes of Pharos and Canopus; your game is cities, kingdoms, and provinces."

At length Antony began to realise that he must put an end to his happy days of holiday. News of an increasingly disquieting nature continued to arrive from Rome. Eager to avenge the insult to her daughter, and desirous also of compelling her husband to return to Rome, Fulvia had got together an army, and was preparing to make an attack upon Octavius. As the latter was at the time disturbed by Sextus Pompey, and was not, for that reason, anxious to involve himself in fresh struggles, he sent two of his friends, Cæcina and

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Cocceius, to Antony to try to persuade him to return to Italy. Upon his becoming acquainted with these events, Antony immediately awoke to a sense of duty and, bidding farewell to his mistress, he left Alexandria in the spring of the year 714 for Phœnicia, where his legions were being harassed by the Parthians. Naturally the triumvir did not tear himself away from the Queen without vowing that he would soon see her again, and Cleopatra sent her fleet to accompany Antony on his journey as far as Tyre.

CHAPTER IX

THE REIGN OF CLEOPATRA

WHEN Cleopatra and Antony parted, with the firm conviction that their separation would only be for a short time, they little thought that three years would go by before they would see each other again. These were three eventful years, and years full of anxiety both for the woman who feared for the fate of her lover, and for the Queen with thoughts set on the preservation of her throne. During all this time, Cleopatra only learnt what was happening in Italy and in Greece from an occasional bearer of news or from the reports of her functionaries living in those countries. At Rome her agent was still Ammonius, that old and faithful servant of the Lagidæ, who, being intimately acquainted with the affairs of the Republic, and maintaining excellent relations in official circles, kept her regularly supplied with trustworthy information, obtained from reliable sources. Thus, no sooner had Antony left Alexandria than the Queen had news of the military preparations of Fulvia, of the peculation and infamy of Manius, Antony's confidential agent at Rome, of Octavius' victory over Fulvia, and the latter's illness at Sicyon, whither she had been obliged to fly. A little later Cleopatra heard

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again that Antony had only stayed in Syria for a few days, and had then hastened on into Greece, whence he had sped to Rome. She also learnt that Octavius had endeavoured to prevent his rival from landing in Italy, and that Antony had only succeeded in extricating himself from the difficulties surrounding him by the popularity in which he was held by the legionaries and his own personal courage; and again that Sextus Pompey had offered to join forces with him against Octavius, whom he had already defeated several times in Southern Italy, but that the faithful Antony refused to listen to his proposals. Finally she was informed of Fulvia's death in Sicily; she had never recovered from her illness, nor had she seen her husband again and become reconciled with him. We are told that when Antony heard of the death of his wife, he was deeply grieved.

Of all these pieces of news, none gave Cleopatra any satisfaction save one: that of Fulvia's death; for, if, in the light of the easy morals and the lax marriage laws of Egypt, her *liaison* with Antony shocked few in Alexandria, by the Romans she was regarded as no better than a harlot, for, by the laws of the Republic, not even was the name of concubine allowed to a foreigner living with a Roman citizen as his wife. Now as Cleopatra knew that she was soon to become a mother for a second time and felt that the realisation of her ambitious schemes seemed likely to be delayed, it was important and urgent that her own position and

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that of the child about to be born should be made such as the laws and customs of Rome recognised. As long as Antony's wife was alive, such recognition was almost impossible, while now the triumvir could legitimatise the union, provided only that he could persuade the Senate to ratify the marriage. In the autumn of the year 714 the Queen gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl, who were named Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene.

In the meantime Cleopatra was very much concerned with the turn events had taken on the eastern frontier of her kingdom. Taking advantage of the disagreement between Octavius and Antony, the Parthians had penetrated into Syria, and there had sprung up in that country several factions of malcontents, whose ambitions had been fired afresh by the inaction of the Romans and the energetic action on the part of the Parthians. In Judea, too, there was evidence of disorder. Antigonus had made an inroad into that country, and Herod and his brothers were incapable of defending the throne. Finally the Arab tribes of Nabathaea, set on by Labienus, were invading Arabia Petraea and threatening Egypt itself, so that Cleopatra was obliged to send a strong army against them. By the end of the autumn, Antigonus succeeded in taking Jerusalem, and Herod fled to Pelusium, where he found the Egyptian army encamped under the walls of the town. From there he journeyed to Alexandria, to beg for help from Cleopatra.

The Queen received her kinsman with great

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kindness, for she had known him when she was still a child, and they were both in the camp of Gabinius; she even went so far as to offer him the chief command of her armies, but Herod would not accept the office. Yet Cleopatra had doubtless little desire to interfere with what was going on in Judea, for in doing so she might create fresh enemies and even involve herself in a war with Rome; and she seems to have made Herod understand her position, for he subsequently decided to address himself to the Roman Senate direct, although it was then mid-winter. It is probable that the Queen took occasion to send word to Antony, bidding him have nothing to do with the overtures of Sextus Pompey, and to return to Egypt. But the message reached him too late, for Herod was delayed by bad weather, and only reached Italy after the reconciliation of the two triumvirs.

At Rome, Herod found in Antony a friend and a protector, and his mission was crowned with instant success. Not only did the Senate spontaneously and unanimously recognise him King of Judea, but they also decided that the Roman legions stationed in Syria should help him to recover his throne.

In the meantime the Parthians were still pursuing their march, and had taken Damascus, Antioch, Laodicea, and had levied war contributions on the towns of Tyre and Sidon, and several other coast towns. They held the whole of Phœnicia when, at length, in the spring of the year 715, the Roman army received orders to begin operations. One of

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Antony's generals, Ventidius, immediately directed his march to the north-east, while Sosius, in a series of brilliant victories, drove the Parthians out of Phœnicia and Judea. At the same time Cleopatra's army, under Athenion, broke up the camp of Pelusium, and invaded Arabia Petræa, cutting the Nabathæans to pieces. The expedition was brought to a successful issue the more easily in that Sosius had already inflicted several grave defeats on Antigonus, the ally of the rebellious Arabs. At length, when this prince had been driven back behind the walls of Jerusalem, the Roman general hastened to invest the town; and, acting under orders from Rome, he proclaimed Herod King of Judea.

While the successes won by Egyptian arms on the eastern frontiers of the empire in 715 (39 B.C.) increased the authority of Cleopatra as well in her own realm as among the neighbouring people, the news from Rome wounded her woman's vanity and made her fear that her great schemes were after all destined to failure. Had the Queen of Egypt been only a wise sovereign and not also a lover and a woman, the events that were taking place in the capital of the Republic would certainly have convinced her that, in spite of his great personal courage and his indisputable military talents, Antony possessed neither strength of mind nor political perspicacity sufficient to create a great eastern empire; and she would have been thoroughly justified in drawing such conclusions.

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But her love for Antony prevented her from seeing that he had no knowledge of men whatever, and, further, that he was completely lacking in self-control and clearness of vision.

As a fact, when he returned to Italy, the triumvir showed himself quite unable to profit by the occasion and settle affairs to his own advantage with his cowardly and treacherous ally. As Octavius was, at this time, on bad terms with Lepidus and at open war with Sextus Pompey, Antony could the more easily have checkmated him, especially as he was himself very popular at Rome, and none among the legionaries could ever have been persuaded to take up arms against their old leader. Yet Antony again took the wrong course, and became reconciled with Octavius, marrying the latter's sister-in-law, Octavia. Though a man whose every movement gave evidence of great physical strength, and who was courageous to the point of foolhardiness, he had not moral strength enough to brave the sarcasm of the Romans and stand by Cleopatra; and as he was also incapable of resisting the flatteries lavished on him on all sides by the friends of Octavius, he renounced the only woman he had ever truly loved, and lost at the same time an opportunity by which he might have become master of the world, or, at all events, of the eastern half of the Roman Empire.

When Antony, at the close of the year 715 (39 B.C.), married Octavia, she was thirty-two, and had only been a widow for a few months. She had married Caius Marcellus in 698, and, two years later, Cæsar

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had wished to procure her divorce in order that she might become the wife of Pompey, already an old man; but the latter refused her on account of the difference in their ages. Octavia had two children—a boy and a girl—by her first husband; and as she was about to have a third child by the latter, a decree of the Senate was necessary, if Antony was to marry her immediately. A few weeks after her second marriage, she gave birth to a girl. Although the writers of the epoch of Augustus are never weary of praising the beauty and virtue of Octavia, it is none the less probable that at the time of her marriage with Antony she had already lost much of her freshness and youth. But however that may have been, the history of her life proves her a kind, good woman: one of those mild and gentle natures over whom the passions hold no sway, and who are alike incapable of inspiring passion. On the other hand, according to the testimony of Roman authors, she seems to have been one of the few matrons of that epoch who, even in the light of our own day, would have been considered a truly virtuous woman.

In consequence of the danger arising from the incursions of Sextus Pompey in Southern Italy, it became necessary to come to terms with him, and it was arranged that his attacks should cease. Antony was obliged to remain in Rome until the autumn of the year 715, and then went with his family to reside at Athens, where he remained for a year and a half. He found far more enjoyment in this town than at Rome, and spent two

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very gay winters there; but, in the meantime, he journeyed twice to Italy, whither he was summoned by his brother-in-law, only to be sent back again immediately. It was due to Octavia alone that war did not break out between the two triumvirs; twice did this noble woman succeed in appeasing Antony's wrath. For the rest, Mark Antony seemed to be very fond of his wife and perfectly happy in the quiet life he spent with her in the bosom of his family. When, in 716, Octavia bore him a daughter—who, later, became the wife of Drusus and the mother of Germanicus and the Emperor Claudius—everyone thought that his 'liaison' with the Queen of Egypt was definitely at an end. Moreover, the courtiers surrounding the triumvir conceived a bitter hatred against Cleopatra, whom they accused of being a sorcerer and witch. They attributed to her freaks of gallantry which were unworthy of her rank, laughed at her religion, mocked at her love, and strove to efface the thought of her from Antony's mind. The chief of these intriguers was that same Dellius who had formerly arranged the interview at Tarsus. As for friends, the Queen could count but very few: the best among them was one Fonteius Capito, a friend of Antony's childhood, who several times assisted him in his negotiations with Octavius and remained faithful to him when he fell upon evil days.

Yet the Queen had not abandoned all hope of one day recovering the love of Antony. Knowing Octavia as she did, she felt sure that, with her cold and conventional nature, hidebound by all the

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prejudices of the Roman world, she was incapable of keeping the triumvir for very long by her side. She had, moreover, secret agents at Athens who took every opportunity to remind Antony, as if by chance, of the happy days he had spent at Alexandria, and to pronounce the name of his mistress in his hearing. One of these emissaries was doubtless that Alexas or Alexander who, according to Plutarch, was introduced to Antony by Timagenes. The son of that Alexander II., who was put to death at Laodicea at Pompey's orders, and grandson of Alexandra Janaus, the last Jewish king of Judea, Alexander probably came to Athens in the company of his brother-in-law Herod. When, thanks to the protection of Asinius Pollio, and on the recommendation of the Queen of Egypt, he gained admittance to the court of Antony, he rapidly succeeded in winning the confidence of the triumvir and exercised a preponderating influence over his life. Several writers impute to him the coldness that grew up between Antony and his wife; later, after the battle of Actium, not even Herod's intervention could save him from the wrath of Octavius. Appian of Alexandria mentions,—among several others,—another of Cleopatra's agents, that fortune-telling gipsy who one day, according to Plutarch, told Antony, who was as superstitious as a child, that the star of his fortune, although glorious in itself, was eclipsed and obscured by that of Octavius, and advised him by all means to keep at the greatest possible distance from that young man. 'The genius of your life,' said he, 'is afraid

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of his; when it is alone its port is erect and fearless; when his approaches, it is dejected and depressed.' Stahr observes on this point that this oracle had in truth no aim other than that of keeping Antony at a distance from Rome.

Cleopatra, wounded in her vanity, deceived in her ambitious hopes, made no secret of her grief and mortification. At one time she would lose her energy completely and appear to fall into a kind of trance; at another she would face her destiny bravely, and spend hours in endeavouring to procure means of assuring herself of success.

Historians are not agreed as to whether Cleopatra was really in love with Antony or whether her conduct was dictated solely by ambition. If the latter is the case, her passion could only have been a clever comedy, played throughout with infinite skill. When Plutarch describes the anguish of the Queen during the absence of Antony, he represents her despair and her ardent longings as being merely feints to strengthen her hold over the triumvir. Ancient historians quote this author and are, for the most part, of his opinion. Modern writers, however, seem rather to have been influenced by Shakespeare, who, in his tragedy, contrives above all to throw into relief the woman passionately in love. There are writers, too, who see in the Queen of Egypt only a woman blinded by passion, and unconsciously dragging her lover into the gulf into which she was herself destined to fall. For my part, I consider that it was in the first instance for

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political reasons that Cleopatra went to Tarsus, although it is not at all unlikely that Antony, the handsome and the brave, won her heart before very long. There can be little doubt that she easily fell a prey to passion; and I am inclined to agree with Stahr when he says: 'She was a woman, and only twenty-six.' Even if we admit that necessity and ambition alone threw her into the arms of Cæsar, it does not follow that she was incapable of loving. The manly beauty of Mark Antony, his bravery, his distinguished bearing, certainly produced a marked impression upon Cleopatra; and although her wisdom and prudence at first counterbalanced its effect, it would appear that it was not alone through the senses and her thirst for glory that she later became attached to Antony, but also through the heart; and it is certain that she conceived a violent passion for the handsome triumvir whose destiny was so intimately associated with that of the Aphrodite of the Nile.

When she left Tarsus, Cleopatra had probably no thought beyond gratifying her ambition, and, the better to ensure success, she cast her own person into the balance and bound herself to the hero of Philippi by ties of love. This seems to admit of no doubt whatever; but as Blaze de Bury remarks, 'Antony was by no means a nonentity, content that his love for Cleopatra should go unrequited; on the contrary, he was of the men who make women love them.' We have no grounds for supposing that Cleopatra's heart

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remained cold after her relations with the triumvir had become intimate; on the contrary, subsequent events go amply to prove that her passion soon became so ardent that her jealousy as a woman upset her calculations as a Queen. It is therefore more than probable that the fits of despair to which, according to Plutarch, the Queen was subject during Antony's stay at Athens, were perfectly sincere and that the unhappy woman was passionately devoted to her lover. As a fact, not only did she see her political plans falling one by one to the ground, and the father of her children taken possession of by another woman, but also did she feel that she had been slighted and her vanity wounded; I therefore cannot see why—as Plutarch insinuates—Cleopatra need have emaciated herself by abstinence. It is likewise perfectly natural that, during this critical period of her life, the Queen did not occupy herself greatly with affairs of state; the eunuch Mardion, grand-master of the ceremonies, and Pothinus, at this time commanding the Mediterranean fleet, began to assume an increasingly important position in the management of the realm.

In the course of the year 716, while Antony was occupied with affairs in Italy, his generals, Ventidius and Sosius, gained a series of brilliant victories in Syria. Ventidius first laid siege to the town of Samosata, but without success; in the end, however, he made himself master of the town by coming to terms with its commander;

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then he proceeded to defeat the Parthians in one encounter after another, slaying Pacorus, the king's son, in one of the battles, and driving the enemy back as far as the Euphrates, compelling them to entrench on the left bank of the river. Sosius, on his side, took Damascus, cut the enemy's army to pieces, captured Jerusalem after a long siege, and took King Antigonus prisoner; the unfortunate prince was publicly beheaded by Antony without an instant's delay. In the meantime, the Egyptian general Athenion had reconquered the whole of Idumea and subdued the Arab tribes. This victory was of very great importance to Egypt, as the authority of the Queen over the peoples of North Arabia guaranteed to Alexandria a profitable commerce with India and Persia, by way of the Desert.

While Antony's armies were gaining victory after victory in the East, and his general Ventidius was celebrating his triumph at Rome, Octavius was meeting with very severe reverses in his struggle with Sextus Pompey. He had already lost the greater part of his ships and was no longer able to supply Rome with food with any regularity, and the capital was threatened with famine. Not knowing what course to adopt, he implored Antony to come to his aid. The latter had little desire to do the work of his rival, yet in the end he yielded to his wife's entreaties and determined to set out for Italy. Octavia, who had reason to dread the meeting of the two brothers-in-law, which could hardly be expected

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to be amicable, accompanied her husband with her whole family; and it was only owing to her intervention that harmony was restored between Octavius and Antony. The latter handed over to Octavius 120 vessels, thoroughly well equipped, with which to combat Sextus Pompey; and on his side Octavius promised to send Antony 20,000 men for his campaign against the Parthians. And finally, as the second term of their triumvirate had just expired, they renewed it for a further five years, without any intervention on the part of the Roman people.

The war against the Parthians was popular both with the friends of Antony and Octavius and with the citizens of Rome, who, ruined by the civil war, hoped to enrich themselves with the spoils of the vanquished. Antony himself was compelled to acknowledge that, if he did not want to lose the advantage of the successes of Ventidius, he must himself take prompt and energetic action; and he decided to set out immediately for the eastern provinces of the empire. Leaving all his ships with Octavius, and his family lodged in the house that had once belonged to Pompey, he left Italy about the middle of the spring. His wife went with him as far as Corcyra, and then returned to Rome to hasten the despatch of the relays promised by Octavius. But the latter's mind was set on the destruction of Antony, and while evincing the warmest friendship for him, he did all he could to bring the campaign against the Parthians to a disastrous

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conclusion. In the first place, he not only did not send the Italian legions he had promised, but even prevented the least reinforcement from setting out from Rome. In the second, he entered upon a number of intrigues with the Eastern princes, and endeavoured to induce them to refuse to help Antony. And finally, he came to an understanding with Artavasdes, King of Armenia, and together they arranged that the latter should betray the triumvir at the first opportunity.

So far from thinking that his brother-in-law was intriguing against him, Antony had set sail with every hope of bringing the campaign to a successful issue. Arrived in Asia-Minor, he proceeded to collect as numerous an army as possible. All the legions stationed in Asia and Greece received orders to concentrate in Syria, while the vassal princes and the kings of the neighbouring states were invited to lead their men into the camp at Antioch. All hastened to conform to his wishes. Among others, Artavasdes arrived with 6000 horse and 7000 foot, and promised that another body of horse, some 26,000 strong, should join the Roman army in Media. In short, when Antony reviewed the troops at his disposal, he counted 60,000 Roman legionaries, 10,000 horse soldiers from Spain and Gaul, and 30,000 auxiliaries, both horse and foot, furnished by the allies. Notwithstanding that the legions promised by Octavius did not appear, never since the time of Alexander the Great had so numerous an army been got together in one place. But one thing was wanting, and that a most important thing: Antony

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lacked money. The sums necessary to arm and equip his troops were not forthcoming, and what was more, his provinces could not supply him with money, as they had been drained of all they possessed. It was in vain that he voted new taxes: the people were unable to pay them. 'Finally,' says Plutarch, 'he laid a double impost on Asia; and a certain orator, Hybreas, the agent for the people, told him, with a pleasantry that was agreeable to his humour, that if he doubled the taxes, he ought to double the seasons too, and supply the people with two summers and two winters.' After having waited in vain for the arrival of help from Rome, and recognising how utterly impossible it was to hope to obtain the sums he wanted from the provinces of Asia, he charged one of his staunchest friends, Fonteius Capito, to apply for aid to Cleopatra. It would seem that the Queen at first refused to listen to his petition, and subsequently named certain exacting terms as the condition on which she would send a relay of troops; Antony then sent Capito to Alexandria to beg Cleopatra to come herself to Laodicea to pursue the negotiations.

That was exactly what the Queen desired: to be face to face with Antony once more. She had no other wish; she had offered up no other prayer to her gods. She felt sure that full and entire satisfaction would immediately be given her and that her *liaison* with the triumvir, interrupted for a period of three years, would be renewed as soon as she stood with open arms before him.

