the prisoners drew water in the buckets of the well, and, with their guards, rejoiced in the refreshing drink, the leader led Joshua and Ephraim on one side, for they could not be separated by reason of the chains that bound them together by the ankles. They were soon hidden from the others behind the little temple, and then the driver sank down on a bench at a little distance, having first, with a significant gesture, shown the two Hebrews the bludgeon in his right hand, and pointed to the dogs who were rubbing against his feet.

He kept his eyes open, too, during the conversation that followed. They might say what they pleased; he knew his duty, and though he understood how to shut one eye on a parting in return for good gold, for quite 20 years, in spite of many attempts to escape among his moles—as he called those condemned to the mines—not one had ever succeeded in getting away.

This lovely woman was perhaps this fine fellow's betrothed, for he had been told that Joshua had been commander. But he had already called many noble birds "moles," and if this veiled woman should contrive to slip files or gold into the prisoner's hands so much the better; this evening nothing on these two should be left unsearched, not even the youth's black hair, which had been left unshorn in the confusion that had taken place at the start of the prisoners, for they had been sent off just before the departure of Pharaoh's army.

The subject of the woman's whispered negotiations with the fallen captain remained unknown to the driver, but from her sorrowful face and manner he inferred that she had caused the ruin of this noble man. Oh! woman, woman! and that lad in chains! The glances he cast at the slender creature were so ardent that she had to draw her veil closer. But patience! Great Father Amon! His moles were going to a good school for modesty.

Now the woman removed her veil. She was beautiful! It must be hard to part with such a lovely creature; and now she cried so bitterly.

The rough guard's heart was touched as much as his position would allow, and he could have struck the elder prisoner with his whip, for was it not an outrage, having such a lover, to stand like stone? At first the wretch did not even stretch out a hand to the woman, who certainly loved him; while he, the guard, would have been glad to see the two kiss and embrace.

Or was this beauty perhaps the warrior's wife, who had deceived him? But no, no, how kindly he approached her now. A father speaks like that to his child, but his "mole" was much too young to have so old a daughter. A riddle! However, he did not care about the answer, since it was in his power during the march to make the most taciturn convict as frank as an open book.

And not alone the simple driver of the gang, but everyone might have wondered why this beautiful woman had come out into the highway at early dawn to see an unfortunate man weighed down with chains.

Nothing but tormenting anxiety for the man she loved could have impelled Kasana to take this journey and expose herself to scorn as a woman of no reputation. A terrible fate awaited him; her lively imagination had pictured Joshua in the mines languishing, broken down, pining away, and at last dying with a curse on her upon his lips.

On the evening of the day on which Ephraim, shivering with high fever and half choked with dust, was carried into their house, her father had informed her that in the person of the young Hebrew she held a hostage which would force Joshua to return to Tanis and yield to the wishes of the Prophet Baie, with whom she knew her father to be allied in a secret plot. He likewise confided to her that not only were great distinctions and high honors to be offered to Hosea, but also marriage with herself, to secure his fidelity to Egypt and to a cause from which he, Hornecht, looked for great benefits to the country and to his own kindred. This had filled her with high hopes of attaining long-wished-for joys; and, as they sat near the little roadside temple, she now confessed this to the prisoner with a drooping head and low sobs; for he was now forever lost to her, and even if he could not return the love she had felt for him since her childhood, he at any rate would not hate her and condemn her unheard.

Joshua, indeed, listened to her willingly, and assured her that nothing would gladden his heart more than that she should clear herself from the reproach of being answerable for the terrible fate awaiting himself and the youth by his side.

At this she sobbed aloud, and had to struggle to compose herself before she could succeed in telling her story with any degree of calmness.

Shortly after Joshua's departure the high priest had died, and Baie, the second prophet of Amon, had succeeded him. Things were then greatly altered; this man, the most powerful in the land, stirred up Pharaoh to hatred against the Hebrews and their leader, Moses, whom, till then, the King and Queen had protected and feared. He had also persuaded the King to pursue the fugitive Hebrews, and the army was at once ordered to go forth and compel them to return. She immediately feared that Joshua would certainly refuse to fight against those who were of his own blood, and that it must anger him to be sent forth to sign a contract which the Egyptians would begin to break before they could know whether it had been accepted. Then, when he had returned home, he himself knew, only too well, how Pharaoh had treated him like a prisoner and had refused to admit him to his presence until he had sworn to continue to lead the Egyptian troops, and remain a faithful servant to the King. Still, Baie, the High Priest, had not forgotten that he had saved his life, and was well disposed toward him and grateful; and she knew that he had hoped to entangle Joshua in the secret conspiracy in which her father also was implicated. It was Baie, too, who had caused Pharaoh to release him from fighting against his own nation on condition of his renewing his oath of fidelity, to place him in command of the foreign mercenaries, and to raise him to the high rank of "Friend of the King"—but of course he must know all this already, for the new High Priest had with his own hand set the tempting prospect before Joshua, who had rejected it with firm and manly decision. Her father had in the first instance been on his side, and for the first time had entirely refrained from speaking with reproach of his Hebrew origin.

