

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky Smith Willis
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Henry Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Vinci
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Gogol Busch
Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato Scott
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Dickens Plato Scott
Andersen Andersen Cervantes Burton Hesse Harte
London Descartes Wells Voltaire Cooke
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving
Bunner Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving
Richter Chekhov da Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving
Doré Dante Shaw Wodehouse
Swift Chekhov Pushkin Alcott
Newton



tredition was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, tredition offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. tredition is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: www.tredition.com

TREDITION CLASSICS

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series. The creators of this series are united by passion for literature and driven by the intention of making all public domain books available in printed format again - worldwide. Most TREDITION CLASSICS titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades. At tredition we believe that a great book never goes out of style and that its value is eternal. Several mostly non-profit literature projects provide content to tredition. To support their good work, tredition donates a portion of the proceeds from each sold copy. As a reader of a TREDITION CLASSICS book, you support our mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion. See all available books at www.tredition.com.



The content for this book has been graciously provided by Project Gutenberg. Project Gutenberg is a non-profit organization founded by Michael Hart in 1971 at the University of Illinois. The mission of Project Gutenberg is simple: To encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. Project Gutenberg is the first and largest collection of public domain eBooks.

A Thorny Path –Volume 03

Georg Ebers

Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: Georg Ebers

Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany

ISBN: 978-3-8424-5862-8

www.tredition.com

www.tredition.de

Copyright:

The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations, such as Project Gutenberg, worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

A THORNY PATH

by
Georg Ebers

Volume 3.

CHAPTER VIII.

The sun had passed the meridian when Melissa and Andreas left the house. They walked on in silence through the deserted streets, the girl with her eyes sadly fixed on the ground; for an inward voice warned her that her lover's life was in danger. She did not sob, but more than once she wiped away a large tear.

Andreas, too, was lost in his own thoughts. To win a soul to the Saviour was surely a good work. He knew Melissa's sober, thoughtful nature, and the retired, joyless life she led with her surly old father. So his knowledge of human nature led him to think that she, if any one, might easily be won over to the faith in which he found his chief happiness. Baptism had given such sanctification to his life that he longed to lead the daughter of the only woman for whom his heart had ever beat a shade faster, to the baptismal font. In the heat of summer Olympias had often been the guest for weeks together of Polybius's wife, now likewise dead. Then she had taken a little house of her own for herself and her children, and when his master's wife died, the lonely widower had known no greater pleasure than that of receiving her on his estate for as long as Heron would allow her to remain; he himself never left his work for long. Thus Andreas had become the great ally of the gem-cutter's children, and, as they could learn nothing from him that was not good and worth knowing, Olympias had gladly allowed them to remain in his society, and herself found a teacher and friend in the worthy steward. She knew that Andreas had joined the Christians; she had made him tell her much about his faith; still, as the daughter and wife of artists, she was firmly attached to the old gods, and could only regard the Christian doctrine as a new system of philosophy in which many things attracted her, but many, on the other hand, repelled her. At that time his passion for Melissa's mother had possessed him so wholly that his life was a constant struggle against the temptation to covet his neighbor's wife. And he had conquered, doing severe penance for every glance which might for an instant betray to her the weakness of his soul. She had loved flowers, and he knew the plant-world so well, and was so absolutely master over

everything which grew and bloomed in the gardens of which he had charge, that he could often intrust his speechless favorites to tell her things which lips and eyes might not reveal. Now she was no more, and the culture of plants had lost half its charm since her eyes could no longer watch their thriving. He now left the gardens for the most part to his men, while he devoted himself to other cares with double diligence, and to the strictest exercises of his faith.

But, as many a man adores the children of the woman he might not marry, Alexander and Melissa daily grew dearer to Andreas. He took a father's interest in their welfare, and, needing little himself, he carefully hoarded his ample income to promote the cause of Christianity and encourage good works; but he had paid Alexander's debts when his time of apprenticeship was over, for they were so considerable that the reckless youth had not dared confess the sum to his stern father.