CHAPTER X

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

CLEOPATRA, accompanied by Fonteius Capito, came to Laodicea during the summer of the year 717. There is no doubt that both the lovers were anxious to see each other again, but Cleopatra had been sighing for Antony for the whole of the three long years. We can imagine the reproaches with which she greeted him and the scenes of jealousy that were enacted. A woman will still be a woman, whether her forehead be encircled with a royal diadem or not; and the jewels adorning her breast, however costly, are incapable of repressing a beating heart. Yet Cleopatra did not want to punish her lover; she was anxious to win him back again. She forgot the insults to which he had submitted her, the torture she had been forced to endure. Antony, on his side, kindly, compassionate, and generous as he was, only thought of how he might obtain her pardon. The inevitable came to pass. The Queen's hopes were realised: Antony capitulated, and their union was legalised by a marriage which only the death of the lovers could again break. The writers of antiquity have not transmitted to us details of Cleopatra's journey to Laodicea, as they have done with regard to her visit to Tarsus, but the results of her meeting with

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Antony are nevertheless known to us. Antony made legitimate the twins that she had borne him: Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, and concluded a treaty of alliance with the Queen, to whom he handed over Phœnicia,—with the exception of the towns of Tyre and Sidon,—Northern Judea, that part of Idumea which was inhabited by the Arab tribes of Nabathæa, and the regions stretching away to the north, in the direction of the Mediterranean. Cleopatra, for her part, not only promised to pay nearly all the expenses of the Parthian war, but also to supply the Romans with the food and war materials of which they stood so much in need. But although the maintenance of so numerous an army must have cost Cleopatra enormous sums of money, the arrangement did not fail to cause grave dissatisfaction at Rome. In the first place, the marriage of Antony with Cleopatra was very galling to the vanity of Octavius and Octavia; in the second, the material advantages of the agreement were a source of envy to the avaricious and grasping Romans.

The news of the concessions made to Cleopatra was reported at Rome in most exaggerated terms. It was said that Antony had given her the whole empire; and serious historians, like Plutarch, pretended, even after two generations, that he made her a gift of the provinces of Phœnicia, and Coele Syria, the island of Cyprus, and a great part of Cilicia. This cannot have been true, for Coele Syria and Cilicia continued to form part of the territory of the Republic. Cyprus we know to have been

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already given to Egypt by Cæsar; and from that time it had always been governed by officials appointed by Cleopatra. As a fact, Antony only ceded to his mistress the sea-board of Phœnicia and the narrow strip of land which lay between Libya and the Mediterranean, even then making exception of the two richest towns, Tyre and Sidon. And, in return for these lands, devastated as they had been by the Parthian occupation, for these towns and villages, which were in ruins and practically deserted, Cleopatra bound herself to provide for all the wants of the Roman army in the campaign against the Parthians,—surely no small thing. Antony troubled himself little about the evil reports and gossip as to his conduct current at Rome. If anyone ventured to reproach him for his intimacy with Cleopatra, he replied 'that his ancestor Hercules trusted not to the fertility of one woman, as if he had feared the penalties annexed to the law of Solon, but by various connections with the sex, became the founder of many families.' As for those who murmured against the handing over of the provinces to the Queen of Egypt, they received a curt reply. 'The greatness of the Roman Empire,' he said, 'appeared more in giving than receiving kingdoms.' In short, Antony considered the whole of the East as belonging to him,—as a possession which he could dispose of as he wished; he gave Pamphylia to Amyntas and Cappadocia to Archelaus. Indeed, he could not very well have done otherwise, for the majority of the provinces conquered by the

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Romans in Asia-Minor would never have tolerated the administration of proconsuls. But on the other hand, under the government of vassal kings and princes of the soil, the vanquished nations felt themselves to be a great deal better off, and the Romans themselves reaped a greater advantage from the system.

This was so well understood at Rome, that no one there had any fault to find with what he had given away, except in the case of Cleopatra. Moreover Antony was practically compelled to act as he did, because, as soon as his armies left these countries to oppose the Parthians, Syria would have been without defence, and the Romans would have run the risk of being cut off from the base of their operations, or—as happened to Crassus,—of being attacked unexpectedly from the rear.

Having in this manner adequately provided for his army, and having strengthened his headquarters by consolidating his power in Syria and safeguarding himself both from trouble in the interior and a possible attack from the south, Antony set out with his army to seek the enemy. In doing so, the triumvir yielded to the entreaties of Artavasdes, who urged him to begin the campaign, in spite of the fact that the summer season was well advanced. Having crossed the Euphrates, Antony entered Armenia, making straight for the main body of the enemy. Cleopatra accompanied him as far as the banks of the river, and then, returning to Damascus, one of her new possessions, she

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proceeded on a visit to Judea. There she was received by Herod, and she took the opportunity of coming to terms with that King, the results of which were that she ceded to him, for an annual tribute of 200 talents of gold, that part of Judea which she had received from Antony. Both of them were very well pleased with the arrangement: Herod, because the province in question produced balm, and was the richest in Judea; Cleopatra, because her general, Athenion, would continue to occupy the country and send her regularly the amount of tribute due to her. She then returned to her own country by land, being escorted as far as Pelusium by King Herod.

The summer was drawing to a close when the Queen reached Alexandria, and shortly after her arrival she gave birth to a son. Cleopatra had every reason to be satisfied with the results of her journey to Laodicea. From that time her lover belonged to her, body and soul, and nothing could take him from her. Her empire was greater than it had ever been under any of her predecessors since the time of Euergetes. Profound peace reigned in Egypt, the people increased and grew richer year by year, and the Queen's authority was paramount among the princes of the East. Her only anxiety came from Rome, in the news that reached her from that town: the hatred and animosity of the people against Antony was growing daily more bitter, and Octavius was doing his best to aggravate it

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further. This news was even more disagreeable to her than the alarming reports that reached her from Antony's camp.

His campaign in Persia had not been successful. Artavasdes, the chief promoter of the war, was little better than a traitor: he had acted on behalf of Octavius, who did not wish that Antony should cover himself with glory by fresh victories, while he himself was meeting with nothing but reverses in his struggle with Sextus Pompey. Thinking that the body of horse that Artavasdes had assured him would join him in Media was protecting his rear, Antony left all the provisions and baggage under the command of an officer named Tatianus, with a body of troops; and hastening by forced marches up to the walls of Phraata, the capital of Media, he laid siege to that town. But the Parthians had been informed by the King of Armenia of all Antony's movements. Having no anxiety with regard to Phraata, which had been well fortified against an attack, they fell unexpectedly on the rear-guard of the Roman army, and Tatianus, together with 10,000 of his men, were slain on the spot, their movements having been impeded by the machines and ammunition left in their charge. These machines were seized by the enemy and destroyed. Thereupon Artavasdes deserted with his 16,000 horse and withdrew into Northern Armenia. In the meantime the triumvir waited in vain for the legions promised by Octavius in exchange for the ships he had sent to him. Beneath the walls of the besieged town, which

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itself wanted for nothing, the Roman army soon began to suffer great privations, although the rainy season had yet not begun. Seeing that, in these circumstances, it would be impossible for his army to winter before Phraata, and that he could not take the town by assault because he lacked the necessary machines and implements of war, Antony determined to retrace his steps. His retreat is one of the most famous in history. 'They had been twenty-seven days in their return from Phraata to Armenia,' says Plutarch, 'and had beaten the Parthians in eighteen engagements; but these victories were by no means complete, because they could not prosecute their advantages by pursuit.

'Hence it is evident that Artavasdes deprived Antony of the fruits of his Parthian expedition; for had he been assisted by the 16,000 horse which he took with him out of Media, after the Romans had beaten the Parthians in set battles, this cavalry might have taken up the pursuit, and harassed them in such a manner that they could not so often have rallied and returned to the charge.' At length the army reached the borders of Armenia, after having lost 20,000 men. Antony halted, to give his men time to rest and to reprovision the army. But by the beginning of the following year (718) he was again on the march, and reached Syria about the end of January. The army, exhausted by these forced marches, made in perpetual snow across the inhospitable mountains of Asia-Minor, lost another 8000 men.

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In his reports to the Senate, the triumvir mentioned only his victories, passing over in silence the failure of the campaign as a whole. But, at Rome, the people were kept well informed of all that was taking place, for if Antony regularly sent news to his partisans, so too informers were not lacking who sent full accounts to his enemies. The agents in the pay of Cleopatra reported all that was of interest to her: thus she heard of the treachery of Artavasdes, of the siege of Phraata, the defeat of Tatianus, and the heroic retreat, which cost the Romans so many precious lives. Her friends at Rome also kept her informed of the base intrigues of Octavius and his attempts to turn public opinion against Antony and render him more and more unpopular. Cleopatra, whose sagacity was equal to her beauty, had little difficulty in penetrating Octavius' secret designs and in realising that he intended to frustrate Antony's plans and end by making himself absolute and uncontested master of the Roman Empire. These aims, becoming more and more manifest every day, were soon favoured by circumstance. While Antony was being forced to retreat across Asia-Minor, Octavius was winning important victories in Italy: he deprived the third triumvir, Lepidus, by this time an old man, of his power, taking from him his troops and his provinces, and attaching them to his own. At the same time, his general, Agrippa, defeated Sextus Pompey in the decisive battle of Messina, and got possession of the whole of Sicily; Pompey was compelled to quit Italian

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waters and sail with all haste to the East with the remains of his fleet. Cleopatra, knowing how greatly these events had increased Octavius' prestige at Rome, could not be other than extremely anxious about her husband, whose destiny was now bound up in hers.

As soon as he reached Syria, Antony sent messengers to the Queen of Egypt, charged to tell her of the failure of the campaign and to ask for help. Cleopatra, who was expecting the worst, replied that she would come herself, and arranged a meeting in a fort on the sea-coast between Berytus and Sidon, called the White Hair. She then loaded several vessels with provisions and such effects of war as she could get together in her haste, and, taking with her large sums of money as well, she came to White Hair, where Antony was already awaiting her with feverish impatience. The triumvir hastened to equip his troops anew and provide them with all that was lacking: all their arrears were paid, and every legionary received in addition to his pay a sum of 140 sesterces (a sesterce was worth about tenpence). Antony did not conceal the source of the money from his men; on the contrary, he was anxious that they should know that it was Cleopatra who supplied them with provisions, and he took care to see that his officers were satisfied with the Queen's gifts to them.

After their interview, Antony definitely cast in his lot with Cleopatra. He must have recognised that even if Octavius were not his avowed enemy,

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he was in any case the most dangerous of his opponents, and he saw too that he could count on receiving no help whatever from the Republic. On the other hand, Cleopatra, the woman who loved him, the mother of his children, the Queen who had need of his sword, was certainly his natural ally; and, moreover, she had hastened to respond to his first appeal for help. The die was cast; and, from this moment, war between Antony and Octavius was inevitable. In the meantime Octavius as well as Antony judged the time unpropitious: Octavius, because Antony's popularity at Rome was still considerable; Antony, because before taking arms against his rival, he wanted to bring the war with the Parthians to an end, restore the prestige of the Roman arms by a brilliant victory, and win back his reputation as a great general, the lustre of which had become tarnished by his recent reverses. Octavius apparently made better use of his time than Antony; for when, at length, they entered on the struggle, it was no longer looked upon as one between two rival triumvirs at Rome, but rather as a truceless, pitiless war between Egypt and the Republic.

In order that he might not be inconvenienced by bad weather or again betrayed by companions-at-arms little worthy of his confidence, Antony sent his army into winter quarters, for his men were sadly in need of a rest, while he himself returned to Egypt with Cleopatra to prepare for a new expedition against the Parthians. The people of Alexandria received Antony as a general return-

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ing from victory and gave him an enthusiastic welcome. He was treated by all as the husband of their Queen and sovereign of their country; and, moreover, Cleopatra comported herself towards him, both in public and in private, as a loving and submissive woman. It seemed as though the court—who welcomed as their guests not only Antony's generals and the Roman senators of his party, but the ambassadors of foreign kings or vassal princes—were only guided by Cleopatra, while Antony was the pivot on which everything turned. An anecdote reported by Plutarch on the testimony of an eye-witness will the better illustrate our meaning: 'Philotas, a physician of Amphissa, who was at that time pursuing his studies in Alexandria, told my grandfather Lamprias that, being acquainted with one of Antony's cooks, he was invited to see the preparations for supper. When he came into the kitchen, besides an infinite variety of other provisions, he observed eight wild boars roasting whole; and expressed his surprise at the number of the company for whom this enormous provision must have been made. The cook laughed, and said that the company did not exceed twelve; but that, as every dish was to be roasted to a single turn, and as Antony was uncertain as to the time when he would sup, particularly if an extraordinary bottle was going round, it was necessary to have a succession of suppers.'

As soon as he reached Alexandria, Antony

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entered upon various conferences, with a view to the assurance of peace in the West and the conclusion of new alliances with the princes of the East. As a fact, he was anxious, on the one hand, to render it impossible for Artavasdes to injure him, either by some new act of treachery or by open attack; and on the other, not to lose sight of what was taking place at Rome, for it would have been highly imprudent to leave the friends still remaining to him without support, or to ignore the intrigues of Octavius. The latter did not yet dare to remove his mask, for the hero of Pharsalia and Philippi had still many friends left at Rome and, besides, the consuls Cneius Domitius and Caius Sossius were devoted to his cause; but he lost no opportunity of undermining the popularity of his colleague, and writers in his pay seconded his efforts to the utmost of their power, by presenting events in the light best calculated to rouse men's minds against Antony. And yet, in spite of this conduct, he behaved towards his rival as though nothing had occurred to mar the harmony of their relations; he even wrote him a letter in which, without making the least allusion to their differences, he gave him an account of his doings at Rome; and he went so far in his duplicity as to ask help of Antony for the expedition he was about to undertake against the Illyrians. Antony sent back a reply by Bibulus that he would aid him in so far as his own strength allowed him to do so.

It was, at the same time, imperative that Antony

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should keep watch over the movements of Sextus Pompey, who had left Italian waters and taken refuge in the East. When he reached the coasts of Asia-Minor, Sextus offered to enter upon an alliance with Antony against Octavius; but Antony sent him word to lay down his arms and come to him, assuring him that not only would no harm befall him, but that he would be received as a friend. Pompey, however, declined; and while Antony was fighting against the Parthians in Media, he got possession of Lesbos and several other islands of the Ægean Sea, restored his fleet, and was holding it in readiness for any eventuality. When Antony heard this, he charged Titius, one of his generals, to keep a careful watch over Pompey's movements, bidding him to afford him honourable treatment in the event of his surrendering, but not to spare him if he offered hostilities.

But in all this the triumvir did not see serious cause for anxiety: his chief concern was with Artavasdes; it was essential that it should be no longer possible for this prince to do him injury and that he should succeed in forming a strong and trustworthy alliance in the East, in order that his legions might advance in safety. He therefore sent Quintus Dellius into Armenia, with orders to bring Artavasdes to a conference, and, under pretext of parleying with him on the subject of the campaign, to lure him into Syria, and there arrest him and guard him as a hostage.

The first piece of good news from the East was brought to Cleopatra at the beginning of the spring

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of the year 719 by one of her most trusted agents, a certain Polemon, who had been taken prisoner by the Medes at the time of the siege of the Phraata. The King of the Medes and the King of the Parthians, who had during the preceding year fought the Romans side by side, had quarrelled; and the former had commissioned Polemon to offer his services to the triumvir. Antony hastened to take advantage of this welcome proposal; and, in order to seal the compact and make it of a more intimate nature, he demanded the hand of the King's daughter for his eldest son by Cleopatra. Seeing his way clear to advance, Antony left Alexandria with the intention of beginning operations against the Parthians without further delay. Cleopatra accompanied her husband on this expedition. She desired to spend a certain time in Syria, in order to put down the disturbances that had broken out again in Judea and to be in a position to send speedy help to Antony in case of need. But, on their arrival at Antioch, affairs had already taken a new turn. Quintus Dellius had returned from Armenia without having succeeded in his mission, for Artavasdes, conscious of his guilt, had declined to accept Antony's invitation: he probably feared what was in store for him, and decided not to leave his mountains. At the same time Sextus Pompey was marshalling his troops in Asia-Minor and the triumvir was obliged to send Titius to oppose his movements; and lastly, Antiochus, one of the vassal princes, had broken the treaty which bound him to the Romans and taken up arms against

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them, compelling Antony to send a detachment of his army to chastise the prince for so gross a breach of faith. The Roman legions would have had little difficulty in defeating Antiochus in the open, but he shut himself up behind the walls of Samosata and held out for many months.

Meanwhile autumn was almost upon them. Seeing that he could not go on a fresh expedition against the Parthians before order was re-established in the provinces of Asia-Minor, and being determined at any cost not to spend another winter in that inhospitable land, Antony decided to defer the war until the following year, and began to make arrangements for returning to Egypt, where he counted on spending the winter. But, at this moment, he received news from Rome that necessitated a change of plans, and he set out in all speed for Alexandria.

His friends informed him that Octavius had found that his hostile attitude towards his colleague during the Parthian war had alienated many of his well-wishers and, in order to exculpate himself for not having aided Antony in his struggle against these ancient enemies of the Republic, he was now sending Octavia out to him, intending that she should join him in Syria. It is true that he still did not put at Antony's disposal the 20,000 men that he had promised him; but instead he gave Octavia 2000 picked men, fully equipped and armed for the general's cohort. Octavius had a shrewd suspicion that his sister would not be very welcome; and—as Plutarch himself acknowledges

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—he hoped that the ill-treatment and neglect which he expected she would meet with might give him a pretence for renewing the war.

Cleopatra, for her part, saw at once that Octavia's visit was intended to put her at defiance: an attempt to take her husband from her. Should the plan succeed, not only would Antony be definitely humbled and cast down, but all her political schemes would once more be frustrated. The mistress feared, above all things, to lose the man she cherished, and the mother trembled lest the other woman, haughty and cold as she was known to be, would yet tear the father of her children from her arms. What more natural than that Cleopatra should endeavour at all costs to prevent this meeting, planned as it was by her bitterest enemy. Although she foresaw the consequences of such an act, and although it was to her interest to put off any definite rupture between the rivals, she nevertheless persuaded Antony not to await the arrival of Octavia, but return immediately to Egypt. But before he had time to start, the triumvir heard that his wife was already at Athens; thereupon he wrote to her immediately, telling her to come no farther. After having read the letter, Octavia put the presents she had brought, consisting of clothing for the army, beasts of burden, money and gifts for the officers, into the care of a superior officer and friend of Antony's, named Niger, and begged him to convey them into Syria. It appears that it was at this juncture that Antony sent for young Antyllus, his son by Fulvia; for

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all historians are agreed that, at the time of his departure from Rome, he had confided his whole family, including his children by his former wife, to Octavia, recommending them at the same time to the care of his brother-in-law and colleague. But, when Octavia returned to Rome from her journey to Athens, Antyllus was with his father.

This youth was destined never to see Rome again. He was educated with Cæsarion, his elder by two years, at the court of Alexandria, and remained there until his death. His master was the atheist philosopher, Theodorus, and he was allowed a suite of officers especially attached to his person; it would appear that the greatest liberty was granted to this young man, when he was little more than a child. Plutarch's grandfather told the historian how 'the physician Philotas of Amphissa, being in the service of Antony's eldest son by Fulvia, was admitted to sup with him when he did not sup with his father; and it once happened that, when another physician at table had tried the company with his noise and impertinence, he silenced him with the following sophism:—"There are some degrees of a fever in which cold water is good for a man; every man who has a fever has it in some degree; and, therefore, cold water is good for every man in a fever." The impertinent physician was struck dumb with this syllogism; and Antony's son, who laughed at his distress, to reward Philotas for his good offices, pointing to a magnificent sideboard full of plate, said, "All that, Philotas, is yours!" Philotas acknowledged the

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kind offer, but thought it too much for such a boy to give. And, afterwards, when a servant brought the plate to him in a chest, that he might put his seal upon it, he refused, and, indeed, was afraid to accept it. Upon which the servant said, "What are you afraid of? Do not you consider that this is a present from the son of Antony, who could easily give you its weight in gold? However, I would recommend it to you to take the value of it in money. In this plate there may be some curious pieces of ancient workmanship that Antony may set a value on."

