FIGURES of the PASSION
OF OUR LORD
NIHIL OBSTAT

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Patrick Cardinal Hayes,
Archbishop, New York.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 10, 1925.
To the Mother
who has so often related to me
the story of the Passion
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Judas

"Then saith one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray Him: Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?"

_St. John xii, 4, 5._

The women lifted their eyes to the blue of the evening heavens, and broke into words of rejoicing and blessings upon the Lord.

For in the heavens, between Capernaum and Bethsaida, there was drawing near, in a graceful triangle, a flight of cranes.

Twelve birds Mary could descry, and she named them one by one: Matthew, and Thomas, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Simon Zelotes, and James the Less, and his brother Judas, and Simon Cephas, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John. And at the apex of the triangle there was flying also the Rabbi! Before His children, before His children, the Rabbi also was flying!

The mother of Cephas' wife smiled disdainfully, for she knew that to her son-in-law, Simon, there had been promised the guardianship of the keys of the Heavenly Kingdom. But soon these differences were forgotten in devout preparations to receive the message that the Messiah and His Disciples were at hand. The Lord was sending the tidings through the birds of the air in that all creatures were His.

When the women brought their eyes to earth again they beheld a traveller appear from among the boats lying on the fresh, green sward.

The traveller had red hair protruding from under a
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dusty turban, and was spare of form, fiery of eye, and melancholy of lip.

In joyful amazement Mary Salome cried:
“Art thou too come from the Lord?”
The man halted.
“‘The Lord’? Who is ‘the Lord’? Meanest thou
the Eremite who eateth locusts in the stony places, and
honey from the trunks of trees, and crieth by the way in the
wilderness?”

The women eyed one another in astonishment at the
man’s ignorance.
“That must have been John,” one of them exclaimed.
“Yet John was beheaded of the Tetrarch in Machærus!”
“Even so—the righteous man who said that he was unworthy so much as to unloose the Lord’s sandals!”

The traveller hung his head in thought—stood biting at
the end of the leathern strap which girded his sackcloth
garment. Then he murmured:
“‘The Lord’? Who is ‘the Lord’? Mean ye him who
ruleth the dwellers by the foul waters of Sodom?”

The women laughed.
“What? Them who do abhor women, and draw spades
through the earth to bury their uncleannesses?”

The mother-in-law of Peter said:
“Nay, our Lord is not that ruler. Our Lord is He who
bringeth salvation unto men, and delivereth them who are
possessed of devils. To myself He came when I was
lying stricken of a fever, and raised me up to serve
Him.”

The man said:
“Then is it he who beareth on his hand the ring of the
root of Baaras; the root of fire able to cleanse from every
evil?”

From the turf arose a young woman soft and languorous
of eye, with teeth like spikenard, and breasts like fluttering
Judas
doves. And her arising seemed to fill all things about her with her beauty.

And as he looked upon her the man with the red hair trembled, and was fain to bend himself, that he might conceal the coals of living fire in his eyes.

"With the power of His word," the woman said, "the Lord did drive from me seven devils which had been consuming my womb."

And the stranger found himself envying devils which had been able to batten upon such sweet nourishment as yonder life.

Said Salome:
"If the Rabbi be not known to thee, what seekest thou here amongst us?"

"I seek Simon, the son of Jonas. I myself am one Judas, son of Simon a tanner. My father's place is Kerioth, but all my people there are dead, and I am poor, and would fain get me labour amongst the boats."

Cephas' mother-in-law replied:
"Simon and his brother have now become fishers of men. But, if thou wilt, tarry thou here until nightfall, when they will return, for so it hath been foretold unto us by a flight of cranes."

And, rising, she fetched half a loaf of barley bread and some camel's milk.

Judas seated himself in the shadow of a boat, and, after blessing the hand which had fed him, ate ravenously. Then he said:

"I am a Jew from a village in the uttermost parts of Hebron, beside the borders of Idumea. There the people are as hard as their own mountains. Those mountains do smite when they be touched, and raise sores upon the hands which lay hold upon them."