Very soon after this, Alexander had become one of the most popular painters of the town; and when he proposed to repay his friend the money he had lent him, Andreas accepted it; but he added it to a capital of which the purpose was his secret, but which, if his prayers were heard, might return once more to benefit Alexander. Diodoros, too, was as dear to the freedman as a son of his own could have been, though he was a heathen. In the gymnasium and the race-course, or in the practice of the mysteries, the good seed which he sowed in the lad's heart was trodden down. Polybius, too, was an utter heathen; indeed, he was one of the priests of Dionysus and Demeter, as his wealth and position in the senate required.

Then, Diodoros had confessed to him that he hoped to win Melissa for his wife, and this had been adverse to Andreas's hope and purpose of making a Christian of the girl; for he knew by experience how easily married happiness was wrecked when man and wife worship different gods. But when the freedman had again seen the gem-cutter's brutality and the girl's filial patience, an inward voice had called to him that this gentle, gifted creature was one of those elect from among whom the Lord chose the martyrs for the faith; and that it was his part to lead her into the fold of the Redeemer. He had begun the work of converting her with the zeal he put into everything. But fresh doubts had come upon him on the threshold

of the sick-room, after seeing the lad who was so dear to him, and whose eye had met his with such a trustful, suffering look. Could it be right to sow the seed of discord between him and his future wife? And supposing Diodoros, too, should be converted by Melissa, could he thus alienate from his father the son and heir of Polybius—his benefactor and master?

Then, he remembered, too, to what a position he had risen through that master's confidence in him. Polybius knew nothing of the concerns of his house but from the reports laid before him by Andreas; for the steward controlled not merely the estate but the fortune of the family, and for years had been at the head of the bank which he himself had founded to increase the already vast income of the man to whom he owed his freedom. Polybius paid him a considerable portion of each year's profits, and had said one day at a banquet, with the epigrammatic wit of an Alexandrian, that his freedman, Andreas, served his interests as only one other man could do—namely, himself—but with the industry of ten. The Christian greatly appreciated his confidence; and as he walked on by the side of Melissa, he told himself again and again that it would be dishonorable to betray it.

If only the sweet girl might find the way alone! If she were chosen to salvation, the Lord himself would lead and guide her. Had he indeed not beckoned her already by impressing on her heart those words, "The fullness of the time is now come?"

That he was justified in keeping this remembrance alive he had no doubt; and he was about to speak of it again, when she prevented him by raising her large eyes beseechingly to his, and asking him:

"Is Diodoros in real danger? Tell me the truth. I would rather endure the worst than this dreadful anxiety."

So Andreas acknowledged that the youth was in a bad way, but that Ptolemaeus, himself well-skilled, hoped to cure him if his greater colleague Galenus would aid him.

"And it is to secure his assistance, then," Melissa went on, "that the leech would have him carried to the Serapeum?"

"Yes, my child. For he is in Caesar's train, and it would be vain to try to speak with him to-day or to-morrow."

"But the journey through the town will do the sufferer a mischief."

"He will be carried in a litter."

"But even that is not good for him. Perfect quiet, Ptolemaeus said, was the best medicine."

"But Galenus has even better remedies at hand," was the reply.

Melissa seemed satisfied with this assurance, for she walked on for some time in silence. But when the uproar of the crowd in the vicinity of the Serapeum became more audible as they advanced, she suddenly stood still, and said:

"Come what may, I will find my way to the great physician's presence and crave his help." "You?" cried the freedman; and when she firmly reiterated her purpose, the strong man turned pale.

"You know not what you say!" he exclaimed, in deep concern. "The men who guard the approaches to Caracalla are ruthless profligates, devoid of courtesy or conscience. But, you may rely upon it, you will not even get into the antechamber."

"Perhaps. Nevertheless, it is my duty, and I will try."