Cæsarion was at this time fourteen years of age; and, according to both Greek and Roman writers, he greatly resembled his father. The time was approaching when, according to Egyptian custom, he would, amid much rejoicing, be proclaimed heir to the throne. In the meantime, he continued his studies under the guidance of one of the learned men of the museum, Cleopatra herself watching over them with a careful eye. She was most solicitous on his behalf, guarding him from all possible harm, and generally taking him with her on her journeys into the provinces. The portrait of them both which is still to be seen on the wall of the temple of Dendera is probably a souvenir of one of these excursions.

When Cleopatra and Antony reached Alexandria, it was evident that there was not a moment to be lost, and they immediately set about the suppression of Sextus Pompey. Meanwhile the latter sent ambassadors to Antony, urging him to accept his

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alliance. But notwithstanding the fact that the triumvir considered that Pompey was not to be despised as a friend and a general in his army, he did not wish to have him as an ally; for, in his opinion, he was not to be trusted. He therefore did no more than communicate to the envoys the orders he had already given to Titius, adding that if Pompey's intentions were really such as the envoys represented them to be, he had but to appear before him in the company of that general.

But Pompey was not sincere in his offers of alliance; for he had at the same time sent deputies to the Parthians with a proposal that they should join together to oppose the triumvir. These deputies were taken on the journey by Antony's officers, and brought to Alexandria. The triumvir, having learnt the particulars of their mission, summoned the ambassadors of Pompey who were still in Egypt and confronted them with those that had been arrested; then, without listening to their explanations, he gave orders to Caius Furnius immediately to begin operations against Pompey. The troops placed under the command of Marcus Titius were reinforced by the legions of Asia-Minor, under Furnius, to which were also joined men stationed in Syria and Coele Syria which Ahenobarbus and Amyntas had brought with them. Pompey was not able to hold out for long against a force so considerable. After several bloody battles, in which the comparatively few troops that Pompey could put into the field were cut to pieces, his friends one after the other

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abandoned him; and even Libo, his aged father-in-law, went over to the enemy. Pompey, realising that his position was untenable, then proceeded to burn his ships, which lay at anchor before Nicomedia; and, gathering together the scattered remnant of his army, he gained the interior of Bithynia and made thence for Armenia. But in this enterprise he was no more successful than before, for Amyntas overtook him by a forced march and surrounded him near Midatum, in Phrygia. In his dismay, Pompey endeavoured to escape by night, but, betrayed by one of his officers, he was taken by Amyntas and sent a prisoner to Titius.

Cleopatra, who had always pleaded in favour of an alliance with Sextus Pompey, both in remembrance of the friendship of Pompey the Great for her father and by reason of the fierce struggle Sextus had sustained against Octavius, now begged the prisoner's life and suggested that he should be allowed to employ his talents and his courage in the service of Egypt. But all Antony's followers, including his ablest generals, had a bitter grudge against Pompey; and the wily Plancus, knowing how glad Octavius would be to hear of his death, abused the right given him by Antony to use his signature and seal if occasion arose, and sent orders to Titius to cut Pompey's throat. Antony, however, ignorant of what had been done, granted the boon to Cleopatra and wrote to his lieutenant, bidding him show mercy to his prisoner. But the letter arrived too late, for Titius, listening only to

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the dictates of personal animosity, had hastened to carry out the instructions of Plancus, and Pompey was put to death about the middle of October 719 (35 B.C.).

Great was the joy of Octavius when he heard of Pompey's death. Antony and Cleopatra, on the other hand, were very much incensed at the news, and rightly, for it was their general that had delivered Octavius of his bitterest and most active foe, while the latter was in no way answerable for the death of his enemy nor would he have to make any apology for the unfortunate occurrence. The event, however, brought peace once more to the provinces of Asia-Minor; and now it was Cleopatra herself who pressed Antony to proceed with the campaign against the Parthians, which had been interrupted by the ineffectual siege of Phraata. Early in the winter Quintus Dellius was again sent on an embassy to Artavasdes, with orders to reopen negotiations with that prince with a view to deliberately misleading him as to Antony's actual intentions.

Towards the conclusion of winter, at the beginning of the year 720, Antony entered Syria; and, having collected all his forces together, he set out for the borders of Armenia. At first Artavasdes gave no more credence to this news than to the protestations of friendship on the part of Dellius; but, when he learnt that Antony was already at Nicopolis and that the Roman legions were invading his territory, he realised that resistance would be vain; and, not wishing to let matters go too far,

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he went to Antony's camp and gave himself up as a prisoner, together with his wife and his whole family, with the single exception of his eldest son. The triumvir treated him at first with great kindness; but when, in a very short time, the Armenians took up arms to recover their independence and proclaimed Artaxias, son of Artavasdes, king, Antony in a rage ordered the prisoners to be put in chains: although it is true that, on account of their high rank, their chains were of silver. But the rebellion of the Armenians, badly organised and badly managed, was soon put down by the Roman legions. After having defeated them in several encounters, Antony took from them all their strongholds in succession, so that Artaxias himself was obliged to seek refuge with the Parthians. The triumvir then took entire possession of Armenia, deprived it of its independence, and made of it a prætorian province.

CHAPTER XI

TRIUMPH AT ALEXANDRIA

THROUGHOUT the campaign in Armenia, Antony had taken care to keep the Senate informed of his victories. But it so happened, that through the machinations of Octavius, who had no wish that Antony's glory should be enhanced or that he should return in triumph to Rome, his reports were not even read. What was more, Octavius could not bear the thoughts of the possibility of his secretly, King Artavasdes, being dragged through the streets and then put ignominiously to death. His authority was already so great that the Senate bowed to his wishes, and in spite of the intervention of Antony's friends, refused categorically to give a formal reception to the victorious general. But Antony had no thoughts of renouncing a triumph: no sooner had he received news of the refusal from Rome than he decided to celebrate his triumph at Alexandria. He hastened to communicate his plan to Cleopatra, who encouraged him in it most enthusiastically. Not only Alexandria, but the whole of Egypt, was curious to see the grand spectacle, one until then unknown in the East; and the Queen took care that the display should be of a magnificence such as had never even been heard of before.

On the day when Antony made his entry into

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Alexandria, in the beginning of the month of December 720, the whole town had a holiday, and all the people turned out to see. Seated on a throne of gold mounted on a platform of silver in the great public square, Cleopatra awaited the triumphant general: behind the chariot of the triumvir marched Artavasdes and members of his family, loaded with chains of silver. Antony was cheered by all, the Queen mingling her cries with those of the people. Yet the ceremony had about it an essentially regal air, for it was Cleopatra, the Queen, who played the most conspicuous part in it. It was at her feet that Antony laid his booty, to her that he handed his prisoners; and the satisfaction of the sovereign was the victorious general's only reward. Dion Cassius tells us that when Artavasdes and his wife, loaded with their chains, were presented to Cleopatra seated on her throne, they refused to prostrate themselves or humble themselves before her, in spite of all commands and threats. And again, when they addressed her, they gave her no title, but called her simply by her name. The historian adds that it was impossible not to admire their boldness, but the consequence of their obstinacy was, however, only a harsher treatment. Yet, had the ceremony taken place at Rome, it is more than probable that they would have been put to death after the ceremony, in accordance with the laws of the Republic; while at Alexandria their lives were spared and even their captivity was not made unbearable.

After the triumphal reception, the whole town

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repaired to the gymnasium, where golden thrones had been prepared for Antony, Cleopatra, and their children. It was here that Antony declared Cleopatra Queen of Queens, that he associated Cæsarion with her rule, and recognised their sovereignty alike over Egypt and Cyprus, Lybia and Coelesyria; adding that since one had been the wife, and the other was the son, of Cæsar, he was but paying homage to his shade in thus doing them honour. As for the children he himself had had by Cleopatra, he conferred on them royal titles and gave to his elder son, Alexander (who was betrothed to the daughter of the King of Media), Armenia, Media, and the kingdom of the Parthians, when he had completely subdued it; to his younger son, Ptolemy, he gave Phœnicia, Syria, and Cilicia; and finally, his daughter Cleopatra received the kingdom of Cyrene. He did not, moreover, confine himself to speeches at Alexandria; he did not hesitate to inform the Roman Senate of what he had done. After these important declarations, Antony presented his sons to the people in the costume of the lands they had received at his hands: Alexander was clad in the dress of the Medes, and wore on his head a tiara and the pointed turban or *cidaris* which was the mark of the Kings of the Medes and Armenians; Ptolemy had a long cloak, slippers, and a bonnet encircled by a diadem, the dress of the successors of Alexander the Great. The one child was surrounded by Armenian guards, the other by a guard of Macedonians. Antony then presented the Queen with a company of royal guards chosen

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from the Roman legionaries, whose duty it was to spend their last drop of blood in protecting her from harm. And, after having reviewed the legions stationed at Alexandria and the Egyptian troops, Antony and Cleopatra sat down to a magnificent banquet, at which were present not only the dignitaries of the court and all the more important citizens, but also the entire population of the town and the soldiers of the army.

Antony now felt a desire to show his gratitude to the city that had given him so hospitable a welcome and which, moreover, it was good policy to render still more powerful and famous; he therefore sent for the famous library that the Eumenides had collected at Pergamus and incorporated it with that of the museum. As this was a very valuable collection of over 200,000 volumes, the Egyptian capital was amply repaid for the loss of the library of the Ptolemies, destroyed in Caesar's time, and they saw in it the nucleus of a new library which was destined, later, to become so famous.

When we glance over this page of the world's history it is difficult not to imagine that we are reading a tale of wonder, concerning giants and fairies. We see this Queen, beautiful as a dream, more beautiful even than Homer's Helen, wise and witty as the most accomplished lady of our own day; and then her lover, a hero able to achieve all the lovely lady asks of him: to please her, he overthrows the established order, makes and un-makes kings and kingdoms, and gives whole

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countries to the mistress of his heart. For his part, although absolute master and emperor of the East, he is content to lay all his power and all his privileges at the feet of his idol, content to be but the husband of her whom he called 'Domina' or mistress, and even carries his gallantry so far as sometimes to accompany her on foot and help to support her litter. They were painted together (a picture which unfortunately has been lost), and their marble statues stood, one beside the other, in the public square of the capital.

Great was the consternation at Rome when they heard of what had taken place at Alexandria. The friends of Antony regarded his conduct as a piece of infatuation, while his enemies saw in it insolent defiance. As for the citizens, they were visibly disturbed to think that a Roman general had gone so far as to celebrate his triumph in Egypt and thought regretfully of all they had lost: festivities, banquets, and, above all, the customary gifts. Is it possible, said they, that the spoil of the vanquished can have been distributed elsewhere? Of what profit was it to be a Roman citizen, if other nations were to enjoy privileges similar to their own? And, in these circumstances, what benefit had they derived from the conquest of Armenia? . . . Thus did the jealous citizens argue; and their hatred for the Queen of Egypt found fresh food to feed upon, for to her did they attribute their mortification and their bitter disappointment. Perceiving that the victories of Antony had not been brought to the account of the Republic, that the

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tribute laid on the conquered countries would serve neither to embellish the Eternal City nor to enrich her citizens, and that, in a word, the soldiers and wealth of the East would not be employed to achieve the conquest of the West, they asked each other anxiously how Rome was to exist, if the empire was to be parcelled out in this manner, and, further, how Antony could allow himself to make such innovations, he who was after all but an officer of the great Republic. For men still spoke of the Republic, although it had long since ceased to exist; and they failed to see that the sole obstacle to the institution of a monarchical government lay in the fact that the empire had not one but two masters, and that they must wait until one of the rivals rose victorious over the other.

Antony, thoroughly well informed of all that was being said at Rome and, moreover, entirely at one with Cleopatra in her political views, replied to these reproaches by sending in his resignation to the Senate, on condition that the office of triumvir should be abolished, and Octavius deprived of his charge. The proposal was the easier in that he knew full well that his rival would by no means consent to it, for it was his title of triumvir that conferred upon him all the power with which he was invested, while to Antony the office was of little or no importance, as in any case he retained Syria and Egypt. Moreover, at this time the triumvir looked upon himself as sovereign of Egypt above all. He had adopted the national

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costume and granted permission to the Egyptians to include him among their deities; and finally, in his will, discovered later at Rome in the hands of the Vestal Virgins, he did not confine himself to recognising Cleopatra as his wife and his three children by her as legitimate offspring, but he further bequeathed to them the whole of his immense fortune and ordered that his body, even in the event of his dying at Rome, after it had been borne through the streets in pomp, should be transported to Alexandria and delivered into the hands of Cleopatra. All this is clear proof that Antony had already completely identified himself with the interests and the destiny of his new empire.

In the winter that followed Mark Antony's triumph at Alexandria a great number of Roman Senators came to that town, while the rupture between the two triumvirs was becoming more and more imminent. The friends whom Antony could still number at Rome were compelled to acknowledge that Octavius had at length succeeded in completely ruining the prestige and popularity of his rival, for they were now all eagerness either to abandon his cause, or to fly to Alexandria, a town which was taking upon itself more and more the aspect of a great metropolis. The contrast between East and West was being accentuated, and those of Antony's friends who by interest or ambition were drawn towards Rome, returned one after the other to Italy and offered their services to Octavius. At the same time, in the court of Cleopatra were still to be numbered a large gathering of Roman

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functionaries, and the royal guard was entirely made up of legionaries; several officers of the army were, besides, of Roman origin, and the legions stationed in Asia-Minor, Greece, and Syria alone were recruited almost exclusively from Greeks and Syrians. The whole army was naturally supported out of the Egyptian treasury, which, moreover, provided also for the needs of the majority of the Senators who had installed themselves at Alexandria. It was at this time that several of the friends of the unfortunate Sextus Pompey—Titius, among others—surrendered to Antony; there were even among his followers some of Octavius' secret agents. Plancus, for example, was one of these; in spite of Cleopatra's insurmountable antipathy for him, he had succeeded in worming himself into Antony's confidence, and indeed did not hesitate to abuse it, as was seen in the case of the execution of Pompey.

Towards the end of the year 719 Alexandria was at the zenith of her power and wealth. A few years before, the capital had been a hot-bed of Hellenism; now, temples were being erected to Roman deities, as though Rome itself had been transported there. A peace of twelve years had multiplied the inhabitants; and the increasing activity of commerce had created an atmosphere of affluence throughout all the provinces of the kingdom. As Alexandria was already too small for the number of its citizens, building operations were begun along the road leading to Canopus and, in a short time, the intervening space between the two

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towns was filled up. Thanks to this enormous increase in prosperity, it was possible to meet the expenses of the Parthian campaign, and the cost of Antony's triumph, as well as supply the needs of the court. Yet, in proportion as the friends of the triumvir flocked to Alexandria, the royal palace began to teem with Roman senators, generals, and others, whose entertainment and amusement cost the Egyptians enormous sums of money. Antony was at this time surrounded not only by many of his former friends and courtiers, but also by a great number of patricians who had elected to make common cause with him; Fonteius Capito, Dellius, Canidius, Furnius, Ahenobarbus, Titius, Plancus, were among his more intimate acquaintances. As for Cleopatra, she had as her advisers Pothinus, Archibius, Athenion, her commander-in-chief, and Olympus, her head physician: all men of Greek origin. The national element was the only one not represented in that society. The Copts, relegated to the background, tilled the soil, indifferent to all that went on around them; and only very few among them ever rose to important positions in the service of their Queen: Mardion, her faithful eunuch; Iras, her hairdresser; Charmion, her waiting-woman. But these were the only attendants who remained true to their beloved mistress and stood by her at the time of her death.

This crowd of great and small men had no thoughts beyond amassing money; and no one troubled about things of public interest. And yet, as a fact, only very few had any real ties to bind them to the land of Egypt. Certainly the

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Romans had not, since they only considered their presence in Alexandria in the light of a remunerative excursion, and looked to a speedy return to their native land, laden with treasures and honours. Nor had the Greeks, so long as Egypt remained in their eyes only a land in which they might freely carry on their trade, live a pleasant life, and rapidly grow rich. The Jews considered themselves strangers in every country, and lived entirely apart from the rest of the population. Courtiers, officers, scholars, artists, merchants, all had but one ideal and one aim: to gratify their ambition and satisfy their greed. As for consolidating the power of the land and preparing the way for the well-being of future generations, none gave a thought to such projects. No one, indeed, had any knowledge of the real position of Egypt so long as opulence and enjoyment were the order of the day; her weakness was only realised when, at the first breath of misfortune, it came to be seen, as it had been seen many times before, that when a state is tottering, the talents and courage of its rulers avail absolutely nothing if they be not seconded by the patriotism and bravery of a people ready for any sacrifice. Four years previous to the battle of Actium, no one, save perhaps the Queen, dreamed of peril or defeat; on the contrary, the prestige of Cleopatra then shone with an incomparable lustre and the court of Alexandria was crowded with a throng of parasites such as are always to be seen where power and wealth procure an easy existence. It would seem that the whole world con-

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templated the future with feelings of absolute security, and that Cleopatra saw the moment approaching nearer and nearer when she would at length realise her ambitious projects, although she must certainly have had doubts as to whether she would accomplish her end until the bitter struggle between the two rivals for supreme power had been decided.

Nevertheless, Octavius had clearly succeeded at Rome in turning the feelings of the people against Antony, and, what was more, against Cleopatra. Men talked glibly in the capital of the war that was to come, and consulted oracles on its chances. The streets of the Eternal City were the scene of constant brawls between the followers of Octavius and those of Antony, and the very children played at making war. At the same time, the more serious statesmen looked upon Antony as a misguided individual, only deserving of their pity, while they loaded Cleopatra with the most insulting and bitter epithets: it was she, said they, who had bewitched the triumvir by her sorcery, and intended to use him as an instrument whereby she might destroy the mighty power of Rome. When these rumours came to the ears of the Queen, she endeavoured to make herself agreeable, if only to the Senators whom she found at her court, and proceeded to overwhelm them with gifts and attentions. And, although she took care that these men, who inspired her with but very little confidence, saw nothing of what was really in her mind, she none the less put herself to an

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infinite amount of trouble in her efforts to make them perfectly satisfied with their stay at Alexandria.

It was at this time that Cleopatra founded the society of the 'inimitable,' the members of which, says Plutarch, visited each other every day; the profusion of their entertainments was almost incredible. The Queen's purpose was to blend the diverse elements of which the society at Alexandria was composed; and it is possible that she might have succeeded in her enterprise, had she been allowed more time. But the political horizon was clouding and the rupture between the two rivals seemed now to be imminent and inevitable. The moment had at length come when Antony and Octavius were to measure their strength one against the other, in a war between Egypt and the Republic. But while at Rome men felt the greatest anxiety concerning the issue of the struggle, Alexandria remained free from care and seemed to enjoy the conviction that nothing could shatter her power. In the whole of the Egyptian court Cleopatra was perhaps the only person who had any fear that war, no matter with whom, might bring in its train disaster and defeat. In fact, amid all the anxieties caused by both the internal and the external affairs of her realm, she never forgot that she might one day be forced to turn to death as the reward of her struggles, and, having collected all manner of deadly poisons, she was in the habit of testing their efficacy on prisoners condemned to execution. She was, as it were, preparing not for triumph but for self-

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destruction. Yet with her friends and her guests she was always gracious, always gay; and so far from manifesting the least apprehension, she reassured the wavering and censured the timid: 'The day is not far distant,' she would say to them sometimes, 'when I shall administer justice in the Capitol.'