On the third day after Joshua's return the Captain of the Archers had gone out to speak with him, and since then everything had gone wrong. He therefore must know what it was that had turned the man of whom she dared think no evil, since she was his daughter, from being a friend into a mortal enemy. She looked inquiringly into Joshua's face and he was ready with his answer. The Captain had told him that he would be a welcome son-in-law.

"And you?" asked Kasana, looking anxiously at the speaker.

"I," replied the prisoner, "could only say that you had from your childhood been kind and dear to me, but that nevertheless there was much to forbid my linking the fate of any woman to mine."

At this Kasana's eyes flashed and she cried: "It is because you love another—a woman of your own people—the woman who sent Ephraim to you!"

But Joshua shook his head and answered gently: "You are in error, Kasana. The woman of whom you speak is this day another man's wife."

"But then," cried the widow, with revived spirit, and she looked at him with gentle entreaty, "why—oh forgive me—why did you repulse him so harshly?"

"That was far from my purpose, dear child," he replied warmly, laying his hand on her head. "I always have thought of you with all the affection with which I am capable. And though I could not, indeed, accede to his wish, it was because the sternest necessity forbids me ever to look forward to that peace and joy by my own hearth which other men may strive for. If I had been a free man my life would have been one of constant journeying and warfare."

"But how many men," Kasana put in, "wield the sword and shield, indeed, but rejoice at their home-coming to their wives, and the joys they find under their own roof?"

"Very true," said he sadly. "But the duties that call me are such as the Egyptians know not of. I am the son of my nation."

"And you propose to serve it?" said Kasana. "Oh! I quite understand you. But then—why did you return to Tanis? Why did you trust yourself in Pharaoh's power?"

"Because I was pledged by a sacred oath, my child," said he kindly.

"An oath!" she exclaimed. "A promise which puts death and captivity between you and her whom you love, and those whom you desire to serve! Oh! would that you had never come back to this land of unrighteousness, of treachery and ingratitude! That oath will plunge many into grief and weeping. But what does a man care for the woe he brings on others? You have spoilt all my joy in life, hapless creature that I am; and at home, among your own people, you have a worthy father whose only son you are. How often have I seen the noble old man with his snow-white hair and flashing eye! And you will be like him if you attain to old age, as I used to think when I met him by the harbor, or in the four-court of the High Gate, when he was ordering his hinds to bring in his tribute of beasts or woolly sheep to the receipt of custom. And now his latter days are to be darkened by his son's perversity."

"And now," corrected Joshua, "his son is going into misery, loaded with fetters; still he may hold his head high above those who betrayed him. They, and Pharaoh at their head, have forgotten that I have shed my heart's blood for them on many a battle field and been faithful to the King through every kind of danger. Menephtah has abandoned me, and with him his chief minister, whose life I saved, and many another who once called me friend; they have deserted me and cast me out, and this innocent lad with me. But I tell you, woman, those who have done this, those who have committed this sin—one and all, shall—"

"Curse them not!" cried Kasana, and her cheeks flushed scarlet.

But Joshua did not heed her prayer, but exclaimed, "Should I be a man if I did not thirst for vengeance?"

The young woman clung in terror to his arm and beseechingly went on:

"How, indeed, can you forgive him? Only do not curse him, for it was out of love for me that my father became your enemy. You know him well, and his hot blood, which easily carries him to extreme in spite of his years. He kept silence, even to me, of what he took as an insult—for he has seen me courted by many suitors, and I am precious above all else in his eyes. Sooner will Pharaoh forgive the rebel than my father will pardon the man who scorns me, his dearest treasure. He came home frantic with rage. Every word he spoke was abuse. Then he could not bear to remain indoors, and he stormed outside as he had stormed within. At last, however, he would have allowed himself to be pacified, as he often had done before, if he had not met some one in the palace courts who made it his business to pour oil on the flames. I heard all this from the high priest's wife, for she, too, was greatly troubled to think that she had brought evil upon you, and her husband had already done everything in his power to save you. She, who is as brave as a man, was ready to second him and to open the door of your prison; she has not forgotten that you saved her husband's life in Libya. Ephraim's chains were to be struck off at the same time as yours, and all was ready to enable you to escape."

"I know," replied Joshua gloomily. "And I would return thanks to the God of my fathers if they spoke falsely who told me that it was your doing, Kasana, that our dungeon was locked on us more closely than ever." At this the pretty heart-broken young creature exclaimed vehemently: "And should I be here if that were true? Hatred indeed seethed in my soul, as in that of every woman whose love is scorned; but the ill-fortune which befell you quickly changed my wrath into pity, and revived the fires in my heart. As truly as I pray to be mercifully judged after my death, I am innocent of this thing, and never ceased to hope for your release. It was not until last evening, when it was too late, that I learned that Baie's attempt had failed. The high priest can do much, but the very man whom he will not thwart is closely allied to my father."