How firmly and decisively she spoke! And what strength of will sparkled in the quiet, modest maiden's eyes! And the closely set lips, which usually were slightly parted, and hardly covered two of her pearly white teeth, gave her a look of such determination, that Andreas could see that no obstacle would check her.

Still, love and duty alike required him to use every means in his power to keep her from taking such a step. He lavished all his eloquence; but she adhered to her purpose with steadfast persistency, and none of the reasons he could adduce to prove the impossibility of the undertaking convinced her. The only point which staggered her was the information that the great leech was an old man, who walked with difficulty; and that Galen, as a heathen and a disciple of Aristotle, would never be induced to enter a Christian dwelling. Both these facts might be a serious hindrance to her scheme; yet she would not now stop to reflect. They had got back to the great street

of Hermes, leading from the temple of that god to the Serapeum, and must cross it to reach the lake, their immediate destination. As in all the principal streets of Alexandria, a colonnade bordered the street in front of the houses on each side of the wide and handsome roadway. Under these arcades the foot-passengers were closely packed, awaiting Caesar's passage. He must soon be coming, for the reception, first at the Kanopic Gate, and then at the Gate of the Sun, was long since over; and, even if he had carried out his purpose of halting at the tomb of Alexander the Great, he could not be detained much longer. The distance hither down the Kanopic Way was not great, and swift horses would quickly bring him down the Aspendia street to that of Hermes, leading straight to the Serapeum. His train was not to follow him to the Soma, the mausoleum of the founder of the city, but to turn off to the southward by the Paneum, and make a round into the street of Hermes.

The praetorians, the German body-guard, the imperial Macedonian phalanx, and some mounted standard-bearers had by this time reached the spot where Melissa was proceeding up the street holding Andreas's hand. Close by them came also a train of slaves, carrying baskets full of palm-leaves and fresh branches of ivy, myrtle, poplar, and pine, from the gardens of the Paneum, to be carried to the Serapeum. They were escorted by lictors, endeavoring with their axes and fasces to make a way for them through the living wall which barred their way.

By the help of the mounted troops, who kept the main road clear, space was made for them; and Andreas, who knew one of the overseers of the garden-slaves, begged him as a favor to allow Melissa and himself to walk among his people. This was willingly granted to so well-known a man; and the way was quite free for the moment, because the imperial cartage had not followed immediately on the soldiers who had now all marched past. Thus, among the flower-bearers, they reached the middle of the street; and while the slaves proceeded on their way to the Serapeum, the freedman tried to cross the road, and reach the continuation of the street they had come by, and which led to the lake. But the attempt was frustrated, for some Roman lictors who had just come up stood in their way, and sent them to the southern side of the street of Hermes, to mingle with the gaping crowd under the arcade.

They were, of course, but ill received by these, since they naturally found themselves in front of the foremost rank; but the stalwart frame and determined face of Andreas, and the exceptional beauty of his young companion, over whose pretty head most of the gazers could easily see, protected her from rough treatment.

Andreas spoke a few words of apology to those standing nearest to them, and a young goldsmith at once courteously made way, so that Melissa, who had taken a place behind a column, might see better.

And in a few minutes—there was that to see which made every one forget the intruders. Vehicles and outriders, litters swung between mules, and a long train of imperial footmen, in red tunics embroidered with gold, huntsmen with leashes of noble dogs, baggage-wagons and loaded elephants, came trooping down toward the Serapeum; while suddenly, from the Aspendia into the Hermes Way, the Numidian horse rushed out, followed by a troop of mounted lictors, who galloped up the street, shouting their orders in loud tones to the imperial train, in a mixture of Latin and Greek, of which Melissa understood only the words "Caesar!" and "Make way to the right!"