In the meantime, the communications between the two rivals were becoming more and more acrid. The cord was being stretched nearer and nearer to breaking point. Antony complained of having received no share in the booty Octavius had won from Sextus Pompey, and persisted in demanding half of the legions that had formerly been under the command of Lepidus; Octavius never ceased to reproach his brother-in-law for his neglect of Octavia and for living with Cleopatra. But Octavius only spoke through the mouth of his envoy, while the less prudent Antony replied in writing and without any reticence. Thus he wrote to him one day, telling him to 'cease his eternal grumbling on the subject of Cleopatra,' adding that Octavius himself, though married, was involved in several *liaisons*. Octavius was overjoyed to receive such letters. All within them that was prejudicial to Antony was published on the spot, while the passages in which Octavius felt himself compromised, and those in which his accusations were refuted, were carefully kept back. Moreover, from this time Octavius no longer took the trouble to conceal his intentions: he openly attacked his colleague in the Senate in speeches that were full

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of bitter and undying hatred. It pleased him to say that Antony, bewitched by Cleopatra's magic potions, was no longer capable of a good action or a kind thought; and, representing him as a man who had completely lost the use of his reason, he gave it as his opinion that he were better out of harm's way. This language was the means of bringing about so great a revulsion in public opinion that, at the beginning of the year 722 (32 B.C.), Antony's two most faithful friends, Domitius and Sosius, who were consuls at that time, were compelled to give way before Octavius' violence, and leave Rome with all haste, for fear of their lives. They did not reach Alexandria before Octavius, in the name of the Republic, had declared war on Cleopatra. Of Antony there was no mention, although it was against him that the struggle was chiefly directed; Octavius had no desire to ask the Roman people to do battle with him who had once been their darling, their 'spoiled child,' while he knew that the project of destroying the Egyptian sorceress would everywhere be hailed with delight. He knew that Antony would unhesitatingly make common cause with Cleopatra; and he reckoned, by his doing so, upon declaring him a traitor to his country.

When, at the beginning of the year 722, the two consuls set foot in Egypt and informed Antony of what was happening, he immediately got together all the Senators who were to be found in Alexandria; and, as the two legally elected consuls also assisted at the meeting, it became a senatorial

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assembly in which everything was in order. Octavius was solemnly deprived of all his titles and offices and war declared against him. Military preparations were set on foot with feverish eagerness, the Queen herself promising to supply the money. Giving orders for the cessation of the various important public works then being carried on throughout the country, she employed all the resources of the royal treasury to equip the fleet and reinforce the legions stationed in Syria and in Egypt. At the same time, she devoted some of her energies to consolidating her ancient alliances and in concluding fresh ones; and, on learning that her kinsman, Herod, had been won over by the promises of Octavius, she immediately doubled the garrisons of Phœnicia and the land of Moab, and placed them under the command of Athenion. Antony, for his part, left Egypt about the end of the spring for Asia-Minor to ratify the understanding to which he had come a short time before with the King of the Medes. Before setting out, he gave a solemn promise to the Senators at Alexandria that if he came out of the war victorious, he would, of his own free will, resign his authority and all his offices and send them back to the Roman Senate.

While Antony was on his way to Media, Cleopatra and her friends concentrated all their energies upon preventing a breach among his allies and partisans: the legionaries themselves, as well as their officers, were forced to take a new oath of allegiance to the triumvir. The Queen distributed enormous sums of money among

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the Senators and the Roman generals; several of them, however, were unable to resist the appeals which were constantly being made to them from the capital, and left Alexandria never to return. Thus, no sooner had Antony started upon his journey than Plancus and Titius also departed from Egypt and, upon reaching Italy, offered their services to Octavius. Plancus, moreover, with whom Antony had been on terms of such intimacy that he had chosen him as one of the witnesses to his will, was the first to betray him to his enemy and reveal the fact that Antony had entrusted his will to the Vestal Virgins. Octavius got possession of the document, and noted those passages that seemed to him most questionable. Then, surrounded by his satellites, all fully armed, he presented himself before the Senate; and, notwithstanding that several members of that assembly called attention to the strangeness of making a man responsible during his lifetime for what was only intended to be executed after his death, Octavius delivered an address on the will, laying special stress on the clause relating to the burial of Antony, and stormed against him so violently that in the end it was decided that he should be deprived of all his offices and all his authority and power.

CHAPTER XII

THE COURT OF EGYPT AT SAMOS AND AT ATHENS

PEACE could no longer be maintained; war was inevitable, and all the world knew that it could only end with the complete and utter ruin of one of the belligerents. No two ambitions such as those of Cleopatra and Octavius could exist together in the same empire, no matter how vast. Antony, who, both as a general and as a citizen, was far more worthy than Octavius, might perhaps have sacrificed his personal interests to his love of peace, had he been free to act by himself. But, since his union with Cleopatra, his actions had been subordinated to considerations of a different nature; and he had, besides, to take into account the demands of the Egyptian Empire. Nothing is more difficult than to form a true estimate of this page of the world's history, in view of the fact that the writings of contemporary historians have not come down to us. Dellius, in turn the confidant of Cæsar, Antony, and Octavius, it is true, wrote a detailed account of the war, but all we know of his work is the portion that was borrowed by Plutarch and interpolated in his own. In the same way, the writings of Asinius Pollio, Antony's friend, and one of the noblest men of Rome, have been completely lost; and it is from

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a passage of Plutarch alone that we know that Cleopatra's head physician, Olympus, wrote an account of the events occurring at this time. Moreover, it was not the historical works alone that were lost, but all the epics and lyrics, which this great struggle for the empire of the world inspired, disappeared not long after they were written. Lucan was obliged to destroy certain portions of his *Pharsalia*, that treated of these events, because they were displeasing to the Emperor Nero; and of the poem upon the battle of Actium, written by Rabirius, only a few verses have come down to us. We are obliged therefore to examine the writings of later historians, who drew their information from the archives of Rome and the memoirs of Octavius Augustus. But, in spite of the fact that these writers wished to remain impartial recorders of history, they came unwillingly under the influence of the time at which they lived and the atmosphere they breathed; and it is impossible for us to accept without comment or question their estimate of the events and their appreciation of the men who took part in them.

The works of Velleius Paterculus and of Florus, for example, which we are obliged to consult for all that took place between the years 723 and 725, contain such outrageous flattery of Octavius, that their point of view must be very seriously taken into account; for, in reading them, one gets a similar impression as from a history of the Napoleonic wars written by a German patriot in 1825 or 1830. They have doubtless been compelled to relate such

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things as actually happened, and I do not suppose that they have ever descended to pure invention, but, almost on every page, one feels that there is an entire absence of impartiality, to say nothing of a genuine regard for accuracy. Dion Cassius was himself an official of Rome, and his writings were gathered principally, if not solely, from the documents preserved in the public archives by the first emperors. As for the worthy Plutarch, not a historian at all, but only a biographer, many important things are missing from his 'Life of Antony,' and it often disagrees with the history of Dion Cassius. But as these two writers are by far the most trustworthy, we will take them as our authority for what follows, only accepting as true what is related in the same fashion by both.

It is certain that, in spite of the Machiavelian policy of Octavius, Antony had still many well-wishers at Rome, although Cleopatra was looked upon with horror by every single citizen of the Republic. Even those who praised her lofty intelligence and incomparable beauty hated her as an Egyptian and a foreigner, and shuddered at the thought of her one day becoming mistress of the Roman Empire. Antony's best friends were constantly endeavouring to sever him from Cleopatra in order that he might regain his former popularity. The Queen of Egypt knew this only too well; and knowing also Antony's changeable and impressionable character, trembled lest they might succeed, and she be left, without defence and without support, entirely at the mercy of the Republic. It

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was therefore imperative that she should at all costs prevent a reconciliation between Antony and Octavius; and she resolved never again to leave her husband's side.

Antony had, by now, left the country of the Medes, taking away with him the King's daughter, who was betrothed to his son Alexander. He was still in Armenia when he heard of what had taken place at Rome: the publication of his will, which he thought had been put into safe hands, and the resolutions of the Senate, so humiliating to a general of the Republic. He immediately ordered Canidius to put himself at the head of sixteen legions, and lead them in the direction of the Ionian Sea, while he himself set out for Greece by the shortest route. Cleopatra, fearing the turn matters might take if her husband were to approach the coasts of Italy alone, immediately went to meet him, and rejoined him at Ephesus, in the course of the autumn of the year 722. Here, too, Antony soon after watched the arrival of his fleet, which—according to Plutarch—numbered 800 craft, including the transports. The Egyptian squadron was represented by 200 vessels; and the Queen had provided 20,000 talents of money, and provisions for the whole army, for as long as the war lasted.

Towards the close of the year, Antony set foot in Greece, and reviewed the legions stationed along the coast of the Adriatic, as well as the fleet riding at anchor off the promontory of Actium. It seems that he did not think himself strong enough immediately to take the offensive, for he delayed

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commencing operations until such time as his whole force should be concentrated in one spot. In the meantime Cleopatra had left Ephesus and installed herself at Samos: Antony joined her there, and, in a short time, all the officials of the Egyptian court, as well as the Roman friends of the triumvir, came and settled there. Only the children of the Queen were absent, together with Antyllus, who had remained behind at Alexandria under the care of Eupronius, steward to Cleopatra.

During the winter of 722-723, which was spent at Samos, kings, princes, and tetrarchs of allied and tributary countries of the East were summoned thither, and several among them hastened to obey. We may mention, on the authority of Plutarch, Bocchus of Africa, Tarcondemus of the Upper Cilicia, Archelaus of Cappadocia, Philadelphus of Paphlagonia, Mithridates of Commagene, and Adallas of Thrace. Those who did not attend in person, but sent supplies, were Polemon of Pontus, Malchus of Arabia, Herod of Judea, and Amyntas, King of Lycaonia and Galatia. Others again sent a son, a brother, or some other near relation, as hostage. Thus Artaxias, King of Armenia, sent his two brothers, and Malchus, his son. The three young princes, sons of the King of the Medes, and his daughter were also sent to Alexandria. An oath of allegiance was demanded from the Kings who had gone in person to Samos.

Although the whole world was agitated and the preparations for war were being carried out on a colossal scale, the members of the court at Samos

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did not spend their days one whit less gaily and—at anyrate outwardly—with any less freedom from care than at Alexandria. Cleopatra and Antony were both anxious that their supporters should have no opportunity for remarking any disquieting signs on the political horizon; and they also wished the minor princes of the East to believe that they were perfectly sure of victory. Comedians, musicians, singers, clowns, and acrobats, all in Egypt and in Greece whose business it was to entertain and amuse, now flocked to Samos. 'While almost the whole world beside was venting its anguish in groans and tears,' says Plutarch, 'that island alone was piping and dancing.' The several cities sent oxen for sacrifice, and Kings contended in the magnificence of their presents and entertainments; so that it was natural to say, 'What kind of figure will these people make in their triumph, when their very preparations for war are so splendid?'

The senators and knights who had followed the court to Samos, and above all the generals Salvius, Domitius, Ahenobarbus, and Canidius, who knew of Rome's hatred for Cleopatra, now strove to persuade her not to take part in the war, but return to Alexandria until hostilities were at an end; but she would not listen to them. The taunts and jeers, however, that were bandied about at Rome at Antony's expense filled his supporters with misgiving: 'A Roman soldier alas! (but ye, posterity, will refuse belief,) sold into slavery to a woman, carries stakes and arms, and stoops to serve wrinkled eunuchs,' says Horace.

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It was not Antony with whom the Romans were about to do battle, said the people at Rome, 'but Mardion the eunuch, and Pothinus; Iras, Cleopatra's woman, and Charmion; for these had the principal direction of affairs!'

Antony himself, to whom these gibes were reported, now realised that, if he hoped to regain his popularity and his prestige, he must send Cleopatra back to Egypt; and he too sought to persuade her to go. But the Queen, who mistrusted the inconstant nature of her husband, feared that, unless she remained by his side, a reconciliation might again be brought about between him and Octavius, and that Antony might even be induced to return to Octavia, in which case Cleopatra's plans would come to nothing and her ambitions be irremediably ruined. Nothing could persuade her to return to Alexandria. It was in vain that men urged that the separation would be of but short duration, in vain that Antony assured her of his affection and constancy; in vain that—to prove to her that he would never go back to Octavia—he sent a body of men to Rome to drive her from his house: Cleopatra remained obdurate, while Antony, in the eyes of the Romans, had been guilty of grave misdemeanour. The expulsion of Octavia from her husband's house created a great scandal, for it was not looked upon simply as an act of repudiation, but as the abandonment and humiliation of one of the noblest and most virtuous of the patrician matrons of the Republic on account of a foreign adventuress, a creature who hoped to unsettle the established order

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of things and bring the empire beneath her yoke. Moreover, Antony's brutal conduct towards his wife did not attain its end, for it appeased neither the Queen's jealousy nor her doubts. By all the strategic resources of woman, pouting, prayers, tears, threats, Cleopatra sought to obtain permission to remain in the camp. At length, by lavish use of money, she succeeded in winning over Canidius, Antony's most intimate friend; and the latter promised no longer to oppose her wishes. At the next council of war, Canidius represented that it was neither just to remove from the scene of action a princess who furnished such very considerable aid, nor expedient to discourage, by the retirement of their Queen, the Egyptians, who formed so extensive a part of the naval force; he added that Cleopatra did not seem to him any less prudent than any of the Kings fighting under Antony, seeing that she had for long governed a mighty empire, unaided and alone, and that by her intercourse with him had learned how to administer the greatest of affairs. In short, the Queen had her way. It is needless to say that her upbraidings and her fits of jealousy have lost nothing in the telling; although Cleopatra had gained the day, Antony none the less considered reparation still to be due to her. He took from the temple of Diana at Samos the celebrated statue of the goddess and gave it to the Queen, who immediately sent it to Alexandria.

It was with every confidence in success that the court left Samos, at the beginning of the year 723, and installed itself at Athens. To the members

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of the court an enthusiastic reception was given in Greece, and especially in the city of Minerva. Antony's philhellenic sentiments were well known, and the Athenians paid him very great honour. They included him among their gods, placed his image in the temple of Dionysus, and even begged him to espouse their tutelary deity, Pallas Athene. It is a curious fact that Antony eagerly agreed to the latter proposal, exacting from the town a sum of 1000 Attic talents as the dowry of the goddess. As for Cleopatra, the Greeks who knew her only by reputation were very curious to see her; while the Queen, on her side, attached great importance to the fact that the Athenians paid her as many marks of respect as they had, in early days, paid to Octavia, whom the Greek metropolis recognised as Antony's lawful spouse.

Although Cleopatra was then seven or eight and thirty, she was still a very beautiful woman. On the coins of this period she is represented with a face of a slightly fuller contour than formerly, and with her hair bound in a Grecian knot. The Queen of Egypt, knowing doubtless the inestimable value of her beauty, took the greatest care in preserving it; and her charm of manner, which age could not wither, made her irresistible. She had little difficulty in winning friends to her side in a country where Roman prejudices and Roman manners were alike unknown. Her reputation as a magnificent sovereign, the friend and protector of the arts, raised a hope in the hearts of the Athenians that her stay among them would be

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of material benefit to themselves; and they were the more eager in seeking such profit, since their town had not for many years past enjoyed the celebrity that had once been hers, in the days prior to the Peloponnesian wars. In former times, when Athens shone in the front rank of the capitals of the ancient world, her prosperity was largely due to the silver mines of Laurion, which were thought to be inexhaustible. But these mines had now ceased to yield any more metal; and Strabo tells us that in his time—the year 10 or 15 B.C.—they had already been completely abandoned. The population of Athens had fallen off considerably, and only a very few of its men were of any considerable fortune. The magnificent buildings and monuments for which the city was so deservedly famous, still proclaimed the perfection of the art of antiquity, and strangers passing through continued to contemplate them with respectful admiration; but the life and animation that formed part of the whole in the classic age was lacking. Athenian citizens had no longer any political rights worthy of the name; on the Acropolis, the governor, by name Antony, a Roman proconsul, delivered justice. In short, the city of Minerva was already reduced to subsisting on her former reputation, and as her only revenue was now derived from the youths who came to attend courses of study under her still famous scholars and philosophers, the arrival of Cleopatra and her court could not fail to excite feelings of lively satisfaction, on account of the money they

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would be likely to spend at Athens. Yet the Queen and her suite were but indifferently housed in a roomy but modest dwelling situated quite close to the Acropolis, and the rest of her following had to be content with lodgings very different from those they had occupied at Alexandria. And as it was necessary not only to provide for the maintenance of this motley crowd, but also to divert and entertain them until the war broke out, the court at Athens led the same dissipated and uproarious life as at Samos, and Antony once more revived the farce of public entertainments.

From Egypt and from all quarters of the East troops were now on the march, and advancing slowly towards the shores of the Adriatic. Antony's headquarters were at Patræ; part of his army was encamped near the Gulf of Ambracia; the legions of Syria occupied Thessaly and Macedonia, while most of the fleet lay at anchor before Actium. With the arrival of spring, a few weeks after his coming to Athens, the triumvir decided to pass in review both his army and his fleet; and it seems that then he made up his mind to have done with temporising and invade Italy without further delay. Had he put his design into practice it is very probable that he would have crushed his adversary, for, at this time, Octavius' preparations were not complete. Lacking both money and provisions, he had been compelled to demand from all the citizens a fourth of their income and from the sons of freedmen one eighth. So heavy a tax excited grave discontent and bitter complaints,

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causing trouble throughout the whole of Italy. Thus it was the greatest mistake for Antony to defer his attack and allow his opponent time to complete his preparations and repress the insurrections which had broken out, 'for,' as Plutarch says, 'when the money was demanded of the people, they murmured and mutinied; but after it was once paid, they thought of it no longer.' But the triumvir was obliged to abandon his project, because Cleopatra at first obstinately refused to consent to his going into Italy alone. When her feelings of mistrust were at length set at rest and Antony was able to rejoin his fleet, he discovered that it was in a very poor condition: the winter storms had disabled many of the galleys, and the crews, weary of so long a period of inaction, had in many cases deserted.

Although circumstances were now no longer in his favour, Antony was still anxious to attempt an attack on Italy; and, taking with him his best remaining vessels, he set sail for the West. But when, at the island of Coreyra, he was informed that several of Octavius' ships had been sighted, and that a large fleet was protecting the south-east coast of Italy, he renounced his intention of taking the offensive, and returned to Greece without even verifying the statements made to him. Yet Antony had been deceived by his agents, whether consciously or not it is impossible for us to determine: the fleet of Octavius, under the command of Agrippa, was at that time engaged in putting down a disturbance in Sicily, and a few

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ancient galleys, partially disabled, alone guarded the Italian shores of the Adriatic. It was these phantom ships that rumour had transformed into a powerful fleet, and it was on their account that Antony returned to Athens towards the close of the summer months. In the meantime, the harvest of the year 722 had been so poor that the troops stationed in Asia-Minor and on the Balkan peninsula were threatened with famine. The triumvir had at his disposal 100,000 infantry and 10,000 horse; but he dared not concentrate them, for lack of provisions. This formidable army lay scattered between the Adriatic and the Archipelago and the Sea of Marmora, and the Egyptian fleet had to seek for the necessaries of life in the remote regions of Phœnicia and Egypt, since Greece, Macedonia, and even Asia-Minor were incapable of providing them. The contingents supplied by the allied and vassal princes were scattered far and wide throughout Syria and Asia-Minor; the possibility of bringing them together on a field of battle was not to be thought of.

During the winter that followed, there was no lack of intrigue at the court of Antony and Cleopatra. No day passed but witnessed the arrival of suspicious individuals, who asserted that they were fugitives or envoys from the friends of the triumvir; they were, as a fact, agents in the pay of Octavius, and, in spite of every precaution, Antony became a prey to their machinations. As the court was not so sumptuously installed at Athens as at Alexandria, Cleopatra endeavoured to make

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up for what was lacking in comfort by an amiable, kindly, and gracious manner; but she did not succeed in satisfying all the senators and knights assembled there, accustomed as they were to every luxury and refinement. Had Antony led them straight to battle, they would have endured in silence all the miseries and privations of war; but, at Athens, they never ceased to find fault with the Queen's table, and were constantly complaining of the bad wine, while at Rome the humblest of Octavius' supporters was drinking Falernian.