"You mean Pharaoh's nephew, Prince Siptah," interrupted Joshua in great excitement. "They hinted to me the plots they were weaving about him. They wanted to set me in the place of Aarsu, the Syrian captain, if I would but consent to let them work their will with my people and renounce my own flesh and blood. But rather would I have died 20 deaths than stain myself with such treason. Aarsu is far more fit for such dark schemes, though at last he will betray them all. So far as I am concerned, the Prince has good reason to hate me."

At this Kasana put her hand over her mouth, pointing uneasily to Ephraim and the jailer, and whispered: "Spare my father! The Prince—whatever it was that roused his enmity—"

"He is seeking to tempt you, too, into his net, and he has been told that you are in love with me," the warrior broke in. But she only blushed, and bending her head in assent went on:

"And for that reason Aarsu, whom he has taken into the conspiracy, is bound to keep such close ward over you and Ephraim."

"The Syrian's eyes are wide open," cried Joshua. "But I believe you, and thank you heartily for coming to us hapless wretches."

"And you will always think of poor Kasana without wrath or hatred?"

"Gladly, most gladly."

The young widow grasped the captive's hand with passionate agitation, and was about to press it to her lips, but he drew it away; and she said anxiously, gazing up at him with tearful eyes: "Do you refuse me the favor which no beneiactor refuses to a beggar?" Then she suddenly started up, and exclaimed so loudly that the gaoler was roused, and looked to see where the sun was: "But I tell you, the time will come when you will offer me that hand to kiss. For when the messenger shall come from Tanis to bring you and this lad the freedom you pine for, it will be to Kasana that you will owe it!"

The fair face glowed with the flush of eager anticipation, and Joshua, seizing her hand, exclaimed: "Oh, if only you might succeed in doing what your faithful soul desires! How can I bear to prevent your trying to alleviate the terrible misfortune which fell upon this boy under your roof? Still, as an honest man, I must tell you that I can never more take service with the Egyptians; come what may, I shall henceforth forever belong, body and soul, to those whom you persecute and despise, the nation and tribe into which my mother bore me."

At this her lovely head dropped; but she raised it again immediately to say: "There is no one so high souled and honest as you, no one that I have ever known from my childhood up. And when, among my own people, I fail to find any man whom I may reverence, still I will remember you, in whom everything is great, and true, and without spot. And if poor Kasana may succeed in setting you free do not despise her if you find her fallen away from the virtue in which you left her; for the humiliation she may have to endure, the shame she may be brought to——"

Joshua anxiously interrupted her.

"What are you about to do?" he cried; but he was not to hear the answer, for the leader of the gang rose and clapped his hands, crying out: "Now, on again, you moles, on again at once."

At this the warrior's heart was moved to deep regret. Obedient to a hasty impulse he kissed the hapless Kasana on her fair brow and hair and whispered: "Leave me to pine if our freedom is to cost you such degradation. We shall never, indeed, meet again; for, come what may, my life henceforth will be nothing but a struggle and self-sacrifice. The night will close in on us darker and darker; but, however black it may be, one star will often shine on me and on this lad—the remembrance of you, sweet child, my loving and faithful Kasana." He pointed to Ephraim, and the youth pressed his lips, as if beside himself, to the hand and arm of Kasana, who was sobbing aloud.

"Come on!" cried the driver once more, and with a grateful grin for a fresh gift of money he helped the open-handed lady into her chariot.

The horses started, fresh shouts were heard, the whip cracked here and there on bare shoulders, a few yells of anguish rose through the morning air, and the file of prisoners went off toward the east. The chains on the victims' feet stirred up the dust, which shrouded the wanderers, as grief, and hatred, and dread, clouded each separate soul among them.

On they went, bent in gloomy brooding; only Joshua held his head erect. It was a comfort to him to know that Kasana, the sweet creature he had loved as a child, was innocent of his fate; and when his spirit sank within him he could revive it by repeating to himself the words of Moses: "Steadfast and Strong."

CHAPTER XVIII.

At a long hour's distance beyond the little temple where the prisoners had rested, the road leading southward to Succoth and Baal Zephon parted from that which led in a south-easterly direction, across the fortified frontier line, to the isthmus and the mines.

Not long after the departure of the prisoners, the army gathered together to pursue the Hebrews had set forth from the city of Rameses, and as the criminals had rested some considerable time by the well, the troops had nearly overtaken them. Thus they had not gone much further when some pioneers rode up to clear the highway for the approaching host. They ordered the gang of prisoners to stand aside, and proceed no farther till the swift baggage train containing Pharaoh's tents and household gear should have passed them; and, indeed, the King's chariot wheels could already be heard.