The command was instantly obeyed. Vehicles, foot-passengers, and riders alike crowded to the southern or left-hand side of the road, and the many-headed throng, of which Andreas and Melissa formed a part, drew as far back as possible under the colonnade; for on the edge of the footway there was the risk of being trampled on by a horse or crushed by a wheel. The back rows of the populace, who had collected under the arcades, were severely squeezed by this fresh pressure from without, and their outcries were loud of anger, alarm; or pain; while on the other side of the street arose shouts of delight and triumph, or, when anything singular came into view, loud laughter at the wit and irony of some jester. Added to these there were the clatter of hoofs and the roll of wheels, the whinnying of horses, the shouts of command, the rattle of drums, the blare of trumpets, and the shrill pipe of flutes, without a moment's pause. It was a wild and ear-splitting tumult; to Melissa, however, neither painful nor pleasing, for the one idea, that she must speak with the great physician, silenced every other. But sud-

denly there came up from the east, from the rising of the sun, whose course Caesar had followed, such a tremendous roar that she involuntarily clutched her companion's hand.

Every instant the storm of noise increased, rolling on with irresistible vehemence, gathering force as it came on, receiving, as it were, fresh tributaries on its way, and rapidly swelling from the distance to the immediate vicinity, compelling every one, as with a magic power, to yield to the superior will of numbers and join in the cry. Even Melissa cheered. She, too, was as a drop in the tide, a leaf on the rippling face of the rushing torrent; her heart beat as wildly and her voice rang as clear as that of the rest of the throng, intoxicated with they knew not what, which crowded the colonnades by the roadway, and every window and roof-top, waving handkerchiefs, strewing flowers on the ground, and wiping the tears which this unwonted excitement had brought to their eyes.

And now the shout is so tremendous that it could not possibly be louder. It seems as though it were the union of voices innumerable rather than the seabreeze, which flutters the pennons and flags which wave from every house and arch, and sways the garlands hung across the street. Melissa can see none but flushed faces, eyes swimming in tears, parted lips, wildly waving arms and hands. Then suddenly a mysterious power hushes the loud tones close round her; she hears only here and there the cry of "Caesar!" "He is coming!" "Here he is!" — and the swift tramp of hoofs and the clatter of wheels sounding like the rattle of an iron building after a peal of thunder, above the shouts of ten thousand human beings. Closer it comes and closer, without a pause, and followed by fresh shouting, as a flock of daws follow an owl flying across the twilight, swelling again to irrepressible triumph as the expected potentate rushes past Melissa and her neighbors. They only see Caesar as a form scarcely discerned by the eye during the space of a lightning-flash in a dark night.

Four tawny bay horses of medium size, dappled with black, harnessed abreast and wide apart, fly along the cleared road like hunted foxes, the light Gallic chariot at their heels. The wheels seem scarcely to touch the smooth flags of the Alexandrian pavement. The charioteer wears the red-bordered toga of the highest Roman

officials. He is well known by repute, and the subject of many a sharp jest; for this is Pandion, formerly a stableboy, and now one of "Caesar's friends," a praetor, and one of the great men of the empire. But he knows his business; and what does Caracalla care for tradition or descent, for the murmurs and discontent of high or low?

Pandion holds the reins with elegant composure, and urges the horses to a frantic pace by a mere whistle, without ever using the whip. But why is it that he whirls the mighty monarch of half a world, before whose bloodthirsty power every one quakes, so swiftly past these eager spectators? Sunk in the cushions on one side, Bassianus Antoninus is reclining rather than sitting in the four-wheeled open chariot of Gallic make which sweeps past. He does not vouchsafe a glance at the jubilant crowd, but gazes down at the road, his well-shaped brow so deeply furrowed with gloom that he might be meditating some evil deed.

It is easy to discern that he is of middle height; that his upper lip and cheeks are unshaven, and his chin smooth; that his hair is already thin, though he lacks two years of thirty; and that his complexion is pale and sallow; indeed, his aspect is familiar from statues and coins, many of which are of base metal.