The spring of the year 723 brought with it a series of fresh misfortunes. Octavius' ambassadors succeeded in detaching several of Antony's ships from the fleet; and Antony had to renounce part of his auxiliaries, on whose help he had until then confidently relied, and to send the Egyptian army back to Asia-Minor. The first to forsake the triumvir was he upon whom had been bestowed the greatest benefits: Herod, King of Judea, who, not content with failing to send the troops he had promised to his ally, made an attack on the Arab tribes encamped on the southern borders of Palestine, which involved not only these tribes, but the Egyptian troops under the command of Athenion. The historian of the war with Judea represents Herod as acting under orders from Cleopatra, and adds that the Queen was anxious that he should take no part in Antony's campaign in Greece, in order that she might be afforded a pretext for proclaiming herself Queen of Judea or Arabia. But this seems to us a most improbable statement. In

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the first place, the Arabs had not risen, and Malchus, their prince, remained faithful to Cleopatra to the last; and in the second, why should the Queen have desired to annex either Judea or Arabia, states which were already her vassals? Moreover, Herod directed his attack as much against the Egyptian army as against the Arabs; and his behaviour is further explained by the fact that, immediately after the battle of Actium, he hastened to join Octavius at Rhodes and hand him his submission, whereupon the conqueror deigned graciously to recognise his services and his sovereignty over Judea, making him a gift of several of the neighbouring provinces.

In the autumn of the year 723, Herod attacked the Arab tribes encamped east of the Lake of Genesareth, and, during the winter following, defeated them in several encounters. Later, he routed them at the battle of Heliopolis and drove them back as far as Philippopolis. As the result of this victory, the Egyptian army encamped in the land of Moab found itself in a very difficult position, and were compelled to take the offensive against the King of Judea, whose example had in the meantime been followed by two other allies of Antony: Amyntas and Deiotarus. We can understand how, in these circumstances, the friends gathered together at Athens gradually lost their confidence and good humour; and how, in spite of all her efforts, Cleopatra failed to restore their serenity.

To make matters worse, there arose in the year 723 a number of menacing portents. First, a

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violent earthquake shook the eastern shores of the Mediterranean from Italy to the coasts of Asia; several Phœnician towns were completely destroyed, and ungovernable panic took possession of the whole of Greece. Then, Pisaurum, a colony of Antony's on the Adriatic, was swallowed up in the bosom of the earth. Antony's statue in Alba was covered with sweat for many days, which reappeared in spite of its being frequently wiped off. And at Athens a whirlwind threw down the colossal statues of Eumenes and Attalus, called the Antonii, while the rest were unmoved. As the Greeks, the most superstitious people in the world, attached the very greatest importance to these portents, and the Romans also, notwithstanding the scepticism of some, were far from being insusceptible to them, hopeless terror took possession of the camp. All the world believed the earthquake to be a sign of the god's wrath against Antony, and the destruction by lightning of the temple of Hercules at Patræ was interpreted as a proof that the heavenly powers themselves were turned from Antony, who pretended that he was himself descended from this demi-god. Profiting by the general terror and confusion, all who could fled without once looking back; and many generals and officers—among them Marcus Silanus—who had followed Antony in all his previous campaigns, now abandoned his cause. To excuse their defection, the majority of them asserted that they could no longer endure Cleopatra's caprices, nor the mortification and ill-treatment to which she subjected them. The historian

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Dellius—who only abandoned Antony later, during the fighting at Actium—informs us (according to Plutarch) that he was told by Glaucus, the physician, that Cleopatra had designs upon his life, because he had once affronted her at supper by saying that they were given nothing but vinegar to drink.

These misfortunes, following so quickly on one another, caused Cleopatra to lose all patience. As for Antony, he was overwhelmed with dismay, and knew not what course to adopt. Superstitious as any of the Romans, he began to despair, and each day as it passed left him more and more hopeless and despondent. Nor did the summer that followed improve the situation: on the contrary, the gloom and discouragement became intensified. Even the festivities given daily by Cleopatra as a diversion from the preparations for war, and those organised in her honour by the Athenians in return, did not succeed in dissipating the alarm or calming the troubled spirits.

While matters were going from bad to worse with Antony, Octavius' prospects were becoming brighter. He had succeeded in winning to his side the legionaries who had mutinied as well as in putting down the disturbances that had broken out in Italy and Sicily in consequence of the war tax. By the spring of 723, Octavius had already concentrated 80,000 men in his camp at Brundisium, and he invited all the people of any note in the Republic to join them there. Agrippa had returned from Sicily and was harassing the Greek ports. One day Octavius even went so far as to

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attack Antony's fleet as it lay before Actium; he set sail with a great number of ships from Brundisium, but a violent storm overtook him and compelled him to withdraw, after sustaining a very considerable loss. This attempt on the part of Octavius was not considered, at Athens, as worthy of the least notice, so firm was the conviction that he would never dare to carry the war into Greece. Antony and Cleopatra were not, indeed, conscious of any danger, until, about the middle of the summer, they heard that Agrippa had just taken Methana by main force, and massacred the garrison of the town and Bogud, King of Thrace, who commanded it: it was from that time evident that the hour of the decisive battle was near at hand. The court was broken up, and Antony, accompanied by Cleopatra, immediately set sail for Patrae.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BATTLE OF ACTIUM

HISTORIANS have designated by the name of the battle of Actium that series of military operations that lasted more than three months, and of which the final, but not the most sanguinary, episode was the sea-fight near Actium, by which the victory of Octavius over Antony was definitely established. Agrippa's squadron had put into port on the coast of Western Greece; while Antony, who had in the meantime reached Patræ, had to acknowledge the impossibility of laying himself open to the attack of the enemy, seeing that his ships had not half their complement of men, and the officers had been obliged to pick up and press into service in Greece vagrants, ass-drivers, reapers, and boys. Moreover, his fleet was not even concentrated in one spot, since the vessels of the Egyptian squadron had to look after the provisioning of the troops. The triumvir gave orders for this squadron to rally round him with all possible haste, but it did not succeed in reaching him as quickly as he had hoped. No sooner did the Egyptian galleys enter the waters of the Adriatic than they were met and stopped by Agrippa. What was worse, Antony's ships of the line, far too lofty and too unwieldy, were very slow sailers: they scarcely answered to the rudder at all,

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and were constantly being outstripped by the lighter vessels of the enemy, well manned and equipped as they were. And finally, there was no similarity whatever between the crews of the two fleets; Antony's men, hastily enrolled, had hardly any knowledge of the management of weapons, while those of Agrippa, who had already fought in the campaign against Pompey, and had since then been kept well drilled by their leader, represented a very respectable military force.

Antony still lingered at Patræ, where he learnt, in the middle of the summer, that Octavius had crossed the Adriatic and was approaching with his fleet. On hearing this, Antony immediately set sail for Actium, reaching that place just as Octavius was about to make an attack upon his vessels. The latter were so far from expecting it, that their troops were not even on board. Fearing that his ill-manned vessels would be unable to stand the attack, Antony armed the rowers and placed them on the decks to make a show; with the oars suspended on each side of the vessels, he proceeded in this mock array of battle towards Actium. Octavius was deceived by the stratagem, and retired. On his way he took and occupied Coreyra and Paros, which Antony's generals had abandoned, and then returned to his camp at Toryne.

The war had begun both by land and sea. Octavius numbered 80,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry, as well as 250 battleships, well manned and equipped. Antony had 500 galleys and his army included 200,000 foot and 12,000 horse. But

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while the forces of Octavius were all collected together in one spot, and under the command of a single leader, those of Antony were scattered through the whole length of the Balkan peninsula and his generals were hardly worthy of his confidence; as for his fleet, it was good only for show.

Antony was of opinion that the better plan would be to send away his ships and let the decisive battle be fought out on land; but Cleopatra trusted nothing so much as her fleet. She saw that so long as the war was at sea, she could remain by her husband's side; and she made manifest her will in so imperious a manner that the Romans had, perforce, to yield to her. They set to with feverish haste to arm their ships, pressing all whom they met into their service; at the same time, officers were sent in every direction to bring in the legions to the camp at Actium. The preponderating influence of the Queen at all councils of war, however, proved so discouraging to the generals that even those whom Antony considered his most faithful and steadfast supporters abandoned and betrayed him in the presence of the enemy. In this way Amyntas, who had been sent to fetch the legions from Thrace and Macedonia, had no hesitation in delivering them up to Octavius.

It would not be untrue to say that order only reigned in the spot where Antony was himself present in person; no sooner did he leave a town than all traces of discipline instantly disappeared. Hardly had Antony and Cleopatra quitted Patrae

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than Agrippa arrived there with his army; he defeated Quintus Asidius with great slaughter and took possession first of Patræ and then of Corinth, before the garrison of the latter town so much as thought of making a defence. He then, with equal facility, seized upon all the islands in the vicinity of the western coast of Greece, with the result that, by the beginning of August, Antony's fleet was held fast at Actium and unable to move.

In the early part of this month, Antony also learnt that Octavius was advancing in the direction of the Gulf of Ambracia, with his whole force. As it was essential to prevent his approach, Antony ordered his cavalry to skirt the gulf and make a flank attack on the enemy, while on the march. But it did not succeed, because a body under the command of Marcus Titius and Statilius Taurus arrested Antony's horse and utterly defeated them; seeing which, Philadelphus, King of Paphlagonia, concluded that it would be good policy to go over to Octavius, and did so without delay.

Hence Octavius reached the Gulf of Ambracia without meeting with any resistance. Just as, on a day of stormy weather, heavy clouds come drifting from all directions and are massed together in one portion of the sky, so did the soldiers of Octavius gather from the four corners of the earth to the field of battle: there is in the Greek peninsula, between Epirus and Acarnania, a deep indentation formed by the Ionian Sea, surrounded on the north and south by steep mountains. Thus does Dion Cassius describe this historic place:

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'Actium, sacred to Apollo, is situated at the entrance to the channel leading to the Gulf of Ambracia, and lies opposite to Nicopolis. The gulf itself is as long as it is broad, and affords excellent shelter to the most numerous fleet. It was at Actium that Antony concentrated his men, after having erected towers on the two banks of the channel and led his ships into the waters of the gulf.'

Antony's army lay encamped near the temple of Apollo, on the edge of the marshes that stretched away to the water's edge; and Dion Cassius justly observes that, in consideration of its unhealthiness, the spot was a very ill-chosen one. Octavius, for his part, had pitched his tents on the northern borders of the strip of land separating the Gulf of Ambracia from the Ionian Sea, whence he had command of all the neighbouring towns and as easy a power of communication with the gulf as with the sea.

While his scouts were reconnoitring the northern banks of the gulf and skirmishing with Antony's troops, Octavius busied himself exclusively with fortifications for his camp, and seems to have had no thoughts of forcing an entry to the channel. Antony, meanwhile, crossed the arm of the sea with some thousands of his legionaries and took up his position in the neighbourhood of a fort which he had constructed a short time before. Then, for several days, the two armies surveyed one another in silence. Morning after morning did Antony and Octavius draw up their respective

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armies in line of battle; but neither seemed desirous of being the first to strike a blow.

Every day fresh troops arrived for Antony; but the greater their number, the more difficult was it to find food for them. On all sides of Actium, the country had been abandoned by the inhabitants, while Agrippa's fleet cut the enemy off from all communication with the Adriatic, of which it was already mistress. The transport of provisions had therefore to be effected by way of land; and as beasts of burden were scarce, they were conveyed on men's backs, even in the most mountainous districts. The difficulties that the convoys had to surmount may easily be imagined, and it is not possible to exaggerate the privations to which the people were exposed in order that the subsistence of so numerous an army might be assured. Plutarch, who had it from his great-grandfather Nicarchus, used to relate that 'as the inhabitants of Chæronæa had no horses, they were compelled to carry a certain quantity of corn on their shoulders to the sea-coast as far as Anticyra, and were lashed by the soldiers like so many beasts of burden.' And yet, in spite of such rigorous measures, the food did not arrive in sufficient quantities, and the camp at Actium was threatened with famine. It became necessary to raise the blockade, whatever the cost. Sosius, one of Antony's admirals, having learnt in the meantime that Agrippa had drawn away with most of his ships in the direction of the Peloponnesus, and hoping to profit by his absence, threw himself suddenly on the re-

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serve of Octavius' fleet, which was commanded by Lucius Tauresius. The victory actually lay with Sosius, when Agrippa, returning with all speed, drove back the assailants after a fierce struggle, in which both King Tarcondemus and Sosius himself lost their lives.

With the news of this defeat, Antony abandoned his position on the north shore of the gulf, where he had been laying siege to Nicopolis, and returned to Actium. The discipline there had become very lax during his short absence. Deserters became more numerous every day, and men like Domitius Ahenobarbus were seen going over to the enemy—Ahenobarbus, who, since the battle of Philippi, had been Antony's constant friend and inseparable companion. The latter, though he could not but resent such treatment, sent after the traitor his baggage, his friends, and his servants, without a single reproach. Domitius, who, though stricken down with fever, had not hesitated to leave the camp at Actium, suffered such bitter remorse that he died not long after at Nicopolis. Meanwhile, in order to restore discipline among his troops, Antony was compelled to administer martial law with the utmost rigour and even to order the execution of two generals, Quintus Postumius, the Senator, and the Arab Prince Zamblichus, whom he felt he could no longer trust.

Antony would himself have preferred to fight on land, even at the cost of abandoning his fleet altogether, for, although he had achieved countless victories since the siege of Pelusium, he had never

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before engaged in a naval battle; but Cleopatra steadfastly refused to sacrifice her ships. In order to procure greater comfort for the Queen, Antony had, in contempt of time-honoured custom, abandoned the simple tent of a Roman general, and built himself a pavilion of regal dimensions. This gave rise to fresh discontent among his officers, without rendering Cleopatra any the more conciliatory. The difficulties he had to surmount, and the repeated evasion and deception to which he was a victim, ended in completely discouraging Antony and rendering him downcast and morose. He felt he could no longer trust anyone, and even began to have doubts of Cleopatra herself: thus, when at table, he never touched any of the dishes put before him until she had first eaten of them. His suspicions so provoked the Queen that, in order to convince him of the injustice and above all the futility of his precautions, she one day snatched a flower from her hair, and casting it into a cup of wine, called upon her husband to empty it with her. The latter immediately put it to his lips, but the Queen seized him by the arm, calling out: 'See how easily I could kill you, were I able to live without you!' The wine was then given to a condemned soldier, who fell dead as soon as he had swallowed it. The incident dissipated Antony's fears, but sadness and preoccupation continued to prevail in the camp at Actium. Cleopatra endeavoured to revive the spirits of her men, but in vain: her witticisms, her puns, her sarcasm even, were all of no avail.

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As time went on, the situation became more and more critical. The army was now suffering great privation, and it became necessary to hasten the end. Towards the close of the month of August, Antony called a council of war, and after having made a candid exposition of his fears and anxieties, he asked his generals to advise him concerning the manner of continuing the war. It was a matter, above all, of determining whether the decisive battle should be fought by land or sea. There was a great difference of opinion among them, but the majority of generals, including Canidius, advised Antony to send Cleopatra away and retire into Thrace and Macedonia, there to await Octavius' attack. The fleet was to be left to its fate. 'To give up the sea to Octavius,' said Canidius, who, in his Silician wars, had acquired so much experience upon it, 'would be no disgrace; but to give up the advantage which so able a general as himself might make of his land forces, and waste the strength of so many legions in useless draughts for the sea service, would be the height of folly.' But these resolutions did not fall in with Cleopatra's wishes; she was determined not to be separated either from Antony or the vessels containing her jewels and treasure. She insisted on being present at the battle and participating in the defeat of Octavius, never thinking that it would not be possible for her to follow the course of the struggle, with all its vicissitudes, nor that its issue might be a disastrous one for Antony. Cleopatra pleaded that part of the army should be left at Actium, and the

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remainder sent to occupy the chief positions of Epirus ; in the meantime, Antony and herself were to set sail with the best of their galleys, raise the blockade, and return to Egypt. So long and so eagerly did Cleopatra insist on her plan, that Antony in the end decided to adopt it ; and, in order that his allies should not have too much to find fault with, it was decided that the retreat, without being openly manifest, should at the same time not be clandestine. Preparations were made as for a great naval battle, and as the plan would have no possible chance of success unless it were executed exactly at the right moment, all the measures in connection with it were taken with as much precision as caution.

In consequence of the fact that part of the crews had deserted, it was decided to burn all the Egyptian galleys save sixty of the largest and best. The sailors and equipment of these vessels served to complete the manning of Antony's galleys, which were made still stronger by great wooden bastions. 20,000 legionaries and 2000 archers were ordered to embark, but they were very reluctant to obey, and one of the officers, who had fought on several occasions under Antony, and received many wounds in his service, seeing him pass by, said to him, in a melancholy voice : ' Why will you, general, distrust these honest wounds, and rest your hopes on those villainous wooden bottoms ? Let the Egyptians and the Phœnicians skirmish at sea ; but give us at least the land ; for it is there that we have learned to conquer or to die.' Antony made no answer,

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but made as if to encourage him by the motions of his hand.

The land forces were put under the command of Canidius and the fleet was divided into three divisions, under Cælius, Marcus Octavius, and Insteius. The sails of every ship were set and orders given to the legions that remained on land to draw up in order of battle on the shore of the gulf. On the last day but one of the month of August, all was ready for the execution of Antony's plan; but a strong south wind which had blown for three days prevented the fleet from leaving the channel. Quintus Dellius profited by the delay to pass over to Octavius' camp, and, not content with deserting his benefactor at the supreme moment of his life, he sought to gain his new master's confidence by betraying all Antony's projects.

At length, by the 2nd of September, the storm had raged itself out, and Antony was able to advance in the direction of the mouth of the channel; but Octavius and Agrippa, now aware of his intentions, had taken care to concentrate the whole of their naval force at this point. Realising that he had been betrayed and that he would have to give battle immediately, Antony left the Egyptian ships in the channel and, drawing his own vessels into as close a line as possible, set sail for the high seas; and when he had reached the open, with a firm front he awaited the attack of the enemy. It was now about midday; and neither of the two fleets seemed anxious to begin

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the fight. At that moment, a light wind sprang up out of the sea, and Octavius' galleys, getting into motion, threatened to cut Antony off from communication with the channel. To prevent this, the latter advanced his left wing; whereupon Octavius gave the signal for the attack. At first the impetuous attacks of his ships met with no success; on the contrary, Antony's fleet drove them back again and again; but the bulkiness and heaviness of his battleships prevented him from closing with the enemy and putting them to flight.

Victory still hung in the balance when a stiff breeze from the north sprang up and separated the combatants: Antony's ships were driven towards the shore, while Octavius went off in a westerly direction, when suddenly Cleopatra's vessels, which had remained at a distance within the mouth of the channel, hoisted every stitch of canvas and, making a way for themselves through Antony's line, scudded away, with a strong wind behind them, in the direction of the Peloponnesus. As the battle had not ceased, the majority of the officers and sailors were not even aware of Cleopatra's departure, and even those who saw what had happened could not believe that the Queen had definitely abandoned the scene of action. Antony himself thought the Egyptian fleet had fled from motives of fear, and not at the Queen's express command, and he attempted to recall them. Without a moment's reflection he took a five-oared galley, and accompanied only by Alexander the

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Syrian and Scellius, went in pursuit of the Egyptians. It was this incident that, deciding as it did the issue of the battle of Actium, decided also the fate of Antony, of Cleopatra, and of Egypt.

The flight of the Egyptian fleet had itself thrown Antony's huge battleships into disorder; but when it was realised that the triumvir had likewise disappeared, the confusion that followed was complete. There were many who refused to believe that Antony had forsaken them; and, in any case, all hoped that he would not long delay his return. The fleet continued to hold out against the enemy until late in the afternoon; and it is probable that, had their leader not abandoned them, the victory would have gone to the allied forces. But, with Antony absent, it was impossible to maintain order in the lines or on board the vessels; and the sailors of Octavius made light work of the enemy's galleys, attacking them one by one, boarding them, and massacring all who attempted to oppose them. When night fell, 5000 corpses lay awaiting burial on Antony's side, and the blazing hulks of one of the noblest fleets of the world shed a sinister light on the waves and the shore.