Then the man drank. And as he did so his body resounded from throat to belly like a pitcher being filled.
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And, with mouth and half his face within the vessel, he muttered between the gulps:

"May ye never thirst! May ye never thirst!"

And his red beard remained flecked with the froth and cream of the milk.

The women smiled, and promised:

"Thou shalt fare better yet when the Rabbi hath come, and thou eatest with us."

Repeated Judas:

"I am a Jew. My land is a land of thistles and pits, and not as Galilee, where rejoice soft pasturage, and fruit-bearing trees, and a people pleasing unto Jehovah because of their compassion."

The beautiful woman interrupted him with:

"Deniest thou thine own country? Deniest thou the land of thy fathers, the land of Israel, the land promised unto Israel of God Himself?"

The stranger’s eyes flashed.

"For many days," he said, "I journeyed in the wilderness. I did follow the train of caravans, and gnaw the fragments which the jackals also did seek. And only such bread had I to eat as the legionaries required not."

The woman looked at him, and grieved for his desolation, and would not suffer him even to assist them in placing sails over the framefuls of fish curing in the sun—no, not though he said:

"Night cometh apace, and the dew of evening will hurt the fish."

The fish, the last catch landed from the nets of Simon and Andrew and James and John, for conveyance to the markets of Jerusalem and Jericho, included yaltri, a fish almost round, and still to be found swimming in the waters of ancient Nile; cromi, a fish prismaed and embroidered like a priest’s dalmatic, the species of fish which carries its young in a pouch in its massive jaws; bolti, a fish which
Judas
dwells apart from its fellows, and, sinking to the bottom
of the reeds, lies palpitating like an ingot of molten gold;
the blennus, a fish strong of flavour; the conger, similar to
the conger of Alexandria; the anchovy, the pike, and the
barbel.

Judas approached the knot of women, and again sought
to help them with the sail-cloths.
But again Salome repulsed him with:
"Thou art breathing yet with weariness."
However, he persisted, and so came to touch the hands
and clothing of the beautiful woman.
The sun, sinking, was turning Gennesaret's shores to
gold, and, amid a peacefulness of air and water, herons
were gliding on roseate-silver wings, and whitewashed cot-
tages, and boats, and outstretched nets, and a mooring-
post beside a cottage wall, and masses of pure white apple
blossom, and the smoke from a kiln all were lying mirrored
in the Lake's slumbering bosom.

Judas went to the rest amongst some hay in a stable be-
side worn-out fishing baskets trampled by the hooves of
cattle. And as he lay watching night lower its starry vault
upon the city of Tiberias he shivered with fever. For, be-
fore retiring, he had mended six pairs of sandals for the
Disciples of the Rabbi, and ground three measures for
bread for the Holy Family. And as he had toiled he had
felt sweat dropping from his brow upon the grind-stone.

And then the Rabbi entered to look upon Judas. And
as He passed His hand over the sufferer's brow the man
of Kerioth grew easier, cooler, more restful.
And women came with the Prophet, with, conspicuous
amongst them, the Prophet's Mother, a woman always
silent and sad. For whereas the Son had in Him the
energy, the fervour, the enthusiasm, the inspiration, the
melancholy and ecstasy of the Foreordained, in the Mother
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there were only the anxiety, the constant dread of joyousness, the resignation, the reticence, the ever-brooding gloom of her who knew in advance her Son's destiny. Wherefore her whole aspect was an aspect of suffering. And Judas trembled before those deep, impassioned eyes, and felt shoot through him a premonition, a sense of disquietude.

And of those eyes he was dreaming when he awoke to find the Master by his side, and the Disciples contemplating the Master's sun-crowned head as dawn shot its glorious rays over a far blue mountain peak.

And Judas heard Jesus' words—words as assured as a command of Jehovah Himself:

"Judas, follow me, and thou shalt be given a share in my Father's kingdom."

And all set forth beside the Lake, along a road which ran between spreading fig-trees. The country of the Gergesenes on the further or eastern shore of the Lake lay red, scorched, and thirsty.