Most of those who thus beheld the man who held in his hand the fate of each individual he passed, as of the empire at large, involuntarily asked themselves afterward what impression he had made on them; and Caracalla himself would have rejoiced in the answer, for he aimed not at being attractive or admired, but only at being feared. But, indeed, they had long since learned that there was nothing too horrible to be expected of him; and, now that they had seen him, they were of opinion that his appearance answered to his deeds. It would be hard to picture a more sinister and menacing looking man than this emperor, with his averted looks and his haughty contempt for the world and mankind; and yet there was something about him which made it difficult to take him seriously, especially to an Alexandrian. There was a touch of the grotesque in the Gallic robe with a red hood in which this ominous-looking contemner of humanity was wrapped. It was called a 'Caracalla', and it was from this garment that Bassianus Antoninus had gained his nickname.

The tyrant who wore this gaudy cloak was, no doubt, devoid alike of truth and conscience; but, as to his being a philosopher, who knew the worthlessness of earthly things and turned his back upon the world, those who could might believe it! He was no more than an actor, who played the part of Timon not amiss, and who made use of his public to work upon their fears and enjoy the sight of their anguish. There was something lacking in him to make one of those thorough-going haters of their kind at whose mere aspect every knee must bend. The appearance, in short, of this false philosopher was not calculated to subdue the rash tongues of the Alexandrians.

To this many of them agreed; still, there was no time for such reflections till the dust had shrouded the chariot, which vanished as quickly as it had come, till the shouting was stilled, and the crowd had spread over the roadway again. Then they began to ask themselves why they had joined in the acclamations, and had been so wildly excited; how it was that they had so promptly surrendered their self-possession and dignity for the sake of this wicked little man. Perhaps it was his unlimited control over the weal and woe of the world, over the life and death of millions, which raised a mortal, not otherwise formed for greatness, so far above common humanity to a semblance of divinity. Perhaps it was the instinctive craving to take part in the grand impulsive expression of thousands of others that had carried away each individual. It was beyond a doubt a mysterious force which had compelled every one to do as his neighbors did as soon as Caesar had appeared.

Melissa had succumbed with the rest; she had shouted and waved her kerchief, and had not heeded Andreas when he held her hand and asked her to consider what a criminal this man was whom she so eagerly hailed. It was not till all was still again that she recollected herself, and her determination to get the famous physician to visit her lover revived in renewed strength.

Fully resolved to dare all, she looked about with calm scrutiny, considering the ways and means of achieving her purpose without any aid from Andreas. She was in a fever of impatience, and longed to force her way at once into the Serapeum. But that was out of the question, for no one moved from his place. There was, however,

plenty to be seen. A complete revulsion of feeling had come over the crowd. In the place of Expectancy, its graceless step-child, Disappointment, held sway. There were no more shouts of joy; men's lungs were no longer strained to the utmost, but their tongues were all the busier. Caesar was for the most part spoken of with contempt as Tarautas, and with the bitterness – the grandchild of Expectancy – which comes of disappointment. Tarautas had originally been the name of a stunted but particularly bloodthirsty gladiator, in whom ill-will had traced some resemblance to Caesar.

The more remarkable figures in the imperial train were curiously gazed at and discussed. A worker in mosaic, who stood near Melissa, had been employed in the decoration of the baths of Caracalla at Rome, and had much information to impart; he even knew the names of several of the senators and courtiers attached to Caesar. And, with all this, time was found to give vent to discontent.

The town had done its utmost to make itself fine enough to receive the emperor. Statues had been erected of himself, of his father, his mother, and even of his favorite heroes, above all of Alexander the Great; triumphal arches without number had been constructed. The vast halls of the Serapeum, through which he was to pass, had been magnificently decorated; and in front of the new temple, outside the Kanopic Gate, dedicated to his father, who now ranked among the gods, the elders of the town had been received by Caesar, to do him homage and offer him the gifts of the city. All this had cost many talents, a whole heap of gold; but Alexandria was wealthy, and ready to make even greater sacrifices if only they had been accepted with thanks and condescension. But a young actor, who had been a spectator of the scene at the Kanopic Gate, and had then hurried hither, declared, with dramatic indignation, that Caesar had only replied in a few surly words to the address of the senate, and even while he accepted the gift had looked as if he were being ill-used. The delegates had retired as though they had been condemned to death. To none but Timotheus, the high-priest of Serapis, had he spoken graciously.