The drivers were well content to be bidden to wait; they were in no hurry; the day was hot, and if they were late in reaching their journey's end it was the fault of the army. To Joshua, too, the incident was agreeable, for his young companion in chains had been staring before him as if in delirium, and had answered his questions vaguely or not at all, so that the older man was growing uneasy. He knew full well how many of those condemned to forced labor fell into madness or melancholy. And now a portion of the host would march past them, and the sight was new to the lad, and might rouse him from his dull moodiness. There was by the roadside a sandhill overgrown by tamarisk bushes, and to this the driver led his file of men. He was stern, but not cruel, so he allowed his "moles" to stretch themselves on the sand, for the march past would be a long business. They had scarcely settled themselves when the roll of wheels, the neighing of fiery steeds, and shouts of command were heard, with now and then the harsh bray of an ass.

As the foremost chariots approached Ephraim inquired whether Pharaoh was not coming; but Joshua informed him with a smile, that when the King led forth his troops to battle, first of all, immediately after the advanced guard, the King's camp and furniture was sent on; for that Pharaoh and his nobles liked to find their tents pitched and the tables spread when the day's march was over, and all, officers and men alike, were to rest for the night.

Joshua had not yet ceased speaking when a number of empty carts and asses free of burthens came past; they were to carry the tribute of bread and meal, beasts and birds, wine and beer, to be paid by each village through which the sovereign should pass. This had been levied by the collectors the day before. Soon after came a company of warriors in chariots. Each small, two-wheeled chariot, plated with bronze, was drawn by a pair of horses, and in each stood a man and a charioteer. Large quivers were attached to the breastworks of the chariots, and the soldiers rested on their spears, or on their large bows. They were protected against the missiles of the foe by shirts covered with scale-armor, or thickly padded coats of mail under gayly colored tunics; and by a helmet, as well as by the breastwork of the chariot. These, whom Joshua designated as the vanguard, went forward at an easy pace, and were followed by a vast multitude of wagons and carts, drawn by horses, mules or oxen; and with them were whole herds of asses with towering loads on their backs. Next he pointed out to his nephew the tall spars and poles, and heavy rolls of rich stuffs which were to be used in erecting the king's tent, and which were a burden for several beasts; the asses and the carts with the kitchen utensils, and the camp smithies. With these came the leeches, wardrobe-keepers, salve makers, cooks, garland winders, attendants and slaves attached to the royal camp, all mounted on asses driven by nimble runners. All these, having so lately set out, were still fresh and in high spirits, and those who noticed the prisoners flung many a sharp jest at them, as is the Egyptian way, though several applied a balm in the shape of an alms; others, who said nothing, sent a slave with a few fruits or some small gift, for he who was free to-day, might, on the morrow, be sent after these poor wretches. The driver let this pass, and when a slave whom Joshua had sold sometime since for his dishonesty, shouted aloud "Hosea," and pointed to him with a malignant gesture, the good hearted rough fellow offered the insulted Hebrew a drink of wine out of his own flask.

Ephraim, who had fared from Succoth on foot with a staff in his hand, and a small wallet containing dried lamb's flesh, bread, radishes and dates, expressed his amazement at the numberless men and things which one man required for his comfort, and then sank into melancholy again until his uncle roused him with some fresh explanation.

As soon as the camp baggage had gone by the driver wanted to start with the prisoners, but the King's pioneer—the "opener of the way"—riding in front of the archers of the guard, who came next, forbade it, as it ill beseemed criminals to mingle with the soldiers; so they remained on their hillock and looked at the rest of the procession.

After the archers came the heavy infantry, carrying shields of strong ox-hide so long as to cover the brawny bearers from their feet almost to the chin; and Joshua told the boy that at night they were placed in a circle round the King's camp, and so inclosed it, as it were, with a fence. Besides their shields they carried a javelin, and wore a short dagger-like sword or a war sickle. When, after some thousands of these heavily armed men there followed a troop of sling men, Ephraim spoke for the first time of his own accord, exclaiming that such slings as the shepherds had taught him to make were far better than those of the soldiers; and then, encouraged by his uncle, he told him, so eagerly that the men lying about him listened to his words, how he himself could slay not mere jackals, wolves and panthers with a stone from a sling, but even a vulture on the wing. And meanwhile he asked the meaning of the standards and the names of the different companies of warriors.

Several divisions had already gone past when at last another crowd of chariots came in sight, and the driver cried aloud: "The kind God! The Lord of both worlds! Long life to him, health and happiness!" As he spoke he fell on his knees in an attitude of adoration, and the prisoners lay prostrate on their faces to kiss the ground, holding themselves in readiness to join at the right moment, at their gaoler's signal, in the cry, "All hail and happiness!"

But they still had long to wait before the expected monarch appeared. After the chariotmen came the body guard, mercenaries of foreign nations wearing a peculiar kind of helmet and long swords. They marched on foot, and immediately behind them a vast multitude of priests and scribes appeared, with a number of images of the gods. Then again a company of guards, and at last Pharaoh and his court. Foremost of them all was Baie, the high priest, in a gilt war chariot drawn by splendid brown steeds. He had, in former days, led troops forth to battle, and had taken the lead of this pursuing army at the bidding of the gods, wearing his priest's robes indeed, but also the helmet and battle-ax of a captain of the host. At last, close behind Baie's chariot, came Pharaoh himself; but he did not ride forth to battle in a war chariot, as his bolder forefathers had done, but preferred to be borne on his throne. A magnificent canopy over his head screened him from the scorching sun, and to the same end he was surrounded by fan bearers, carrying immense bunches of ostrich feathers fastened at the end of long fan sticks.