Thaddæus, Philip, and the woman delivered of seven devils walked beside the water, and kept thrusting their staves into the wet sand, and uttering cries of delight when living rings of clarity laved their ankles. And the Rabbi, walking between John and Cephas, smiled at their enjoyment, with, behind Him, the Holy Mother, and Salome, and Susana, and Joanna the wife of Chuza the steward, and the rest of the Disciples, with Judas last, and unable to withdraw his eyes from the beautiful woman and her reflection in the Lake, since he kept thinking to himself that he too was a lake, and held the woman reflected in his bosom.

And then the rustle of sandals became hushed, and laughter and talking died away, as the voice of Jesus arose upon the air.

"Ye are the salt of the earth. But if the salt hath lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? Ye are the light
Judas

of the world. But shall a candle be hidden under a bushel rather than set upon a candlestick? Let your light so shine before men that it may lead them unto the house of my Father."

And the company turned aside into a field-path.

From hamlet and cot the people came waving welcomes with staves and scarves, and overrunning the fences in their haste to strip rags and tatters from their lame and halt and devil-possessed and serpent-bitten and sick children, until, with the removal of this human crust, odours began to wax rank in the warm sunlight. Clamorously women pressed forward to offer the Rabbi fruit and vessels of ointment or wine, that He might touch them with His fingers, and pronounce upon His children the healing formula. And the blind, standing by the roadside, turned towards Jesus' voice, and moaned: "Open Thou our eyes, O Lord! Open Thou our eyes!" and the unclean, apart from the rest, gasped with throats perforated with leprosy.

And the Rabbi set Himself to touch and anoint twisted limbs, and withered hands, and glazed eyes, and swollen, slobbering tongues of dumb and imbecile, and wounds hidden beneath clustered amulets.

For that humanity was Semitic humanity, powerless to contend with diseases not curable either by lotions or by balsams or by the herbs of the Essenes, the keepers of the text of Sefer Refuol, of the Solomonic Book of Remedies. Such humanity looked upon diseases as a chastening either for its own errors or for the errors of its fathers, and believed the bodies of its sick to be possessed with the spirit of unclean blood, or with the spirit of blindness, or with the spirit of dullness, or with the spirit of fever, or with the spirit of witchcraft, as the case might be, and the tormenting of those spirits to be removable only by a formula known to the Great Magician, the Great Rabbi, the Holy Worker of Miracles. Wherefore the
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people lay ever in wait for the Man in whose eyes and voice there was the necessary magic, and would arise as soon as the Apostolic Band had begun to haze the distance with dust of its coming, and collect and strip their stricken, and lay the stricken ones at the Prophet’s feet.

For the Rabbi Jesus surpassed all other Rabbis. Even Abba Chelkian and Chaki-na-ben-Dossa, erudite though they were, had to marvel at the miracles wrought of Jeshua of Nazareth, Joseph’s son.

Presently a centurion approached, with, behind him, a resplendent train of soldiery, returning from a march. From their spear points were dangling sprigs of terebinth, branches of citron, and clusters of dates.

And a legionary shouted, brandishing his javelin: “Way, way for the centurion!” and bit into an orange, and sent a golden shower of sweet juice spurting over a boy’s ulcer.

Judas ran and bowed himself before the Roman officer’s charger. He was trembling from head to foot that Jesus should appear so unconcerned at the appearance of this overlord of Israel. Stutteringly he cried:

“It is the Lord Jesus—the Lord Jesus walking abroad to preach the glad tidings, and heal men’s sicknesses!”

“The Rabbi Jesus, thou sayest?” And, plunging gilded heels into his charger, the Roman soldier darted forward with a shout of:

“Rabbi! Rabbi! Come and heal my servant, who is raging and roaring on his bed like unto one tormented.”

And, that Jesus forthwith might attend to the warrior all sought to thrust away from Him an old woman who, swollen and monstrous, had come to Him for comfort. But He stopped her graciously, touched her tumour, and gave her healing.

Only then did He turn about and say:

“Now will I go and heal him.”

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Judas

But the centurion objected:
"Thou needest but command with a word, as I do when I say unto these: 'Go,' or 'Come'; 'Do this,' or 'Do that.' Do thou but bid my servant be healed with a word, and healed he will be."