Yet Octavius was even then no more than master of the sea, for the land forces of his rival had not been subdued. Besides an army of 120,000 men at Actium, Antony also held the passes that led into Macedonia and Thessaly, with the result that his troops could not be cut off from retreat. But the whole force melted as the snow beneath the rays of the sun when the news of Antony's departure

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reached the ears of the men. Officers deserted one after the other : those belonging to the allied troops departed for their own countries, while the Roman officers betook themselves to Alexandria or passed over into Octavius' camp. Some five days after the battle, Claudius made off in the night, leaving his soldiers to their own devices, who, in waiting for the reappearance of their general, gave the strongest testimony of their courage and fidelity. At length, on the seventh day (9th September 723), having heard from a messenger sent from Tænarus that Antony would never return, the deserted legions, with many maledictions, surrendered to Octavius.

Octavius became, from that time, absolute master of the Roman Empire, and from that day took the name of Augustus Cæsar. Cleopatra's ambitious schemes had, a second time, vanished into thin air, and Antony's good star had set for ever. What followed was no more than a heart-rending, lamentable effort; the last phase of a hopeless struggle.

After the capitulation of Antony's legions at Actium, the whole of Greece surrendered to the conqueror : officers, dignitaries, magistrates, private individuals, all hastened to render homage to Cæsar. The vassal princes themselves, who had remained faithful to Antony, now sent ambassadors to sue for peace. Towards the end of September, Cæsar spent a few days at Athens; then, on hearing that Antony had reached Alexandria, he journeyed into Asia-Minor. When the vassal princes had sworn fealty to him, he was seized with a desire to get possession of Syria and attack Egypt; but he

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was deterred from doing so for two very serious reasons. In the first place, the army he had left at Epiræ, having received neither largess nor booty, nor arrears of pay, absolutely refused to march; and in the second, Quintus Didius, the governor of Syria, who held Antioch with several legions, and Athenion, commanding the troops stationed in Phoenicia, had not yet abandoned Antony's cause. Finally, while Octavius was attempting to negotiate with Didius, disquieting news from Rome reached his ears: the citizens, who had long been expecting a share of Cleopatra's spoils, had waxed indignant on hearing that not only had the Queen fled with all her treasure, but that fresh war taxes were to be imposed wherewith to pay the soldiers of the victorious army, and a serious outbreak had occurred. In the circumstances Octavius was obliged to discontinue the war and return immediately to Italy.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FALL OF THE EGYPTIAN EMPIRE

Most of the modern historians who have commented upon the battle of Actium are of the opinion that Cleopatra's unexpected departure was but the outcome of long-premeditated treason, committed for the purpose of delivering her husband and ally into the hands of the enemy, and in order that, when once Antony had been removed from the scenes, she might conclude advantageous peace with the conqueror. But no writer of antiquity ever put forward such a suggestion; and even those who, in relating these events, give full vent to their hatred for Cleopatra, or who commiserate with Antony over his unhappy fate, are careful not to attribute the conduct of the Queen to motives so base. Adolphe Stahr has, in our own day, devoted a whole volume to examining whether Cleopatra betrayed the man to whom she had given herself, body and soul. And, after having very carefully collected all that ancient writers have transmitted to us on the subject, and after submitting the evidence to a rigorous criticism and allowing for all psychological motives that might possibly have existed, this writer has come to the conclusion that the Queen of Egypt cannot be accused of treason.

For my part, nothing seems to me easier than to

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explain the flight of Cleopatra as no more than the act of a woman in no way accustomed to the din of battle. When from her galley, that lay at anchor at the mouth of the Gulf of Ambracia, she heard the roar and tumult of the strife coming nearer and nearer, and saw that very soon the royal galley itself would be in the midst of the carnage; when, from the movements of Antony's vessels, she began to fear that she would soon be made a prisoner; when, in short, perplexity, impatience, and terror had entered into her soul, so that she lost command of herself,—what more natural than that Cleopatra should have no thoughts but of getting away, at all costs, beyond the reach of her powerful enemy? Just at this moment a favourable breeze sprang up, the fight was interrupted, and a large gap was opened between the two fleets. Mad with terror and despair, the Queen suddenly saw a way of escape and of saving her life, if not her throne. The temptation was too great. No sooner had she made up her mind than she gave the order for departure. The Egyptian vessels passed it on, one to the other, and hoisting their sails, fled rapidly away in the wake of the royal galley.

Far more difficult to explain is the conduct of Antony. He who had always shown himself a hero in the face of the most serious reverses, who had come out of the defeats of Mutina and Phraata not only unharmed, but more glorious than before, now, when nothing was lost and all still to gain, to consider himself vanquished before the struggle had well begun! No sooner did he perceive that the

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Egyptian fleet had gone, than he hurried in pursuit—doubtless with the idea of bringing back the ships—and when he saw that that was impossible, instead of immediately returning to the scene of action, putting himself at the head of his army and disputing the victory with Octavius, he forgot every other object and joined the fugitives, abandoning and betraying those brave friends who were shedding their blood in his cause.

The Egyptian fleet was making its way with a fair wind for the Peloponnesus when Antony came up with it. He endeavoured to persuade the leaders to return to the battle, but without success. At length the Queen's galley slowed down and took the despairing triumvir on board. But Octavius' light ships, seeing Cleopatra hastily leaving the gulf and Antony following close behind, went in pursuit. One of these vessels, commanded by a certain Eurycles, an old pirate, succeeded in catching them up and capturing not only one of the two admiral's galleys, but another vessel, which contained the Queen's most valuable plate and furniture. Eurycles went off with his spoil and the fleet was then permitted to keep on its way without further molestation. Cleopatra had taken flight so precipitately and hurriedly, that she had not observed that the battle was on the point of being won; and, as for Antony, he exaggerated the catastrophe of his defeat. He who, only the day before, was master of half the world, king of kings, leader of thousands of brave men, now considered himself a miserable fugitive, abandoned by all the world. He sat down

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at the head of the ship, and remained there in sombre silence, holding his head between his hands. Thus he continued for three days, during which he did not even ask to see Cleopatra; only after arriving at Tænarus did some of the Queen's women first induce them to speak to one another, then to dine together, and not long after, as it may be supposed, to sleep together.

They had not left the port, when several superior officers who had escaped from Actium came to tell them that even if the fleet had been destroyed they believed the land forces were as yet untouched. Such unlooked for good news revived hope in Antony as well as Cleopatra; and they resolved to renew the struggle. Messengers were despatched to Canidius with orders to withdraw immediately into Macedonia and thence to pass to Asia-Minor. At the same time Antony decided to join the legions garrisoned at Cyrene, while Cleopatra went off to recruit a fresh army and collect the necessary war material in Egypt. No sooner had these resolutions been taken, than Cleopatra and the Egyptian fleet set sail for Alexandria: the masts of all her vessels were decorated with crowns and garlands of flowers, as though returning from a victorious campaign. Antony himself embarked on an armed transport and departed with all haste for Cyrene, accompanied only by two friends: the Greek rhetorician Aristocrates and Lucius, whose life Antony had saved at the battle of Philippi, and who remained faithful to him to the last.

But it was all of no avail: time once spent can

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never be regained. When the messengers came to the Gulf of Ambracia, they found that Canidius had quitted the camp at Actium; and, moreover, that the troops themselves, abandoned by their leaders, had also gone over to the conqueror.

Nor had Antony any better fortune in his journey to Cyrene: the news of his defeat had preceded him; and, when he landed at Parætonium, the port for Cyrene, his general Pinarius Scarpus, who had been in command of the legions stationed at Ammonium, on the edge of the desert, had already been won over to the side of his rival. He therefore refused to conform to Antony's commands, put to death his envoys, and massacred all of his soldiers who appeared to have any sympathy with their old general. Scarpus, eager to reap the fruits of his treason, went so far as to take steps to capture Antony's person and deliver him into the hands of his enemy; but the plan fell through, thanks to the loyalty of the garrison at Parætonium, and the traitor was repulsed. Antony was so much afflicted by this news and by the defection of his best friends, that he attempted to lay violent hands on himself; but he was prevented by his companions, who conveyed him to Alexandria.

During the eighteen months that Cleopatra had spent away from her capital, Octavius' secret agents had not been idle, but had endeavoured by every means in their power to stir up the people against the Queen. Although Cleopatra was universally beloved in her kingdom, where life and property were far more carefully protected than in

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the Roman Empire, and things were in a prosperous condition, there still were to be found a certain number of malcontents who, having nothing to lose, hoped to derive an advantage from a change, no matter of what kind, in public affairs and the form of government. Moreover, the society of Alexandria, totally devoid of any ideal of patriotism or loyalty, was composed merely of a number of individuals, each of whom thought only of his personal interests; the crowd that filled the streets had no thoughts other than money-making and pleasure.

Among such people, the emissaries of Octavius made short work of recruiting allies and creating enemies of Cleopatra. The Queen, who knew all that went on, feared lest the news of the disaster at Actium might reach Egypt before her, and opposition be raised against her return. She therefore presented herself before Alexandria with a fleet gaily decorated from mast to keel, while the flourish of trumpets announcing her arrival awoke the echoes of the harbour. As no one was expecting her return, she was able to land and proceed to her palace without any opposition.

But news of the disaster followed hard upon her, and spread like wildfire through the city, where the first symptoms of significant unrest were not long in manifesting themselves. But the Queen, appearing to be ignorant of everything, occupied herself with strengthening the defence of her empire. The troops scattered in the provinces were concentrated at Alexandria; new corps were recruited; a

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fresh fleet was equipped to take the place of the one destroyed at Actium; and finally, the fortresses of Pelusium and Parætonium were adequately garrisoned.

It is needless to say that immense sums of money were required to carry out these measures. To meet her expenses, Cleopatra levied more taxes and even confiscated the treasures of the temples: at this the number of malcontents increased with alarming rapidity and affairs began to assume a menacing appearance. Since the Queen had mounted the throne, the Alexandrians had not had to pay taxes to cover the expenses of the treasury or the maintenance of the court: the royal treasury, guarded with extreme care, had been so enormously rich that there had hitherto been no need for revenues of this nature. The protests became more and more bitter; and things went so far that Cleopatra found it necessary to put down, with a rigorous hand, a partial rising of the people. As it was important to anticipate any fresh disturbance as far as was possible, the Queen showed herself very severe towards her subjects and put to death the instigators of the revolt. At the same time the prisoner king, Artavasdes, was executed, and his head sent as a present to the King of the Medes. Thus it was that, thanks to her energetic action, Cleopatra prevented any more serious disorder; and, as there had been no interruption of peace and tranquillity in the provinces, she was able immediately to resume her military preparations.

Towards the end of September, Antony was

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persuaded by his friends to go to Alexandria; but his presence in no way improved matters. On the contrary, his despondency and apathy spread to his followers and added to the fears of the timid and weak-spirited. And when, in the beginning of October, Canidius brought the news of the fall of Actium, Antony lost heart entirely and became as one whom hope had forsaken. Instead of striving to instil courage into his friends and assuring himself of the help of those legions that were still faithful to him, in Syria and Asia-Minor,—instead of stretching a hand to the towns that had remained devoted to his cause and enabling them to withstand the enemy,—instead of seconding Cleopatra's attempts to reorganise the army, Antony left the royal palace and shut himself up, for a period of several weeks, in a building erected in honour of Neptune opposite one of the corners of the great square, which stood on piles and was washed by the waters of the harbour. He gave to this building the name of Timoneum, in memory of the misanthropic philosopher Timon, because, said he, there was a similarity in their fortunes. Neither the prayers of Cleopatra nor the solicitations of his friends could avail to tear him from the place. In this manner several weeks were wasted, and at a time when every instant was of importance—nay, invaluable. Most of his followers, seeing that everything pointed to disaster and defeat, one after the other quitted Alexandria.

Cleopatra was herself openly incensed at Antony's behaviour, and in the end she ceased to

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trouble herself any further about him, and left him to the gloomy memories of his past mistakes. At the same time, her husband's apathy in no way affected the activity of the Queen: on the contrary, it only excited her to still greater efforts. Sending messengers and ambassadors in all directions, she not only endeavoured to assure herself of the loyalty of her generals and confederates, but also to form fresh alliances. She also made her army and her fleet thoroughly efficient, and even contemplated the removal of her ships of war from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean by dragging them across the Isthmus of Suez. But this enterprise, bold as it was, was not destined to succeed, and several vessels, that had stuck fast in the sand, were burned by the Arabians of Patræ.

It was then that Cleopatra, unknown to Antony, entered into negotiations with Octavius in order to find out whether, by offering valuable gifts to this man, ever greedy for money and costly articles, she could conclude an honourable peace. The ambassadors whom she sent to the conqueror, in Asia-Minor, were abundantly provided with money and presents, intended for the more eminent members of his suite, and were bidden to present Octavius with a crown, a sceptre, and a magnificent golden throne, in recognition of his sovereignty. And further, lest the hatred that prevailed at Rome against the Queen might be used as a pretext for adjourning the negotiations, the envoys were authorised to describe her as being prepared to abdicate in favour of her eldest son, Cæsarion.

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Octavius willingly accepted everything that was offered him, but his reply to Cleopatra's proposals was a categoric negative. He addressed an open letter to Cleopatra, in which, without even mentioning Antony, he ordered her to lay down her arms and abdicate, adding that if she conformed to his orders immediately, he would consider later what he would do with her person. But the reply was only written so that there might be something to meet the eye of the public. What was of prime importance to Octavius was the death of his rival, so that he might be freed from all anxiety in the future. Moreover, Antony was an insurmountable obstacle to the triumph of Octavius, for, whatever happened, he could never drag behind his chariot through the streets of Rome, on foot and loaded with chains, the bravest general the Republic had ever boasted, the friend and boon companion of Julius Cæsar.

But with Cleopatra there were no such obstacles; Octavius intended her to be the finest ornament—the chief attraction—of his triumphal entry into the capital. As, for this reason, he was anxious to take her alive, with all her treasure and jewels, he saw that he must leave her some ray of hope for the present, for the bold and spirited woman was quite capable of making good her escape with all her wealth in her possession, or of destroying herself together with all that belonged to her. At the same time that he sent her the open letter, Octavius informed her, under the seal of secrecy, that she might expect most

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favourable treatment at his hands, provided only that she either put Antony to death or banished him from her kingdom. This message was conveyed to the Queen by Thyrsus, who seems to have endeavoured to embitter the relations between Cleopatra and Antony, already strained, and bring about a complete rupture between them, by persuading the fair Egyptian to believe that Octavius would gladly take her to wife. But the Queen repelled the proposals of Thyrsus with characteristic vehemence: in the first place, she loved her husband, and in the second, she was too clever not to know that Antony was the only man left who could save the empire of the Lagidæ from ruin. Notwithstanding the almost complete isolation in which he was living, Antony came to hear that Cleopatra had entered into negotiations with his enemy, and the news added to his despair: the cruel deception and unexpected treachery that he had met with at every step now made him doubt even his wife, whom he still cherished, however, with a passionate, unbounded love.

The negotiations with Octavius were not the only ones destined to come to nothing: other missions that were sent by the Queen were equally fruitless. The Arab chiefs of Libya and Cyrene were well able to gauge the importance of the catastrophe at Actium in so far as it affected their behaviour; and, as Scaurus had gone over to Octavius, they did not dare to attack the legions under his command. The garrison of Paretonium still held out valiantly against this general, but he

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was pressing it hard, and had completely isolated the town. In the East, the vassal tribes of Arabia, who had not yet forgotten the execution of Prince Zamblichus, and Herod, King of Judea, were only waiting for a favourable opportunity to attack the Egyptian troops in Phœnicia. In the same way, the princes of Asia-Minor were of opinion that it were best to come to an understanding with the stronger of the two rivals, and came in, one after another, to Octavius' camp. Finally, Amyntas also laid down his arms, and the only ally remaining to Antony was Seleucus of Samosata, whose wife and children had been kept at Alexandria. In these circumstances, the legionaries themselves, whom the triumvir had left in the garrisons of Asia-Minor, felt compelled to make their submission to the victorious triumvir.

On reaching Rhodes, Octavius had entered into negotiations with Quintus Didius, Antony's legate in Syria. This general had long been awaiting the return of his leader; but, when he failed to appear, he handed his legions over to Octavius and even helped him to subdue those legions that, in one place or another, still remained faithful to Antony. The defection of Didius placed the whole of Syria in the power of the conqueror: not only did the garrisons scattered throughout the country capitulate one after another, but the few legions that were still true to Antony found themselves unable to rally and join the Egyptian army. As for the gladiators whom, to the number of several thousands, Antony had assembled at Cyzicus to be ready

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in the event of his having vanquished Octavius, no sooner did they learn what had occurred than they decided to hasten to Alexandria and put themselves under the orders of their general. They even succeeded in defeating Amyntas, who attempted to bar the way; but, when they reached the Phœnician frontier, they encountered Didius Scaurus, who proceeded to surround them on all sides. But the gladiators made a heroic stand and, in spite of all Didius' propositions, did not lay down their arms until many weeks had passed and after they had assured themselves that Antony was no longer in a position to send them help. 'After so many of those whom Antony and Cleopatra had loaded with favours had deserted them,' observes Dion Cassius, 'the devotion and bravery of these poor gladiators seems to me little less than sublime.' But Octavius had little confidence in them; and, although they had surrendered to Didius on condition of being allowed to settle in a suburb of Antioch, Messala soon dispersed them under pretext of incorporating them in the legions, and they were slaughtered to a man.

Thus passed the autumn. If Egypt was held so fast in the meshes of the net that had been drawn round her as to be incapable of the least movement, Octavius was alike incapable of striking the final blow against the kingdom of Cleopatra. The news that reached him from Rome was of a more and more disquieting nature, and he sent Agrippa, at the head of several of his legions, to repress the tumult that had arisen in Italy; then, as winter

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came on, this general informed him that his presence in Italy was urgently needed. This deferred the war for some time, for, in the beginning of the year 724, Octavius returned to Brundisium. The news of his departure restored hope to the drooping spirits at Alexandria, and Antony himself left his place of refuge and, yielding to the entreaties of his friends, quitted the Timoneum and returned to the royal palace. Cleopatra received him with open arms, showing herself more affectionate than ever, and, in order to put an end to the malicious rumours that were current, she celebrated the anniversary of the birth of Antony with such magnificence that, according to Plutarch, many of the guests, who came poor, returned wealthy. Harmony was thus restored in the royal household; but, as it was necessary that someone should bear the expenses of the quarrel, all the misery and wretchedness was attributed to Thyrsus, the ambassador Octavius had sent to Cleopatra. The Queen informed her husband of all the proposals that had been made to her in the name of Octavius, and even hinted that he had pursued her with amorous intentions. Mad with anger and jealousy, the triumvir first ordered him to be whipped, and then sent him back to his master.

Antony's presence in part restored its former animation to the royal palace; and, although one no longer saw the crowd of Roman senators, foreign princes, and adventurers that had encumbered it in earlier days, every attempt was made to preserve the prestige of the court in the

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eyes of the people of Alexandria. Antony, surrounded by the few friends who had remained faithful to him — Canidius, Publius Turullius, Lucilius, and Seleucus, son of King Antiochus XIII., — busied himself with everything, and especially with the defensive measures that were deemed necessary. Seleucus was appointed commander-in-chief of the camp at Pelusium, and Turullius, to whom the reorganisation of the fleet was entrusted, displayed so great activity in the accomplishment of his task that, to procure the wood necessary for the construction of new ships, he even went so far as to cut down the trees in the wood sacred to *Æsculapius*. In this way he succeeded in constructing in a few months a fleet which, under a good commander, would have been perfectly well able to hold its own against the finest vessels the enemy could boast.

Neither Antony nor Cleopatra, however, had any illusions with regard to the future. On the contrary, they predicted a most lamentable end to the struggle and considered that ruin was inevitable. In spite of the respite afforded them by the mutiny of Octavius' troops in Italy, they already despaired of preserving even the throne, and were fully prepared for the worst. The fact that a large fleet lay at anchor in the Red Sea seems to indicate that the Queen and her husband had conceived the plan of escaping in that direction with their treasures, and settling in a far-distant land where they would be out of reach of defeat and servitude.