When Menephtah had fairly left the city and the gate of victory behind him, and the triumphant shouts of the populace had ceased to keep him awake, he had fallen asleep; and the spreading fans would have screened his face and persons from the eyes of the prisoners if their cries of "Hail!" had not been so loud as to rouse him and cause him to turn his head toward them. But the gracious wave of his hand showed that he had something else in his mind than criminals, and before the voices of the hapless convicts had died away his eyes were closed once more.

Ephraim's dull brooding had given way to eager interest, and when the King's gilt chariot came past empty, drawn by the most splendid horses he had ever beheld, he broke out in admiration. Those noble beasts, their clever heads crowned with ostrich plumes, and their harness glittering with gold and precious stones, were indeed a sight to see. The large gold quivers, studded with emeralds, at the sides of the chariot, were full of arrows. The sleeping man, whose feeble hand held the reins of government of a great nation, the languid idler who shunned every sort of effort, recovered his energies as soon as he was in the hunting field, and he looked upon this expedition as a hunt on a grand scale; and, inasmuch as it seemed to him a royal sport to shoot his arrows at men instead of at brute game—at men, too, of whom he had but lately been in mortal dread—he had yielded to the high priest's behest and come with the army. The expedition had been sent forth by order of Amon, so he could now have no further cause to fear the power of Mesu. When he should catch him he would make him repent of having struck terror to the heart of Pharaoh and his Queen, and causing them to shed so many tears!

While Joshua was telling the youth from what Phenician city the gilt chariot had been brought, he suddenly felt his wrist clutched by Ephraim, and heard him exclaim, "She—she—look, it is she!"

The lad was crimson with blushes, nor was he mistaken, for there, in the same traveling chariot in which she had come to visit the prisoners, was Kasana, and many ladies besides formed part of the court accompanying the expedition, which the captain of the foot soldiers, a brave old ironeater of the time of the Great Rameses, called a mere party of pleasure. When the monarch went forth across the desert to do battle in Syria, Libya and Ethiopia, only a select party of women accompanied him, in curtained vehicles, under the conduct of eunuchs; but on this occasion, though the Queen had remained at home, Baie's wife and some other women of rank had set the example of going forth with the troops, and it had been a tempting opportunity to many to enjoy the excitement of war without running into danger.

Scarcely an hour since, Kasana had surprised her old friend, the high priest's wife, by joining the rest, for only yesterday nothing could persuade the young widow to go forth with the host. Yielding to a sudden impulse, without asking her father, and with so little preparation that she had not the most necessary gear, she had overtaken the army, and it seemed as though the magnet which had drawn her was a man whom she had hitherto avoided, albeit he was no less a personage than Siptah, the King's nephew.

As the cortege passed the sand hill the Prince was standing by the fair young woman in her waiting woman's place, and interpreting to her with many a jest the symbolism of the flowers in a nosegay, while Kasana declared it could not have been intended for her, as not more than an hour since she had no idea of following the expedition. Siptah, however, assured her that even at sunrise the Hathors had revealed to him the happiness that was in store for him, and that the interpretation of these flowers proved it. A party of youthful courtiers, who had quitted their chariots or litters, were walking by the side of her carriage and taking part in the laughter and merry talk; the high priest's wife also put in a word now and again, for her litter was borne close by Kasana.

All this had not escaped Joshua; and as he saw Kasana with the Prince, whom she had hitherto detested, rapping his hand with her fan with gay audacity, his brow darkened, and he asked himself whether the young widow had not been cruelly mocking him in his overthrow. But at this moment the driver of the prison gang caught sight of the curl on Siptah's temple, which he wore as a badge of the blood royal, and his loud cry of "Haill Haill" in which the other guards and the prisoners joined, attracted the attention of Kasana and her companion. They turned to look at the tamarisk thicket whence it came, and then Joshua could see that the young woman turned pale, and, with a hasty gesture, pointed to the group. She must have given Siptah some behest, for the Prince at first shrugged his shoulders, but, after some delay and argument, half in jest and half in earnest, he sprang from his chariot and beckoned the driver of the gang.

"Did these people gaze on the countenance of the kind God, the Lord of both worlds?" he asked in a voice so loud that Kasana must have heard him from the road; and when he received a hesitating answer he went on in haughty tones: "No matter. At any rate they have seen mine, and that of the fairest women, and if, by reason of that, they hope for mercy they are justified. You know who I am. Those who are chained together are to be relieved of their ankle-fetters;" then signing to the head jailer he whispered in his ear: "but you must keep your eyes open all the wider. That fellow close to the bush is that Hosea who was a captain in Pharaoh's army. When I am at home again come and tell me what has become of the man. The more completely you can quiet him the deeper shall I dip into my money-bag. Do you understand?"