Others confirmed this report; and dissatisfaction found expression in muttered abuse or satirical remarks and bitter witticisms.

"Why did he drive past so quickly?" asked a tailor's wife; and some one replied:

"Because the Eumenides, who haunt him for murdering his brother, lash him on with their whips of snakes!"

A spice-merchant; who was not less indignant but more cautious, hearing a neighbor inquire why Tarautas drove panther-spotted horses, replied that such beasts of prey had spotted skins, and that like to like was a common rule. A cynical philosopher, who proclaimed his sect by his ragged garment, unkempt hair, and rough mode of speech, declared that Caesar had a senator to guide his chariot because he had long since succeeded in turning the senate-house into a stable.

To all this, however, Melissa turned a deaf ear, for the thought of the great Roman leech possessed her mind entirely. She listened earnestly to the mosaic-worker, who had come close up to her, and officiously mentioned the names of the most important personages as they went past. Caesar's train seemed endless. It included not merely horse and foot soldiers, but numberless baggage-wagons, cars, elephants—which Caracalla especially affected, because Alexander the Great had been fond of these huge beasts—horses, mules, and asses, loaded with bales, cases, tents, and camp and kitchen furniture. Mingling with these came sutlers, attendants, pages, heralds, musicians, and slaves of the imperial household, in knots and parties, looking boldly about them at the bystanders. When they caught sight of a young and pretty woman on the edge of the path, they would wave a greeting; and many expressed their admiration of Melissa in a very insolent manner. Woolly-headed negroes and swarthy natives of north Africa mixed with the fairer dwellers on the Mediterranean and the yellow or red haired sons of northern Europe. Roman lictors, and Scythian, Thracian, or Keltic men-at-arms kept every one out of the way who did not belong to the imperial train, with relentless determination. Only the Magians, wonder-workers, and street wenches were suffered to push their way in among the horses, asses, elephants, dogs, vehicles, and mounted troops.

Each time that one of the unwieldy traveling-carriages, drawn by several horses, came in sight, in which the wealthy Roman was

went to take his ease on a long journey, or whenever a particularly splendid litter was borne past, Melissa asked the mosaic-worker for information. In some few instances Andreas could satisfy her curiosity, for he had spent some months at Antioch on a matter of business, and had there come to know by sight some of Caesar's most illustrious companions.

So far the great Galenus was not of the number; for Caracalla, who was ailing, had but lately commanded his presence. The famous physician had sailed for Pelusium, in spite of his advanced age, and had only just joined the sovereign's suite. The old man's chariot had been pointed out to the mosaic-worker at the Kanopic Gate, and he was certain that he could not mistake it for any other; it was one of the largest and handsomest; the side doors of it were decorated with the AEsculapius staff and the cup of Hygeia in silver, and on the top were statuettes in wood of Minerva and of AEsculapius. On hearing all this, Melissa's face beamed with happy and hopeful anticipation. With one hand pressed to her throbbing bosom, she watched each vehicle as it drove past with such intense expectancy that she paid no heed to Andreas's hint that they might now be able to make their way through the crowd.

Now—and the freedman had called her once more—here was another monstrous conveyance, belonging to Julius Paulinus, the former consul, whose keen face, with its bright, merry eyes, looked out between the silken curtains by the side of the grave, unsympathetic countenance of Dion Cassius the senator and historian.

The consul, her informant told her—and Andreas confirmed the statement— had displeased Severus, Caracalla's father, by some biting jest, but, on being threatened with death, disarmed his wrath by saying, "You can indeed have my head cut off, but neither you nor I can keep it steady."

Those of the populace who stood near enough to the speaker to hear this anecdote broke out in loud cheers, in which they were joined by others who had no idea of what had given rise to them.