The inhabitants of Alexandria were completely

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demoralised and their anxiety increased from day to day. During the reign of Cleopatra, Egypt had enjoyed the blessings of peace, while every other country was a prey to war and riot, and the richest men of the world had sought refuge in the metropolis of the Lagidæ, bringing their treasure with them. In the reign of Ptolemy Auletes, the court of Egypt had owed large sums to the Roman bankers, whereas now it was Italy that was unable to pay for the commodities furnished by Alexandria; Italy that was debtor to Egypt. And not only had every Croesus of Asia-Minor and of Syria deposited his wealth in the Alexandrian banks, but the citizens of the great town had themselves rapidly become rich. Now, on a sudden, the world of finance had become seriously alarmed. In vain did the Queen strive to conceal all that was of a disagreeable or disquieting nature: all who had a stake in her kingdom were perfectly well aware of the trend of affairs. At the same time, commercial intercourse with foreign powers had come to an abrupt termination, to the consternation of the people of Alexandria, whose foreign trade was their chief resource. Hence, in spite of the fact that the capital was crowded with soldiers and a strong army was encamped beneath the walls of Pelusium, the anxiety and discontent increased visibly from day to day.

Seeing this, Cleopatra and Antony, in the hope of creating a diversion in men's minds, decided to announce the coming of age of Cæsarion and Antyllus, which was equivalent, in the case of the son of

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Cæsar and Cleopatra, to his accession to the throne of Egypt. Cæsarion was admitted into the order of young men, and Antyllus received the *toga virilis*. The event was made the occasion for imposing ceremonies not in Alexandria alone, but throughout the whole of Egypt; and Cleopatra erected monuments to commemorate it in all parts of her kingdom, not excepting the provinces that were remote from the capital.

It was at this time probably that the temple of Dendera was built and adorned with the high-relief of which mention has already been made; for if Cæsarion had not been invested with royal dignity, it would have been incorrect to have represented him as making sacrifices to the gods side by side with his mother, the Queen.

Cleopatra seized this opportunity to distribute money and gifts among all who took part in the ceremonies. Wine flowed in streams; singers and musicians packed the streets; several days were given up exclusively to games, banquets, and merry-making. But, while the people forgot their danger in feasting and licentiousness, anxiety hung like a pall over the gilded roof of the royal palace. The gay society of the 'Inimitables' was abolished and another instituted, by no means inferior in splendour or luxury, called the 'Companions in Death.' Antony and Cleopatra were both equally determined to put an end to their lives, in the event of the foundering of all their hopes. Antony doubtless desired no more than to die fighting, sword in hand; but he could not shut

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his eyes to the possibility of being taken alive; and, that such misfortune might not befall him, he extracted a promise from Eros, his faithful freedman, to kill him as soon as he gave the word. As for Cleopatra, she was still undecided, not indeed as to whether she should live or die, but as to the manner of her death, for she was vain enough, even at this hour, to be anxious that her countenance, so long admired by all the human race, should not suffer disfigurement through pain. She was acquainted with the effect of every poison, and could not decide between one or another, since those whose effect was prompt brought also a cruelly painful death, whilst gentle poisons administered a slow and lingering death. She experimented with poisonous animals, causing them, in her presence, to be given to condemned prisoners. After having spent many days in this fashion, she decided to follow the advice of her physician, who had told her that 'the bite of an asp was the most desirable form of death, for it induced a kind of lethargy, during which the face was covered with a gentle sweat, and the senses sank easily into stupefaction; and those who were thus affected showed the same uneasiness at being disturbed or awakened as people in the profoundest natural sleep.' At the same time, wishing that she might have a last sleeping-place worthy of her rank, Cleopatra had erected near the temple of Isis monuments of extraordinary size and magnificence.

The respite given by Octavius' journey to Rome was employed in reopening negotiations with

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the conqueror. The number of Antony's supporters was by now so small, and those who remained were so little worthy of his confidence, that he had great difficulty in finding envoys sufficiently trustworthy for such a mission. On the other hand, it became necessary to assure himself of the loyalty of his allies; and inasmuch as Octavius, in concentrating his forces, would certainly establish his base of operations in Syria, Cleopatra and Antony despatched Alexander of Laodicea to Herod, that he might endeavour to persuade him to remain faithful to their cause. But Alexander, like so many of Antony's friends, gave him up, and, relying on Herod's interest, had the effrontery to appear before Octavius. The interest of the King of the Jews, however, did not save him, for he was immediately carried in chains into his own country and there put to death.

Alexander's desertion disconcerted the Queen and her husband so completely that they could think of no other envoy to depute to Octavius than Eupronius, their children's tutor. By him Antony sent Octavius a letter, wherein he informed him that he had been provoked by the insolence of his freedman, Thyrsus, at a time when his misfortunes made him but too prone to anger. 'However,' added he, 'you have a freedman of mine, Hipparchus, in your power, and if it will be any satisfaction to you, use him in the same manner.' Finally, he declared to his rival that he was ready to meet death, if by so doing he might guarantee Cleopatra her life and her throne.

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Antony, knowing Octavius as he did, very probably thought that these humiliations would have but little effect upon him, for, in addition, he handed over to him Publius Turullius, the last of the murderers of Julius Cæsar who still survived, who, having become one of the triumvir's most intimate friends, had accompanied him everywhere since the battle of Philippi. But Antony's implacable enemy was not the man to allow himself to be turned from his course by compliments or entreaties. He made no reply to Antony's letters; and, as he had succeeded in the course of twenty-seven days in satisfying his troops by distributing among them the land that he had confiscated in Italy and Macedonia, and by promising them a considerable share of the spoil he was about to derive out of Egypt, they agreed to set out on the march and continue the war with Antony. Octavius thereupon left Italy, and went to Rhodes, at the beginning of the spring of the year 724. He entrusted his fleet and part of his army to the young Cornelius Gallus, one of his ablest generals, with orders immediately to set out for Cyrene and join forces with Scarpus and attack Alexandria from the west, while he himself, at the head of the legionaries of Gaul, Greece, Asia-Minor, and Syria, would penetrate into Egypt by her eastern borders.

Although the court at Alexandria were perfectly well informed of Octavius' movements, Antony had not succeeded in taking any serious steps to ward off the enemy's attack. Yet Egypt might

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have been defended with a very fair chance of success : in the west, Paretonium had not yet fallen, and the Roman legions of Alexandria, 40,000 strong, were still intact; in the east, Athenion lay encamped in the neighbourhood of Gaza with an equally numerous army, and the garrison of Pelusium, well armed and provisioned, could offer a very strong resistance; finally, the royal fleet, cruising in the waters of the harbour, was capable of repelling any attack that might be made by way of the sea. It would seem that Antony and Cleopatra no longer thought of fighting, but solely of buying peace at the price of the most enormous sacrifices; while Octavius' equivocal messages were of such a nature as to confirm them in their illusions concerning such a possibility.

In the beginning of spring, they sent an embassy to Octavius for the last time. On this occasion it was Antyllus, Antony's son, who was sent to his father's rival with an enormous sum of money. 'Octavius,' says Dion Cassius, 'accepted the gift gladly; but he sent Antyllus back without deigning to make any reply, nor troubling to inform himself of his reasons for coming.' Then at length did Antony realise that it was thenceforward impossible to employ diplomacy in the conflict with Octavius, and that his last resource was the valour of his army and his own personal courage. At this moment very serious news reached Alexandria. Cornelius Gallus had succeeded in effecting a union with Pinarius Scarpus, and Paretonium had been taken by the assault of their combined forces.

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The imminence of the danger awoke Antony from his state of torpor; and, although he was doomed to failure from the beginning, we cannot but admire his superhuman efforts and his matchless heroism during the last days of the desperate struggle. His first thought was to recapture Paretonium, and he hurried by forced marches to that town. Before making the assault, he endeavoured to put himself into communication with his old soldiers and persuade them to help him; but this plan failed, thanks to the vigilance of Cornelius Gallus, who, seeing Antony haranguing the legionaries assembled along the ramparts, drowned his voice by a blare of trumpets. Several other attempts of a similar nature were alike fruitless, and Antony then endeavoured to take the place by storm. But, as his troops were not supplied with the necessary apparatus, the attack was repulsed, and the triumvir had to content himself with surrounding the fortress with his men. Nor was he any the more successful in this, for Gallus had taken care to bar the entrance to the harbour by heavy chains stretched across it, underneath the water; and when the Egyptian fleet had entered, for the purpose of making an attack on the town from the sea, the chains were raised and the vessels caught in a trap and unable to draw back. Cornelius Gallus then assailed them from all sides and destroyed the greater number of them.

While Antony was suffering defeat before Paretonium, Octavius and his army presented themselves at the eastern frontiers of Egypt and forced

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Athenion's troops to draw back as far as Pelusium, which town they invested towards the close of the month of June. On hearing this, Antony abandoned the siege of Paretonium and returned to Alexandria, where, on his arrival, he learnt that the fortress he had believed to be impregnable was already in the hands of Octavius.

CHAPTER XV

THE FALL OF ALEXANDRIA DEATH OF ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

FORTUNE no longer smiled on the fair descendant of Ptolemy Lagus. Not only had the army which was defending the eastern frontier of Egypt been cut to pieces, but Antony had come back from Paratonium covered with disgrace. Surrounded by the few friends still remaining—Diomede, her secretary; Olympus, her physician; Archibius, her adviser; and her children's masters, Cleopatra sought refuge within her palace walls, and there passed days full of anxiety and wretchedness, for one piece of bad news was followed by another, and, what was more, Antony did not return to Alexandria. Immediately after the defeat at Pelusium, at the first rumours of the enemy's approach, the Queen desired above all to send her eldest son, Cæsarion, to a place where he would have nothing to fear from Octavius, in whom in his twofold capacity of son of Julius Cæsar and lawful King of Egypt he inspired both feelings of jealousy and anxiety. If the young prince remained in the capital, he ran the risk of being put to death or made a prisoner by the conqueror; in which case he would be cut off from any attempt to win back the throne of his ancestors and the liberty of his native land.

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It therefore became necessary for Cæsarion to leave Egypt immediately and journey to some foreign land. But both the western and the eastern borders were invaded by the legions of Octavius, while the Mediterranean sea-board did not seem to offer the wished-for security; the roadway of the Nile alone remained open. A royal squadron lay at anchor in the port of Berenice, ready to sail at any moment, and Cleopatra confided her son to his master Rhodon, and, handing him a large sum of money, she despatched him to Ethiopia under the protection of a sufficiently numerous escort. She would herself certainly have accompanied him on his journey and sought a new home either in Southern Africa or India, had she not been unwilling to abandon Antony at so critical a moment; and who knows but that the unhappy Queen still hoped that she was not irremediably lost.

Just as on board a ship that is foundering in a storm all discipline is at an end, so at the news of the approach of the enemy and the flight of Cæsarion order could no longer be maintained at Alexandria. No one seemed to think that at all costs the threatened capital should be saved or at least defended: even the more respectable of the citizens thought only of saving their property and their persons from harm; and all who could, hastily left the country, carrying their wealth in their hands. The scholars and the artists, who had been so favoured by Cleopatra, abandoned the museum, never so much as dreaming that the Queen might

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have need of their counsel at such a crisis. Several among them betook themselves to Octavius' camp and sought to win his favour; and there were others, such as the philosopher Arius, who actually helped him to capture Alexandria and reduce Egypt to slavery. In short, there only remained in the Egyptian capital those who could not escape, and those who hoped to profit in the tumult and disorder by theft and pillage. The town was crowded with troops, it is true; but as most of the officers had deserted, the soldiers had given themselves up to excesses of all kinds and only served to increase the general confusion. The royal palace alone had a guard worthy of the name in the Gauls whom Cæsar had long ago left with Cleopatra, and who were given by Octavius to Herod after the fall of Alexandria. The disorderly crowds in the streets and public places caused the Queen the greatest anxiety; and she removed to the mausoleum, that had been erected near the temple of Isis, all her most precious belongings: gold, silver, precious stones, ebony, ivory, cinnamon; together with a large quantity of flax, and a number of torches. Octavius suffered some anxiety concerning this immense wealth, lest, upon some sudden emergency, she should set fire to the whole. For this reason he was continually sending messengers to her with assurances of gentle and honourable treatment, while in the meantime he hastened to the city with his army. And he was right: the Queen had made a firm resolution to destroy herself and her

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treasure with her, and it was only due to the craft of Proculeius and Cornelius Gallus that she was prevented from carrying out her design.

In the midst of the shouts and tumult of the crowds that thronged the approaches to the royal palace, news of a most contradictory nature was brought to the Queen every hour of the day, and the messengers never failed to find listeners for their fictions. Thus, when it became known that Pelusium had not been taken by assault, but had been handed over to Octavius by Seleucus, the people began to see traitors everywhere, and even the Queen herself was accused of opening the gates of Egypt to the enemy. It was confidently asserted that Cleopatra wanted to rid herself of her husband, believing that Octavius was amorously inclined towards her, and gain the same ascendancy over him that she had previously gained over Antony; and this absurdity was repeated with such persistence that Dion Cassius does not hesitate to state it as a fact, in spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary; for if it is incontestable that Seleucus betrayed the trust that had been confided to him, seeing that Octavius hastened to grant him the principedom of Samosata and to present him with Commagena, which remained in the hands of his descendants until the reign of Vespasian, there remains no reason for us to believe that the Queen of Egypt would have committed an act so contrary to her character and her own personal interests. That she did not immediately put to death the wife and children of the traitor, speaks for the kindness

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of her heart; and, moreover, they could hardly be considered as accomplices to the crime of Seleucus. But we should display a very poor knowledge of Cleopatra, and have a very low opinion of her intelligence and shrewdness, if we were to suppose her capable of being deceived by the falsehoods of Thyrsus, or of expecting favourable terms at the hands of the brother of her mortal enemy Octavia. On the contrary, the events which follow, and which I have attempted faithfully to reproduce, go to prove that never for one instant was the Egyptian the dupe of Octavius and that she acted her part more skilfully than the greatest comedian the Romans ever knew.

But as these calumnious reports were spreading throughout the city, and had even crossed the threshold of the palace, Cleopatra decided that it would be wrong to tolerate them further; and, going down to the great public square, she exhorted the populace to take up arms and march out against the enemy. But she had as well gone out and preached to the sand in the desert: her words were received with suspicion and mistrust and, although the crowd pretended to be carried away with enthusiasm, no one stirred from the place. It was murmured that she mocked them, and that she, least of all, wished to combat the Romans. When Antony returned to Alexandria, about the middle of July, the Queen, in order to justify herself, gave up the wife and children of Seleucus into his hands; but it appears that even then they were not put to death, for no writer tells us of their end.

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From this moment one calamity followed another without interruption. In the west, Antony's army, in beating a retreat, was hard pressed by the troops under Cornelius Gallus; in the east, the remains of Athenion's legions were flying for their lives before Octavius. Alexandria was soon surrounded on all sides; but the enemy was not yet on the eve of capturing it. Thanks to its geographical situation, the town was easy to defend; and Julius Cæsar had already proved that it could easily hold out against a long siege. In ordinary times, and without the aid of treason, Octavius would have had to lay siege to it according to the ordinary rules of warfare; and indeed he was prepared to do so. But Antony's impatience and the sins of the populace were soon to make him master of the capital by easier means.

No sooner did Octavius' army come in sight, than the triumvir made a sortie to prevent him from occupying the places of advantage in the neighbourhood. He put himself at the head of the Gallic horse which Cæsar had long ago left in Egypt (a troop he had commanded before, when he fought under the orders of Gabinius), and, with a furious rush, broke the enemy's ranks and drove them back precipitately. But this brilliant action brought with it no vestige of advantage, because Antony had no infantry to occupy the position the enemy had abandoned, and he was obliged to return into the town without accomplishing anything. Flushed with victory—the last he was destined to gain—he went, armed as he was, to embrace Cleopatra and

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present her that one of his soldiers who had distinguished himself most in the engagement. The Queen, to reward him, presented him with a cuirass and helmet of gold. He took it from her and the same night went over to Octavius.

Encouraged by his success, Antony determined to see if it were possible to sow sedition among the soldiers of his rival and draw away a certain number to fight under his own flag; and, approaching the camp, he caused a report to be spread among the soldiers to the effect that he promised 1500 denarii to every man who deserted Octavius and came over to him. But the stratagem met with no success, since all the world considered that his was a lost cause, while the victories of Octavius had strengthened the discipline and excited the courage of his army, who seized this occasion to prove their loyalty; the legionaries had, moreover, much more to expect from the pillage of Alexandria than the sack of the Roman camp. In the meantime the days went by and yet Octavius did not attack the besieged town: he preferred that the enemy, worn out and harassed by a long siege, should allow themselves to be drawn into some imprudent and thoughtless action, which would ensure his success. And this was exactly what did happen: Antony, impatient to find a way out of the critical situation in which he found himself, challenged Octavius to fight him in single combat; but the latter only answered that 'Antony might think of many other ways to end his life.' Antony, therefore, concluding that he

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could not die more honourably than in battle, determined to attack Cæsar both by sea and land. 'As soon as it was light,' says Plutarch, 'he led his infantry out of the city, and posted them on some rising ground, from whence he saw his fleet advance towards the enemy. There he stood waiting for the event; but as soon as the two fleets met, they hailed each other with their oars in a very friendly manner (Antony's fleet making the first advances), and sailed together peaceably towards the city. This was no sooner done than the cavalry deserted him in the same manner and surrendered to Cæsar. His infantry were routed; and as he retired into the city he exclaimed that Cleopatra had betrayed him to those with whom he was fighting for her sake alone.'

Thus the supreme effort had failed: all was lost. Individual honour and royal dignity might still be saved, but only by death. When they came and told Cleopatra that her fleet had gone over to the enemy, she realised that she had no longer a way of escape; and when, an hour or so later, she learnt that Antony's army no longer existed, she took her two favourites, Iras and Charmion, and entered the mausoleum which contained all her worldly possessions, telling her husband that she went to seek death. Hearing this news at the very moment when he burst into the palace, Antony, mad with grief, rushed to his room, unfastened his cuirass, and summoned his faithful slave Eros to put an end to his life. 'Eros drew his sword'—to quote Plutarch

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once more—'as if he designed to kill him; but, suddenly turning about, he slew himself, and fell at his master's feet! "This, Eros, was greatly done," said Antony; "thy heart would not permit thee to kill thy master, but thou hast taught him what to do by thy example." He then plunged his sword into his bosom, and threw himself on a couch that stood by. The wound, however, was not so deep as to cause immediate death; the blood stopped as he lay on the couch, and he came to himself, and entreated those who stood near him to put him out of his pain. They all fled, however, and left him to his cries and torments, till Diomede, secretary to Cleopatra, came at her request to bid him come to her in the monument.' When Antony found that she was still living, he desired to see once more the only being in the world whom he had ever really loved, and he ordered his servants to take him up. Accordingly, they carried him in their arms to the entrance of the tomb. As it was very difficult to open the door, strongly fortified as it was, 'the Queen,' says Plutarch, 'appeared at a window, and there were let down a cord and some chains, to which Antony was fastened, and she, with her two women, all that were admitted into the monument, drew him up. Nothing, as they who were present observed, could possibly be more affecting than that spectacle. Antony, covered with blood, and in the agonies of death, hoisted up by the rope, and stretching out his hands to Cleopatra, while he was suspended, for a considerable time, in the air. For it was with the greatest difficulty that they drew him

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up, though Cleopatra herself exerted all her strength, straining every nerve, and distorting every feature with the violence of the effort, while those who stood below endeavoured to animate and encourage her, and seemed to partake in all the toil and all the emotions that she felt.

‘When she had drawn him up and laid him on a bed, as she stood over him she rent her clothes, beat and wounded her breast, and, wiping the blood from his disfigured countenance, she called him her lord, her emperor, her husband! Her soul was absorbed in his misfortunes; and she seemed totally to have forgotten that she had any miseries of her own.’

Thus does Plutarch express himself, using as his authority the account given by the physician Olympus, who was himself present at the heart-rending scene. As she saw the noble blood flow from her lover and her husband, she thought no more of the ruin of her plans or the humiliations to which she had herself been brought: her love only gave place to despair. Whatever judgment we choose to form of Cleopatra, we cannot but admit that she was a woman and knew how to love.