The eyes of the Rabbi sought the heavens. And in them there were sunlight and great joy. And, looking upon His Disciples, He said:
"I say unto you that not in all Israel have I found such faith as this!"

And, turning to the Roman, He granted his request with the words:
"Friend, go in peace. And even as thou hast believed, so shall it be given thee."

And, saluting Jesus with the stock of his baton, the centurion departed amidst a cloud of dust, with his helmet flashing, and his chlamys parted before the breeze. And floating back to the company came sweet songs of Latium.

The woman cleansed of seven devils gazed upon Jesus. And Judas heard her say:
"He is the Christ, the Messiah. He speaketh unto the Gentiles as unto the High Priest, and both do ask of Him benefits."

The Rabbi crossed a corn-field, and the multitude followed Him.

The crop, tall and close-set, was just beginning to fill, and over its waves of verdure larks were rising, and emitting notes like grains of gold left quivering in the blue crystal.

Jesus halted to listen to their song.

Bread was broken upon the slope of a hillside so lush with cyclamen and carpeted with anemone as to dye red the feet of the multitude with its juicy freshness. On the summit stood twin peaks like the points of a tiara.

Half-way up, Jesus halted again, and the multitude
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flocked around Him. Two ants approached His feet, and He lifted them up gently, and placed them in a flower. And as the larks sank again into the richness of the plain He said:

"Take no thought for your life: what ye shall eat, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed. Consider the fowls of the air. They sow not, neither do they reap. Consider also the lilies of the field. They toil not, neither do they spin. Yet I say unto you that even Solomon could not array himself like one of these."

And He removed His turban for the full glory of the day to fall upon His forehead, and gazed towards the horizon, and stood with breast heaving in an ecstasy.

The Lake of Galilee lay spread in a glittering oval. Fishing-boats were thrusting up white wings into the golden air, and great, tardy pelicans swimming hither and thither, and swallows rioting deliriously in the sunshine. Further away, the red ridges of Golan had to their left the hoary brows of Hermon, and, to their right, the beautiful plain and Mount Tabor, with the mountain's bare dome looking like a crown to the Jewish fatherland.

And such was the Rabbi's bearing that silence fell upon the noisy multitude. Then His voice spread over the hillside, saying:

"Blessed are the poor, as ye, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

And the devout murmuring arose like incense, as the multitude repeated the promise.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

And the landscape, to its topmost points, seemed to become imprinted with the Rabbi's words, while from His listeners burst sobs of yearning and Messianic hope.

"Blessed are they that weep, for they shall be comforted."

All eyes were uplifted to seek those of Jesus. And the
Judas

man of Kerioth also gazed upon the Rabbi, and, turning to the Disciples and the multitude, and struggling not to cry the words aloud, murmured:

"Who now shall say that this is not the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of David? For even as He doth bless our afflictions, so shall His word cause Jerusalem to become of gold, and her houses as precious stones, and her Sanctuary the centre of the world! And before her all the princes of the earth shall bow down, and we ourselves shall dwell in the glory of a perpetual Sabbath, and the earth bring forth manna and fine linen!"

And the Rabbi’s voice added amid the peacefulness of the hillside:

"Blessed shall ye be when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak evil of you, and accuse you, for my name’s sake!"

John spread his cloak upon a hillock, and the Rabbi seated Himself upon the grass beside it.

Below, trees and homesteads were appearing and disappearing amid soft, warm shadows like smoke.

From the mist born of the south-west breeze, blurring, masking, and yellowing the skies with sand blown from the desert, Jerusalem was thrusting up outlined turrets and cupolas, the Temple’s massive marbles, and the battlements of Fort Antonia. Over the bank of fog that was overhanging the city a tender glow of eventide lay scintillating.

And amid the silence the Disciples could hear the beating of Jesus’ heart.

John’s eyes called their attention to the Master’s agitation and melancholy. And as they did so Judas moved aside to escape their glance.

For of late John had been accusing Judas of stealing the moneys which Judas administered as steward. And
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no one, not even the Rabbi, had defended Judas. The Rabbi had pardoned him; but He had done so with averted eyes.