The man bowed low and thought to himself: "I will take good care, my Prince, and see that no one takes the life of any of my moles. The greater these lords, the stranger and more bloody are their demands. How many an one has come to me with a similar request. Siptah can release the feet of these poor wretches, but he would load my soul with a cowardly murder! But he has come to the wrong man! "Here, you fellows, bring the bag of tools this way and strike the chains off these men's ankles."

Pharaoh's host moved on, and meanwhile the grinding of files was heard on the hillock, the prisoners were freed from their fetters, and then for security their arms were tied.

Kasana had desired Prince Siptah to have the poor creatures who were being led away to misery, relieved at any rate of their heavy footchains; and she frankly confessed that it was intolerable to her to see an officer who had so often been a guest in her own house, so terribly humiliated. The high priest's wife had seconded her wish, and the Prince had been forced to yield. Joshua knew full well to whom he and Ephraim owed this respite, and received it with thankful gladness. Walking was made easier to him, but anxiety weighed him down more heavily than ever.

The army which had marched past would suffice to annihilate a foe ten times as great as the Hebrew force, to the very last man. His nation, and with them his father and Miriam, seemed doomed to a cruel death; Miriam, who had wounded him so deeply, but to whom he owed it that even in prison he had discerned the path which he saw was the only right one. However powerful the God might be whose greatness the prophetess had so fervently extolled to whom, indeed, he himself had learned to look up with fervent adoration; the sweeping onslaught of this vast host must inevitably and utterly destroy a troop of unarmed and inexperienced herdsmen. This certainty, which each fresh division, as it passed by, made more sure, sank deep in his soul. Never in his life had he experienced such anguish; and that pain was intensified as he beheld his own men—all well-known faces who had so lately obeyed his word—under the orders of another. And it was to slaughter his own kith and kin that they were now marching to the field. This was a great grief, and Ephraim's state likewise gave him cause for fresh anxiety, for since Kasana's appearance and her intercession for him and his companion in misfortune he had relapsed into silence and gazed with wandering eyes either at the rear of the army or into vacancy. Ephraim was now freed of his irons, and Joshua asked the lad in an undertone whether he did not feel a longing to return to his people and to help them to resist so mighty an armament, but Ephraim only replied: "In the face of such a foe they have no choice; they must surrender. What indeed did we lack before our departing from Zoan? You were a Hebrew, as they were, and yet you rose to be a mighty captain among the Egyptians until you obeyed Miriam's call. I should have acted differently in your place."

"What would you have done?" asked Joshua.

"What?" replied the boy, and the fiery young soul blazed up in him. "What? I would have remained where honor and fame were to be found, and everything that is good. You might have been the greatest of the great, the happiest of the happy! I know it for certain, and you chose otherwise."

"Because duty required it," said Joshua gravely; "because I never more will serve any but the people of whose blood I am."

"The people!" said the boy, contemptuously. "I know the people, and you, too, have seen them at Succoth! The poor are abject creatures who cringe under the lash; the rich prize their beasts above everything on earth; and those who belong to the heads of tribes are always quarreling among themselves. Not one of them knows what is pleasing to the eye and heart. I am one of the richest of the nation, and yet I shudder to remember my father's house which I have inherited, though it is one of the largest and best. Those who have seen anything finer cease to care for that." At this the veins swelled in Joshua's brow, and he wrathfully reproved the lad who could deny his own race, and fall away like a traitor to his own tribe.

But the driver commanded silence, for Joshua had raised his admonishing voice; and the defiant lad was well pleased to obey; and as they went on their way, whenever his uncle looked reproachfully in his face, or asked him whether he had thought better of it, he sulkily turned his back and remained gloomily silent till the first star had risen, and, the pioneers having encamped on the waste for the night, their meager fare was dealt out to them.

Joshua dug out a bed in the sand with his hands, and kindly and skillfully helped his nephew to do the same. Ephraim accepted his service in silence; but presently, as they lay side by side, and Joshua began to speak to the boy of the God of his fathers, in whose help they must put their trust if they were not to perish of despair in the mines, Ephraim interrupted him, saying in a low voice, but with fierce decisiveness:

"They shall never get me to the mines alive. Sooner will I perish in the attempt to escape than die in such misery!" Joshua whispered a word of warning in his ear, and reminded him of his duty to his people. But Ephraim only begged to be left to rest in peace.

Soon after, however, he lightly touched his uncle, and asked in a low voice:

"What have they to do with Prince Siptah?"

"I know not; nothing good, that is certain!"

"And where is Aarsu, the Syrian, the commander of the Asiatic mercenaries, your enemy who watches us with such malignant zeal? I did not see him with the rest."

"He remains in Tanis with his troops."

"To guard the palace?"

"Just so."

"Then he is captain over many, and Pharaoh trusts him?"

"Entirely, though he hardly deserves it."

"And he is a Syrian, and so also of our blood?"

"At least he is nearer to us than the Egyptians, as you may know by his speech and features."