Having calmed her, Antony begged for a cup of wine, either because he was thirsty, or thought that the wine would hasten his death. When he had drunk, he besought Cleopatra to seek some way of safety conducive to her honour, and to trust herself to Proculeius rather than to any friend of Octavius. Finally, he conjured her not to afflict herself with thoughts of his last reverse,

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but rather to dwell on the blessings he had enjoyed throughout his lifetime, the happiness he had felt, to be the most illustrious and most powerful of men, above all to be able to boast, at the end of his days, that, being a Roman, he had only been vanquished by a Roman.

As he uttered these words, he fell back into the arms of his mistress and expired; and with him went the last and indeed the only man of true feeling of that corrupt and materialistic age. Although nearly twenty centuries have gone by since then, Antony still appears to us as one of the most interesting and the most striking figures in the world's history. His body was considered by his contemporaries to be a type of manly beauty and physical strength; and, if we study his life and his deeds, we see that in him were united the most amazing contradictions — genius, courage, and magnanimity side by side with irresoluteness, despondency, and cruelty. Antony was, in truth, a remarkable mixture of heroism and weakness, licentiousness and candour, depravity and asceticism. If we judge him by the standards of our own day, we must condemn him; yet poets and idealists have never grudged him their sympathy and their admiration. Born of a poor and almost obscure family, he rose by his own exertions to the summit of power and glory; and then he sought his own death, when still in full possession of his faculties, in order that he might leave the world in a manner worthy of his greatness. But a woman's will is law; if his destiny

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—his evil genius—had not introduced him to Cleopatra, he might perhaps have died in the Imperial purple, lamented by the whole Roman world. But it was written that the Queen of Egypt should lead him from the right path and that he should join with her in working out her ambitious schemes; and it was she too, doubtless, who inspired him with the idea of relieving the provinces from the insupportable tyranny of the Roman aristocracy and of becoming master of a transformed world. But the grand plan failed; and the hero paid with his life for his error and his defeat.

While Antony was still struggling with death, one of his guards, a certain Dercetæus, privately carried off his bloody sword and showed it to Octavius, informing him of the suicide of his rival. On hearing of it, Octavius immediately sent Proculeius and a freedman named Epaphroditus with minute instructions concerning what they were to say to Cleopatra, and how to treat her. Dion Cassius, the official historian of the Roman Empire, admits that Octavius desired not only to obtain possession of the Queen's treasures, but also to capture her person, to serve as an ornament for his triumph; he therefore instructed his envoys as to how they should behave in the event of her resisting their overtures. As the conqueror's troops filled the greater part of the town, Proculeius and Epaphroditus reached the mausoleum easily enough; but, when there, Cleopatra refused them admittance: she had a long interview with Proculeius at the door of the building, the entrance

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of which, though strongly barricaded from within, allowed a passage for the voice. In this conversation Cleopatra demanded the kingdom of Egypt for her children; while Proculeius, on the other hand, encouraged her to trust everything to Cæsar.

Proculeius, having taken a careful survey of the place, went back and made his report to his master, who sent Cornelius Gallus to the Queen to confer with her further. 'The thing was thus concerted,' says Plutarch: 'Gallus went up to the gate of the monument, and drew Cleopatra into conversation, while, in the meantime, Proculeius applied a ladder to the window where the women had taken in Antony, and, having got in with two servants, he immediately made for the place where Cleopatra was in conference with Gallus. One of her women discovered him, and immediately screamed aloud: "Wretched Cleopatra, you are taken alive." She turned about, and, seeing Proculeius, the same instant attempted to stab herself; for to this intent she always carried a dagger about with her.' But the envoy ran up to her and took the dagger from her, and shook her clothes, lest she should have poison concealed about her. He then left her in the care of Epaphroditus, with strict orders to see that she did not succeed in taking her life. At that moment, one of the Queen's faithful eunuchs, who had stood by in agony, committed suicide in his despair. Thus Octavius managed to lay hold of Cleopatra and her treasures, without being under the necessity of renewing any of his former promises.

When night fell, the last rays of the power and

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glory of the Lagidæ were extinguished with those of the setting sun. The Egyptian Empire was destroyed, its capital taken; the Queen, her family, and her wealth were in the hands of the victor; Cæsarion, a fugitive, had now no country to which to turn. On the following day, the 1st of August 724, Octavius made his triumphal entry into Alexandria. He traversed the streets in conversation with the philosopher Arius, whom he held by the hand; and, having summoned the people to assemble in the gymnasium, he mounted a tribunal which had hastily been erected for him. The inhabitants of the town, mad with terror, threw themselves at his feet and begged for mercy; but he bade them rise and addressed them in the following words:—'I forgive the people of Alexandria all the sins of which they have been guilty. I have various reasons for doing so. In the first place, the town was built by Alexander; in the second, I admire it for its beauty and magnitude; and, lastly, I will spare it, were it but for the sake of my friend Arius, who was born here.' He then dismissed the assembly and made his way to the royal palace.

As long as the preparations for the obsequies of the dead Antony lasted, Cleopatra was comparatively free from anxiety; and although several kings and generals had begged the body of the triumvir, to render funeral honours to their late master, Octavius did not wish to deprive the widow of her due. He even allowed her to expend what sums she thought necessary for the occasion, and

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—according to Plutarch—Cleopatra interred the body with her own hands and performed the funeral rites with great magnificence. After the burial, Cleopatra, stricken down with fever from excess of grief and the blows she had inflicted upon herself, gladly seized the opportunity as a pretext for refusing to eat, and so courting death from inanition; and, if we are to believe the same writer, her physician, Olympus, helped her by his counsel and advice to deliver herself from her wretched existence. But Octavius, foreseeing the Queen's intentions, employed threats to keep her from carrying them out, causing her grave anxiety for the fate of her children. His messages and the persuasive arguments of young Cornelius Dolabella, one of the officers told off to keep watch over her, tied the hands of the unfortunate Queen, and she allowed her vanquisher to do with her what he would.

This Dolabella, sprung from one of the oldest families of the Roman aristocracy, and the son of Publius Cornelius Dolabella, formerly consul with Antony and proconsul of Syria, had been presented to the Queen when but a child, during her visit to Rome. Although she could hardly support life, and longed for nothing so much as death, she yet exercised so potent a charm on all who came near her that the young knight could not refrain from pitying her in her misfortune. Seeing that Cleopatra was doing all in her power to invite death, as an end to her suffering, he besought her not to renounce life before assuring herself of her children's future

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welfare, promising her, at the same time, to communicate to her everything that passed. The Queen listened to his entreaties so far as to demand an interview with Octavius, and the young man hastened to find him.

Dion Cassius tells us that Cleopatra, in anticipation of the coming of Octavius, caused costly rugs to be spread over the floor of her chamber, and received the conqueror surrounded with statues and busts of Julius Cæsar. He then goes on to describe a scene in which we see the Queen putting forth all her powers to render Octavius enamoured of her charms; and when she perceived that he did not even deign to look at her, she had recourse to tears, and begged for mercy in the language of hypocrisy, persuading him that she had no intention whatever of putting an end to her life. But the account is in flat contradiction to that of Plutarch, who relates that Octavius found her in a state of undress, lying negligently on a couch; but when the conqueror entered the apartment, though she had nothing on but a single bed-gown, she arose and threw herself at his feet. Her hair was in disorder, her voice trembling, her eyes sunk, her bosom bore the marks of the injuries she had inflicted upon it. In short, her person bore witness to the condition of her mind, yet, in this deplorable condition, there were some remains of that grace, that spirit of vivacity, which had so peculiarly animated her former charms, and still some gleams of her native elegance might be seen to pass over her melancholy countenance.

‘When Cæsar had replaced her on her couch, and

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seated himself by her, she endeavoured to justify the part she had taken against him in the war, alleging the necessity she was under, and her fear of Antony. But when she found that these apologies had no weight with Cæsar, she had recourse to prayers and entreaties, as if she had been really desirous of life; and, at the same time, she put into his hands an inventory of her treasure. Seleucus, one of her treasurers, who was present, accused her of suppressing some articles in the account; upon which she started up from her couch, caught him by the hair, and gave him several blows on the face. Cæsar smiled at this spirited resentment, and endeavoured to pacify her: "But how is it to be borne," said she, "Cæsar, if while even you honour me with a visit in my wretched situation, I must be affronted by one of my own servants? Supposing I had reserved a few trinkets, they were by no means intended as ornaments for my own person in these miserable fortunes, but as little presents for Octavia and Livia, by whose good offices I might hope to find favour with you." Cæsar was not displeased to hear this, because he flattered himself that she was willing to live. He therefore assured her that whatever she had reserved she might dispose of at her pleasure, and that she might, in every respect, depend on the most honourable treatment. After this, he took his leave, in confidence that he had brought her to his purpose; but she deceived him.'

No information which has any claims to accuracy has come down to us concerning the inventory remitted by Cleopatra to Octavius, so that we are

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unable even approximately to evaluate the millions transported at that time to Rome. But it is certain that it was a question of very large sums of money, for, according to Dion Cassius, all the soldiers received their arrears of pay, and, besides, a special donation of 250 drachmas apiece; Octavius also paid off all his debts and made generous donations to the citizens; and finally, the public buildings were sumptuously adorned with the spoil taken from Alexandria, and Rome became, from that time, a rich and splendid city.

In spite of the fact that the conquest of Alexandria and even of Egypt was accomplished, Octavius could not return to Rome. Many things had to be put in order before his departure: it was above all necessary for him to consolidate the power of the Republic and organise the administration of the new province. Wishing to judge of the size and resources of Alexandria for himself, he visited all the various quarters of the town and saw all the monuments, all the sights, contained therein. In the Sema he drew the body of Alexander the Great from its tomb and with all respect placed a golden crown upon the head, covering the whole with flowers; but, when asked if he would visit the Ptolemæion, he replied that he had come to see a king, and not dead corpses.

At the same time, he devoted special attention to all that concerned the royal family and the court dignitaries. Antyllus, as well as Cæsarion, had disappeared; and, as it was not possible that he could have already left Egypt, he was eagerly

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sought for, and finally handed over to Octavius by his master, Theodorus. The unfortunate youth, after having endeavoured in vain to move his vanquisher by his prayers, took refuge in the temple built by Cleopatra in memory of Cæsar;—he was torn from his hiding-place and put to death. Princess Jotapa, daughter of the King of the Medes, who was betrothed to Alexander, the eldest of the sons of Antony and Cleopatra, was sent back to her parents. The wife and children of Seleucus were allowed to rejoin that prince. Finally, Octavius ordered all who had remained faithful to Antony after the battle of Actium to be put to death, save only the Egyptians, for he was afraid to show himself too harsh where the natives were concerned.

Cleopatra's younger children were spared, and even treated with the consideration due to their birth. The only thing that now troubled Octavius was the fact that the emissaries sent to arrest the flight of Cæsarion had not succeeded in catching him, for the young prince had established himself beyond the cataracts of the Nile, in Ethiopia, with a numerous escort. He could therefore only be won by stratagem; and as Octavius had set his heart on his capture, seeing that Cæsarion was a menace and a danger to him, he endeavoured to corrupt his master Rhodon, who had gone with him, and gave orders that neither gold nor promises should be spared in the task. But the negotiations were long in being brought to a conclusion, and Octavius, being unwilling to return to Rome before he

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had settled the matter, found himself compelled to delay his departure from Alexandria from day to day. It was then that, at his orders, the statues of Antony were all demolished. Those of Cleopatra, however, remained untouched; for Archibius, a friend of hers, gave Cæsar a thousand talents for their redemption. To commemorate his victory, Octavius founded Nicopolis (or the City of Conquest) in the vicinity of Alexandria; he also enlarged the ancient temple of Apollo, adorned with naval trophies the spot where his troops had encamped, and made sacrifice to Mars and to Neptune.

During this time the Queen was treated as a prisoner, but with gentleness and forbearance. As she showed no inclination to escape or to do away with herself, the supervision of her person was relaxed; and even the freedman Epaphroditus, though he was far more wily than her other keepers, believed that Cleopatra was becoming resigned to her fate. Any desire she had was speedily satisfied, and she was even permitted to surround herself with a company of her most trusted friends. Her health, too, was almost completely restored, when, towards the end of August, Octavius heard that Rhodon had at length been won over and that the wretched governor had prevailed on Cæsarion to turn back towards Alexandria, whither, said he, his father's nephew called him with the intention of making him King of Egypt. In due time the young prince appeared and tendered his submission to Octavius, who lost not a moment in casting him into prison.

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Wishing now to leave Alexandria as soon as possible, his work there having been completed, Octavius entrusted the government of Egypt to Cornelius Gallus; and as he wished to return to Rome by land, by way of Syria, he ordered Cleopatra and her children to be sent off before him. Faithful to the promise he had made to the Queen, Dolabella informed her secretly that her departure was fixed and that within three days she would be sent away; and, on hearing this, she immediately made up her mind to put an end to her life before the time appointed for the journey. Carefully concealing her intentions, she requested of Octavius permission to make her last oblations to Antony. On the following morning she was conveyed to the place where he lay buried; and (says Plutarch) kneeling at his tomb, with her women, she thus addressed the dead: 'It is not long, my Antony, since with these hands I buried thee. Alas! they then were free; but thy Cleopatra is now a prisoner attended by a guard, lest in the transports of her grief she should disfigure her captive body, which is reserved to adorn the triumph over thee. These are the last offerings, the last honours she can pay thee, for she is now to be conveyed to a distant country. Nothing could part us while we lived; but in death we are to be divided. Thou, though a Roman, liest buried in Egypt, and I, an Egyptian, must be interred in Italy, the only favour I shall receive from thy country. Yet, if the gods of Rome have power or mercy left (for surely those of Egypt have for-

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saken us), let them not suffer me to be led in living triumph to thy disgrace! No!—hide me, hide me with thee in the grave; for life, since thou hast left it, has been misery to me.'

Thus the unhappy Queen bewailed her misfortunes; and, after she had crowned the tomb with flowers, and kissed it, she returned to the palace and ordered her bath to be prepared. When she had bathed, she sat down to a magnificent supper; during which a peasant came to the gate with a small basket. The guards inquired what it contained, and the man who brought it, putting by the leaves which lay uppermost, showed them a parcel of figs. As they were admiring their size and beauty, he smiled and bade them take some, but they refused; and not suspecting that the basket contained anything else, allowed him to carry it to the Queen. After supper Cleopatra took her tablets and wrote a letter to Cæsar, which she sealed and begged Epaphroditus to convey to Octavius immediately. Then saying that she wished to rest, she ordered everybody to go from the monument except Iras and Charmion, and made fast the door.

When Octavius opened the letter, its plaintive tone and the urgent entreaty that she might be buried in the same tomb with Antony, led him to suspect her design. At first he was for hastening to her himself, but he changed his mind, and despatched others. His people found the guards at their post, innocent as yet of the fact that the Queen had attempted her life. Her death was sudden, for,

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when the doors were burst open, they found her quite dead, lying on her golden bed, and dressed in all her royal ornaments. Iras, one of her women, lay dead at her feet ; and Charmion, hardly able to support herself, was adjusting her mistress' diadem. One of Octavius' messengers said angrily : ' Charmion, was this well done ? ' ' Perfectly well,' said she, ' and worthy a descendant of the Kings of Egypt.' She had no sooner said this, than she fell dead at the messenger's feet.

Meanwhile Octavius had himself hastened to her apartment. At his orders the physicians summoned a snake-charmer and bade him suck the two slight pricks which were to be seen on the arm of the Queen ; but in vain : it was impossible to bring her back to life. Cleopatra died on the last day of the month of August 724 (B.C. 30) at the age of thirty-nine, in the midst of the ruins of her empire, and without sacrificing either her dignity or her pride. Historians tell us that she was beautiful even in death : her face betrayed no suffering and her body showed no marks of any wound, no sign of poison. Only on her left arm were to be seen two slight pricks, and they could only be discerned with difficulty ; and it is for that reason that the physicians of the time attributed her death to the bite of an asp, brought in by the peasant underneath the figs and leaves in the basket. But no serpent was found in the room, and a rumour was started that the queen had taken poison contained in a hollow needle concealed in her hair, and had administered it likewise to her two women. But it seems more

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probable that she was bitten by a serpent, for, at the triumph of Octavius, a statue of Cleopatra was borne through the streets of Rome, with one of its arms clasped by an asp.

Although Octavius was very much chagrined at having lost so beautiful an ornament to his triumph, he none the less faithfully executed the last wishes of the Queen. She was buried by Antony's side, with all the magnificence due to her quality, for, says Plutarch, disappointed as he was by her death, he could not but admire her fortitude. But a few days later, he put an end to Cæsarion on the advice of the philosopher Arius, who is said to have observed that there ought not, on any account, to be too many Cæsars. The principal reason for Octavius' hatred for the young prince was doubtless his striking resemblance to Julius Cæsar; for he did not even wish him to figure in his triumph, for fear he should excite the pity of the Romans.

The death of Cleopatra closed the annals of the Ptolemaic dynasty, the first pages of which record the deeds of sovereigns both wise and brave, while the latter ones tell us only of good-for-nothing kings who weakened and finally ruined Egypt, that vast country so liberally endowed by Nature. The Lagidæ succeeded in subduing many broad lands, in founding a mighty empire, in amassing fabulous wealth; and, in the words of a writer of those times, they enriched not the royal house only, but also the people whom they governed. But, at the same time, they committed an irreparable error in omitting to blend into a homogeneous whole the

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various racial elements, in every way so disparate, that existed side by side beneath their sceptre's sway. The cosmopolitan country never possessed that strength out of which heroes are born and which alone is capable of defending the native soil, the fatherland. When the last sovereign of the dynasty—a young queen of eighteen years, beautiful, wise, and more cultured than any of her predecessors—mounted the throne, the empire was already threatened with ruin. Cleopatra, seeing the ancient kingdoms of the East crumbling around her and scattering in all directions, felt at once that her country was alike incapable of arresting the steady march of Roman authority, and that there was no one on whom she could rely, in the event of her opposing strength with strength. Thereupon her ambitious spirit sought new means of consolidating her tottering throne, and she attempted to raise the dynasty to heights never before dreamed of by any of the Lagidsæ. Her genius even suggested the best method of attaining her end; and, had she not been a woman, had she not been passionately enamoured of the man who should have been no more than an instrument in her hands, it is probable that her efforts would have been crowned with success. But fate had decreed it otherwise; she gave her life to expiate her faults, and died bravely, worthily, the master of her sex. Her empire and throne crumbled to the dust with her death, burying beneath its ruins the last descendant of Ptolemy Lagus.

The news of the taking of Alexandria was

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received at Rome with rapturous delight: the whole world felt it had been relieved of a great burden, a dreadful nightmare. At last it was vanquished, the monster that had dared to make war on the Republic; she was dead, the Egyptian sorceress who had bewitched Cæsar and Antony.

Octavius' solemn entry into Rome and the three days' triumph celebrated by him were the occasion of the most magnificent feasts and an unheard of display of enthusiasm. The children of Antony by Cleopatra, loaded with chains, followed the victor's chariot, and a waxen image of the Queen was also paraded through the streets. Historians do not tell us of the fate of the young princes; but it would seem that, in spite of the prescriptions of the Roman laws, they were not put to death after the triumph. All we know is that the young Cleopatra was married in later years to Juba, son of the King of Numidia.

Egypt, now become a Roman province, was submitted to an extremely severe form of administration. Fearing, as Cæsar had before him, that the country would furnish an unruly governor with an occasion for creating a revolution, Octavius reserved to himself both the government of Cleopatra's ancient kingdom and the use of its revenues. He even went so far as to forbid Roman citizens to settle in Alexandria without special permission, and made it impossible for an Egyptian ever to become a Roman Senator. Finally, although all the Roman provinces enjoyed a certain autonomy in all that concerned their internal administration,

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Egypt was perpetually being sacrificed to the good pleasure of the emperors, and not until the reign of Tiberius did its people obtain the title of citizens.

A great silence fell on the country and her capital; and although, in after years, the Roman and Arabian occupations of Egypt restored some of the former prosperity of that ancient land, Alexandria, giving place to Cairo, lost more and more of its prestige as a great metropolis, and eventually fell into ruin and decay.

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