Judas walked always alone, and laggardly—he followed his companions as he had followed caravans, though now he had for alms apostleship and love. And he said to himself:

"Never now doth the Rabbi call me to His side. Doth He despise me because of my office? Yet it was He Himself who gave it me, and never have I failed to care for His nakedness and hunger and lodging. And it is through me that those others are able to join in His thoughts and imaginings!—But did He not say that the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hidden in a field, or unto a merchant seeking fine pearls? Then were those likenings taken from my own covetousness? . . . Ah, what is there in my blood that all should abhor me? The women do praise and look upon John, though in him there is nought that is lovable, and even his gentleness is but a rustic yielding, and all his words and acts but sorry counterfeits of the Master's. And unto Simon Cephas also do the women hearken, though hard he is as a rock, and did receive his name of Petros from the Master Himself. Unto all do the women speak save only unto me: from me alone do they shrink. And in particular doth Mary of Magdala regard me as she might regard one of the devils driven from her womb. And the sisters of Lazarus do apportion me the lowest place at their table."

And he sprang to his feet to overtake the group—now descending towards Bethany. No one had thought to call him. And as he panted, and bruised his feet against the broken ground, he reflected:

"I am as a dog which ever must seek its master! Yet have I need of that master?"
Judas

The band supped in the house of Simon the leper; and after that the high chamber had been lighted up multitudes flocked from the surrounding villages to see the Lord, and the Lazarus whom He had raised. For in his joy and thankfulness Simon was giving a feast.

And Martha attended to all things without ceasing.

And her sister received the thanks of the Lord's eyes and lips as He lay upon a couch amongst His friends and Disciples.

But Judas had to take the lowest place at table. Nor could he even stretch himself out there, seeing that no room had been left for him to do so.

And the Beloved Disciple received the Lord's smiles and praises. And the women smiled upon John, both because of the Lord's favour and because of his own comeliness and zeal.

And when supper was over Mary arose, and poured ointment of spikenard upon Jesus' head. And all the chamber, and the meats, and the apparel of the guests, and even their breath, and the country air without remained saturated with the fragrance. Then Mary broke the box of ointment, and dried the Rabbi with the coils of her soft hair.

Judas approached, and, on seeing the spice scattered, voiced his heart, and also sought to curry favour with a Rabbi who preached poverty, by saying:

"She hath wasted over a pound of ointment. Might it not have been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?"

John and the women exchanged glances of scorn at Judas' avarice, and Mary's glorious mouth quivered with disgust. But the Rabbi only said:

"Judas, Judas, wherefore murmur est thou that she should have wrought upon me this work of loving-kindness? Knowest thou not that her hands were anointing my body
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unto burial? To remember the poor is good, but the poor ye have always with you, whereas me ye will have but a brief while longer."

And He turned pale, and fell into affliction.

Judas cursed himself, and there uncoiled themselves in the depths of his soul the dormant serpents of evil intent. Such was his humiliation that his fellows' sandals seemed to be dabbling in his very blood.

And he rushed from the house, and disappeared into the night.

Shaking a venerable head, the eldest guest muttered:

"Alone is that man among you. Yet hath not the righteous Hillel said: 'Set not thyself apart from thy fellows'?"

The Disciples smiled, and replied:

"But not so the man of Kerioth, not so the man of Kerioth. Alway he hath to report unto us what hath been done, in that he is the keeper of our goods, and the holder of our charges."

The Rabbi halted with arm upraised against the moon-lit sky, and said:

"Offend not your brother, but remember My words: Of him who taketh that which is thine require not thine own again. For if ye do but love them who love you, what honour shall ye have?"

Judas was breathing heavily as he returned towards Bethany. He was breathing so heavily that the parched air from his lungs seemed to sear his very mouth.