The consul's chariot was followed by a crowd of clients, domestic officials, and slaves, in litters, on horses or mules, or on foot; and behind these again came another vehicle, for some time concealed from sight by dust. But when at last the ten fine horses which drew

it had gone past Melissa, and the top of the vehicle became visible, the color mounted to her cheeks, for on the corners of the front she recognized the figures of AEsculapius and Minerva, which, if the mosaic-worker were right, distinguished the chariot of Galenus. She listened breathlessly to the roll of the wheels of this coach, and she soon perceived the silver AEsculapius staff and bowl on the wide door of this house on wheels, which was painted blue. At an open window by the door a kindly old face was visible, framed in long, gray hair.

Melissa started at hearing the order to halt shouted from the Se-rapeum, far down the road, and again, close at hand, "Halt!" The procession came to a standstill, the riders drew rein, the blue wheels ceased to turn, the coach was immovable but a few steps in front of her, and her eyes met those of the old man. The thought flashed through her brain that Fate itself had brought about this pause just at this spot; and when she heard the mosaic-worker exclaim, "The great Roman physician!" horses, coach, and everything swam before her eyes; she snatched her hand away from that of Andreas, and stepped out on the roadway. In an instant she was standing face to face with the venerable leech.

She heard the warning voice of her companion, she saw the crowd staring at her, she had, no doubt, a brief struggle with her maidenly shyness, but she carried out her purpose. The thought that the gods themselves were helping her to appeal to the only man who could save her lover, encouraged her to defy every obstacle.

She was standing by the vehicle; and scarcely had she raised her sweet, innocent, blushing face with pathetic and touching entreaty to the white-haired Roman, her large, tear-filled eyes meeting his, when he beckoned her to him, and in pleasant, sympathetic tones desired to know what she wanted. Then she made bold to ask whether he were the great Roman physician, and he replied with a flattered and kindly smile that he was sometimes so called. Her thankful glance to heaven revealed what a comfort his words were, and now her rosy lips moved freely, and she hurriedly, but with growing courage, gave him to understand that her betrothed, the son of a respected Roman citizen of Alexandria, was lying badly

wounded in the head by a stone, and that the leech who was treating him had said that none but he, the great Galenus, could save the young man's life. She also explained that Ptolemaeus, though he had said that Diodoros needed quiet above all things, had proposed to carry him to the Serapeum, and to commend him there to the care of his greater colleague, but that she feared the worst results from the move. She glanced pleadingly into the Roman's eyes, and added that he looked so kind that she hoped that he would go instead to see the sufferer, who had, quite by chance, been taken into a Christian house not very far from the Serapeum, where he was being taken good care of, and—as a matter of course—cure her lover.

The old man had only interrupted her tale with a few sly questions as to her love-affair and her religion; for when she had told him that Diodoros was under the care of Christians, it had occurred to him that this simply but not poorly dressed girl, with her modest ways and sweet, calm face, might herself be a Christian. He was almost surprised when she denied it, and yet he seemed pleased, and promised to grant her request. It was not fitting that a girl so young should enter any house where Caesar and his train took up their abode; he would wait for her, "there"—and he pointed to a small, round temple to Aphrodite, on the left-hand side of the street of Hermes, where the road was rather wider—for the coach had meanwhile slowly moved on.

Next day, at three hours after the rising of the fierce African sun—for he could not bear its meridian heat—he would go thither in his litter. "And be sure you are there in good time!" he added, shaking his finger at her.

"If you come an hour too soon, you will find me waiting!" she cried.

He laughed, and said, "What pretty maid, indeed, would dare to be late for an appointment under the very eyes of the goddess of Love!" He bade her a friendly farewell, and lay back in the chariot.

Melissa, radiant with happiness, looked about her for the place where she had left her companion. However, in spite of the lictors, Andreas had followed her; he drew her hand under his arm, and led her through the now-thinning crowd into a sidelane which led