"I should have taken him for a Hebrew; and yet, you say he is one of the highest men in the army."

"And other Syrians and Libyans are captains of large troops of mercenaries, and Ben Mazana, the herald, one of the greatest men about the court, whom the Egyptians have named 'Rameses in the Sanctuary of Ra,' is the son of a Hebrew father."

"And he and the others are not looked down upon by reason of their birth?"

"It would scarcely be true to say as much as that. But what is the aim of all your questions?"

"I could not sleep."

"And such thoughts as these came into your head? Nay, you have something definite in your mind, and, if I guess it rightly, I am sorry. You wish to enter Pharaoh's service."

After this there was a long silence between the two; then Ephraim spoke again, and, although he addressed Joshua, he spoke rather as if to himself:

"They will destroy all our nation, and those who escape will fall into slavery and disgrace. By this time my house is doomed to destruction; not a head of my great herds will be left to me, and the gold and silver I have inherited, and which is said to be a great sum, they will carry away with them, for it is in your father's keeping and must fall a booty into the hands of the Egyptians. And shall I, now that I am free, go back to my people and make bricks? Shall I bow my back to be flogged and ill-treated?" Here Joshua exclaimed in an eager whisper:

"Call rather on the God of our fathers to protect and deliver His people; and if the Most High has determined on the destruction of our nation then be a man, and learn to hate with all the might of your young soul those who have trodden them under foot. Flee to the Syrians, and offer them the strength of your young arm; give yourself no rest till you have taken revenge on those who have shed the blood of the Israelites and cast you, innocent, into bondage."

Then, again, there was silence, and nothing was to be heard where Ephraim lay but moans from an oppressed heart. At length, however, Joshua heard him murmur:

"We are no longer weighed down by chains, and could I hate her who promised our release?"

"Be grateful to Kasana, but hate her people," he whispered in reply. And he heard the lad turn over in his trough, and again he sighed and groaned.

It was past midnight; the growing moon stood high in the sky and Joshua, still sleepless, did not cease to listen to his young companion; but Epraim spoke not. Still, sleep shunned him likewise, for Joshua heard him grinding his teeth—or was it that some mice had wandered out to this parched spot covered with dry brown grass, between salt plains on the one side and bare sand on the other, and were gnawing the prisoner's hard bread? This grinding and gnawing must disturb the sleep even of those who most desire it, and Joshua, on the contrary, wished to keep awake that he might open the eyes of his blinded nephew. But he waited in vain for any sign of life on Ephraim's part.

At last he was about to lay his hand on the boy's shoulder, but he paused as he saw in the moonlight that Ephriam was holding up his arm, although, before he lay down, his wrist had been tied more tightly than before. Joshua now understood that the noise which had puzzled him was the gnawing of the lad's sharp teeth as he worked at the knot of the cords; so he sat up and looked first at the sky and then round about him. He held his breath as he watched the young fellow, and his heart throbbed painfully—Ephriam meant to escape! He had even achieved the first step toward freedom. He hoped his good fortune might follow him, but dreaded lest the fugitive might set forth in the wrong direction. This boy was the only child of his sister, a fatherless and motherless orphan, so he had never had the advantage of those numberless lessons and hints which only a mother can give, and which a proud young spirit will take from none else. Strangers' hands had trained the young tree, and it had grown straight enough; but a mother's love would have graced it with carefully selected grafts. He had not grown up on his parents' hearth, and that alone is the right home for the young. What wonder, then, that he felt a stranger among his own people?

At such thoughts as these great pity came upon Joshua, and with a consciousness of being deeply guilty in regard to this gifted youth, who had fallen into captivity for his sake when bearing a message to him. Still, strongly as he felt prompted to warn him yet once more against the treachery and faithlessness, he would not do so for fear of imperiling his enterprise. The least sound might attract the attention of the man on watch, and he was now so much interested in his attempt for liberty as though Ephraim were making it by his instigation. So, instead of tormenting him with useless admonitions, he kept his eyes and ears open; his knowledge of life had taught him that good advice is oftener neglected than followed, and that personal experience is the only irrefragable master.

Very soon his practiced eye discerned the path by which Ephraim might escape if only fortune favored him. He gently spoke his name and then his nephew softly replied: "Uncle, I can untie the cord if you put out your hands; mine are free."

At this Joshua's anxious face grew brighter. This bold-spirited youth was a good fellow at heart; he was ready to risk his own success for the sake of an older man who, if he escaped with him, might only too probably hinder him in the path which, in his youthful illusion, he hoped might lead him to fortune.

SUNDAY THOUGHTS

-ON-

MORALS AND MANNERS

BY A CLERGYMAN.

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

One of the crying evils of the day is the tendency of our city churches to build themselves up on the basis of individual name and reputation.

Think over the churches in this city. You say "Dr. This's Church," "Dr. That's Church," "The Rev. Mr. The-Other's Church." The church is named after the man rather than the cause.