And as he seated himself and, still shaking with the dry gaspings of his thoat, sought his money amongst the folds of his girdle he said:

"Verily I am sweating and wearying more even than on the night when the Rabbi looked at me, and I did grind
Judas
corn for his bread! For I knew not the man, yet he did command me to follow him! And though now he calleth himself the Christ, he hath to hide himself in village habitations! And, but for this prophet, I might have been happy with wife and children—a workman as my father was, or a fisherman having my own boat. I might have purchased a boat of Cephas himself. . . . And this prophet must be an impostor, an enemy of the people, seeing that the priests of Jehovah abhor him, nor would have conspired against a true son of David, or given me for his blood but the price appointed of Moses for 'the blood of a slave whom an ox hath gored.' ”

And the man of Kerioth drew forth the thirty pieces of silver, and sat regarding them in the light of the waning moon. Brightly burnished those pieces were, and pieces having on their faces Aaron's budded rod and the superscription "Jerusalem the Holy," and, on the reverse side, a palm, a bowl of manna, and the tokens which signify "Sealed of Israel."

These pieces Helkias, keeper of Corban or the Sacred Treasury, had taken from the first of the thirteen coffers of wrought-gold which stood in the Temple Cloisters for reception of tribute and offerings. And as Judas had been counting the pieces Helkias had said with a sneer of aversion:

"And when wilt thou deliver unto us thy lord and master?"

And Judas had turned about, and cried:

"No lord and master have I! I did lose my peace of soul when first that man did call me."

But the Scribes who had escorted him from the High Priest's house to the precincts of the Sanctuary had extolled him, and plied him with flattery, and said:

"Thou art the saviour of Israel, the saviour of Israel! . . ."
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Judas re-knotted the thirty pieces within his girdle, murmuring:

"Let me hide them in my very flesh, lest those men see them, and conceive suspicion. For the pieces shine like unto none others. They must have been cast but yesterday. Yet they are mine, and mine of right. . . . Ah, alone am I amongst men! But the Rabbi hath friends. . . ."

And he continued on his way down the hill. And everywhere he left behind him a mad barking from the dogs of the homesteads on the Mount.

The moon disappeared, red and mournful-looking. And dawn broke with a frown.

And he reached Bethany.

Slowly, stealthily, and with bare feet he ascended to the roof-chamber of Lazarus' house. And as he approached it he could hear the breathing of Jesus and His Disciples. Ah, well! He would need but to lie down in their midst, and on their awakening no one would suspect that he had been absent.

And cautiously he opened the door of the chamber. Then terror shot to his very vitals as there advanced to meet him a tall figure, and he found himself writhing under the gaze of a pair of deep, impassioned eyes. And he muttered to himself:

"Surely never doth the Mother of the Rabbi sleep!"
The Head of the Household

"And he sent Peter and John, saying: Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat." St. Luke xxii, 8.
"And in the evening he cometh with the twelve." St. Mark xiv, 17.

Setting down his pitcher upon the heated flagstones of the hollow, Asaph stood gazing along the track cut through teasels and rubbish to the Gate of the Essenes.

On the fresh lips of the fountain the water was joyous-looking, full of clarity. Further within, it was of the colour of honeycomb. At times it changed to the blue tint of morning.

Asaph stood gazing at the jet so slender and graceful, yet so strong. For he was the Water Maiden's bondslave, the slave who, receiving her from Holy Mother Siloam, raised her upon his shoulder, and bore her away on his bowed back. And sometimes he would seat himself awhile in the dried torrent bed, the torrent bed dried in accordance with Joel's prediction, the torrent bed which skirted shaded tombs, and listen to the tired beating of his heart, and to the crystalline leap and splash of the water as it rose and sank like a nobleman's dainty daughter on the hump of her camel. Asaph himself was a camel: the Water Maiden's camel. And though sometimes, on his shoulder, she would begin to sport in wantonness, and he would grow fretful, and grumble, and move his heated head aside, soon he would remember that she was a virgin nymph, and delicate, and palpitating, and unveiled, and speak of her again, and smile with kindly submission.

And once, of an evening, he gave of his pain and blood
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for her sake. An evening it was when certain other slaves sought to ravish her, and he grew bold and terrible in the defence of his virgin, and at length found himself an aged camel with a torn and bleeding ear. But soon the terrified Water Maiden came forth again, and refreshed him, and healed his hurt. And Asaph blessed the Water Maiden.