This it is which sets so many parishes running after "crazy quilt" preachers. They must have men in the pulpit whose individuality juts, so that the church may catch the popular ear and be able to auctioneer off the pews. The result is the transformation of the church member into a religious tramp. He goes about from church to church (like a certain character mentioned in the Scriptures) seeking whom and what he may devour.

Many people nowadays want not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but the gospel of novelty—the Greek gospel of the last new thing. Hence the craving for religious stimulants; which, old-toper fashion, must be stronger and stronger as indulgence proceeds, until at last even red pepper loses its bite.

The Romish and the Episcopal Churches set an excellent example in this matter. Their churches memorialize some dead saint who has earned his canonization. The living officiator at the altar is sunk in the cause he serves. The congregation attend divine service for worship, not for entertainment. So the pulpit is not hypertrophied, and the pews are not dyspeptic.

This could and should be the case in every church. If people want amusement, there is the theater; or music, there is the concert; or information, there is the library; or gossip, there is the club or the card party. Let it be understood that the church is not a circus, but a house of prayer, frequented not by sensation seekers, but the abode of the devout, who get there strength for daily tasks and Christian helpfulness.

Bible Transformations.

The Bible, as someone has pointed out, is full of transformations: One series leading downward, beginning with the metamorphosis of Eden into a blighted desert; the other leading upward, culminating in the change of a sin-scorched earth into a heaven of light and glory. Toward the one or the other of these, we are all contributing; nay, the descending or the ascending series we are all illustrating. Saul was transformed from a giant into a pigmy, from a saint into a sinner. The son of Isaac was transformed from Jacob into Israel—from a swindler into an honest man. Judas was transformed from a disciple into a betrayer. Paul was transformed from a persecuter into an apostle.

And we—are we going downward or upward? Do we grow narrower, more selfish, of the earth earthy, as years pass? or is our path like the path of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day? Sunday is a good day for self-examination. Let us ask ourselves some questions concerning our present state and future destiny. One thing is certain—if we want to get into heaven hereafter, we must get heaven in us here.

The Preacher's Popularity.

A Baptist minister, preaching on a recent occasion before a State convention, took his theme, spiritual-mindedness, as set forth in Romans viii. 6, and enforced the truth with much fervor and point. Speaking of the lack of this quality, which is so general, he applied it to the calling of ministers by the people, saying plainly: "You get a minister that you want," and then confirmed it by the testimony of a light in another denomination. One of the Methodist Bishops said: "Many churches send to me saying, 'Bishop, we want a man that shall be popular with the young people.' Others say, 'We want a man that shall be popular with sinners.' Others, 'We want a minister who will be popular with everybody.' But no one ever sent to me and said, 'We want a preacher who is popular with God.'" When we are popular with God we shall shake this State and the world. We must ask for this spiritual mind.

Hupfeld's View of Christ.

Riehm, in his Life of Hupfeld, the eminent Semitic scholar and critic who has often been regarded as a rationalist, quotes him as saying:

"I stand still before Christ as before a riddle, in the presence of which all my philosophical and historical criticism is silent. I know not what to call that being to which in the entire history of humanity I find no analogy. But I find that the whole history of humanity before Him and after Him points to Him, and in Him finds its center and solution. His whole conduct, His deeds, his addresses, have a supernatural character, being altogether inexplicable from human relations and human means. I feel that here there is something more than man, that He must be a divine embassador. But how He is I do not undertake to say."

Sermons in a Sentence.

THERE must be a man behind the speech.—*Theremin.*

JUSTICE before generosity.—*Latin Proverb.*

VIRTUE is the safest helmet.—*Horace.*

ONE may spend his life laboriously doing nothing.—*Latin Proverb.*

THE hours perish, but an account is to be rendered.—*Ibid.*

A JESTING word may hide serious truth.—*Horace.*

THE only true nobility is that of character.—*Juvenal.*

AS a rule it is not wise to tell all one knows, though it is always highly expedient to know all one tells.—*Exchange.*

CHURCHES may be very poor, and yet not be churches for the poor.—*Ibid.*

IN old Grey Friars' churchyard in Edinburgh may be seen yet the flat gravestone, where, on February 25, 1638, the national covenant was signed—not with ink, but with blood. Those martyr-heroes opened veins in their arms and dipped their pens in blood, in token of how freely they would shed it when the day of battle came; and nobly did they redeem their pledges.

WE say to ministers, look out! It is possible to be so diligent in keeping the vineyards of others that your own vineyard shall become weedy.

SAYS an exchange: An individual having been to church returned home earlier than usual, and was asked: "Is it done already?" "No," he replied, "it is all said, but very little if any of what was said has been done yet."

STRANGELY CHANGED BY TIME.

Records of College Boys That Surprised and Disappointed Friends.

[John B. O'Meara in Globe-Democrat.]

It is a rare source of interest to the collegiate of a retrospective mind, to sit down some evening before a glowing fire, and through the wreaths of smoke from the curling pipe, recall the old classmates as they were and as they are. The brightest boy in my class, one whose future any one would have discounted on leading to f