The edge of the hollow reached, Asaph was stopped by two men who were carrying acacia wicker-baskets, and had their garments covered with dust. The one of them was a youth tanned and wiry, chewing a myrtle flower between his lips, and the other a man of rugged, flint-like flesh, shaggy, unkempt beard, and uncouth figure.

The two men looked at the water-carrier—drawing down the peaks of their turbans to do so. Then they looked at one another. Then the more rugged of the two came, seemingly, to a decision, authoritatively, for he said to Asaph:

"Lead us unto thy dwelling. We are come in the name of the Rabbi."

And Asaph made obeisance, and offered the men the pitcher of water.

And the two drank with a thirst born of the journey from Bethany. And the younger one said:

"Only with fear have I drunken thus greedily, for soon eventide will come, and thy master is to receive guests to-night. But before mine eyes was the righteous man who perished of thirst before that he could come to the waters of ceremony."

And Asaph replied with a smile:

"Daily, to fill the jars, I go seven Sabbath Day's journeys between the rising of the sun and the going down thereof. Yet the Pool never lacketh water for the washings."

And, taking up the pitcher, he set forth, with the men
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following. And at a doorway whitened almost to blindness they halted.

And the strangers entered, with the mantles on their shoulders looking like billows of light. And welcome indeed they found the protection of the shade, since sunshine, there, fell only from afar, from an inner court, and through lemon-tinted canvas. The only sounds audible were the grinding of a hand-mill, and the Phœnician lay chanted by the slave-girl turning the grindstone.

But the lay brought back to the minds of the wayfarers their journeyings through Sidon: through the Sidon whose synagogue had rejected Jesus; the city of flowers and gardens more splendid even than those of Damascus, and orange-groves more luscious, more abundant, even than those of Jaffa; the Sidon whose stones and air had seemed permeated throughout with delicious odours; the Sidon where fish had been more numerous than sand on the beach where the monster had vomited the doubting prophet; the Sidon whose ridges of purple-bearing shells had gleamed like treasure-heaps, and streets quivered with the thunder of looms; Sidon the profane whom Jeremiah had cursed as “she who must drink the full cup of Jehovah’s wrath,” the home and mother of mercantile gallants and adventurers, the city standing between her mountains and the sea, the city which had given of her cedars, of the “glory of Lebanon,” for the roofing of the Lord’s Sanctuary, the city whose craftsmen had fashioned the bronze for the sacred door-posts, the city which had received from the Master an indulgent smile, in that her sons had marvelled at His words, and heard them more gladly than had the men of Israel.

Also, the wayfarers recalled the evening when Jesus had gone down to the shore, and, with azure mantle fluttering in the breeze, stood wrapped in, filled full with, the glorious vista of the Mediterranean. With face turned
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to the ocean He had stood—sending His gaze from point
to point like a rainbow traversing the waters: pale and
silent: His breast heaving with delicious ecstasy. And
the Disciples had watched Him from a little distance, and
been sparing of words, and uttered even those few as
though the words had been fluttering doves. And at
length the Rabbi had set forth along the strand, and ever
and anon turned His head towards the blue waters (for
He was one who could never remain indifferent to loveli-
ness), and towards the gulls soaring to heaven, or darting
horizonward, as though to pursue the Master’s thoughts,
whilst, ashore, men of Phœnicia had been singing chanties
as they tended their turreted, high-prowed vessels.

And so, through palm-groves, beside lagoons, the
travellers had come to Tyre—to Tyre expert in gallantry,
and in inventiveness, and in sybaritic luxury; to the Tyre
whose sons could blow, with flame, exquisite articles of
glass; to the Tyre which had the pillars of her pagan tem-
ples lit from within with lamps; to the Tyre whose aspect
had been as a gem-strewn field.

And behind them had followed ever a woman of Canaan,
pleading for a son possessed with a devil, and begging
for a few crumbs of grace from the Master’s table.

And at length Jesus had extended to her those crumbs of
grace. And then they had departed.

And when they had reached the rugged territories of
Decapolis the Master had halted, turned His eyes to the
infinite sea behind them, and sighed. And so once and
for all He had entered urban confines. . . .

And as now the younger, the more sunburnt, of the
strangers recalled that journeying by the Mediterranean,
he could smell, as of old, the delicious scent of amber
beaches, and of quays filled with rich merchandise, and of
great, free waters promising a land untouched, a soil virgin
for the sower.
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But the stranger with the flint-like flesh was filled, rather, with the fervour of the hour, and, detecting from afar the tappings of the Goodman's staff, hastened forth to greet him, saying to Asaph:

"We are of those who do love and follow the Rabbi Jesus. I am Simon Peter, and this one is John."

Then the head of the household arrived. Clad in a loose cloak of amethyst blue, he had a beard trimmed like the beard of a member of the Golden Fleece, long, smooth hair, a shepherd's crook with an orange-wood shaft graven from the bend to the half-way grasping-point with the Psalm expressive of confidence in the Lord against every ill, and a neck-chain of bronze and green chalcedony from which were suspended some talismans and a great cypher circlet—the whole tinkling against the broad frontal of the cloak. All did him obeisance, and he murmured:

"I know who ye are, for more than once my son Mark hath journeyed with you, and I myself did see you on the night when Nicodemus and I were seeking the Christ that we might warn Him of His peril."

Then John delivered the Master's message, saying:

"The Rabbi Jesus did command us, and say: 'Go ye, and make ready the Passover.' And when we asked of Him: 'Where wilt Thou eat of it?' He did look round upon us all, and call unto Himself Peter and me, saying: 'Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water. Inquire of him for his master, and follow him unto his house, and when the Goodman cometh, say unto the Goodman: Thus saith the Master: My time is at hand. Show us the guest-chamber, that we may eat the Passover.'"

With lowly obeisance the Head of the Household replied:

"Be it so."

And, leading the Disciples out into the walled garden,
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he brought them to the steps of a terrace the planking of which (of Aleppo pinewood) smelt resinously in the bright warmth of the spring morning.

Thence the points of the Holy City could be seen glittering like cressets: the Hippicus Tower, upwards of eighty cubits in height; the Phasael Tower, reproducing the great Pharos, or Lighthouse, of Alexandria; the Mariamne Tower, once the bower of the great Idumean’s best-beloved; the Fortress of Antonia, rooted on crags of a jasper-like polish; and the storeyed pinacles of the Lord’s House. Gleaming like anointed foreheads those landmarks of Israel were—charged with the joy of the prospect—wreathed and garlanded with doves and swallows. And from the orchards and homesteads of the Mount of Olives, and from the gardens to the west, were coming luscious odours; whilst over all lay a whitish-blue sheen, as though, descending to earth for a moment, and reascending, the intense Palestinian sky had left a sediment upon rock and limestone. And, as on a “Day of Rest” during the Exodus period, all the air was filled with bleatings and golden dust from Paschal flocks, and the people making merry, and the fullers’ and crimpers’ wards resounding like torrents in spate as the craftsmen celebrated the last hours of the feast which lasts for seven days from the Rite of Preparation.

Only John was enjoying the spectacle of the morning’s beauty. Simon and the Head of the Household were preparing the guest-chamber. Presently he joined them.

Beaten up were the three rows of couches, spread the carpet and the mat of skins for the table, and covered the table with Sidonian fabrics. Then John arranged the three chief places: one for the Rabbi, on a bench in the
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middle; the second for Cephas, on a couch to the Rabbi's right; and the third for James the Elder, on a couch to the Rabbi’s left.

And he arranged also the canopy, and the linen cloth, and the basin for the ablutions, and the two-handled cup for the libations, and the copper jars and vessels (vessels of earthenware were deemed unclean for the purpose), and the beaker of red wine of Judea.

And, meanwhile, Mark prepared the hearthstone or kir-aim for cooking the bitter almonds which, with nuts and figs and dates and lemons and vinegar and cinnamon, were to be kneaded to the colour and form of a brick, in commemoration of the labours of the Captivity, and to constitute the Kharosel. And, for his part, the Head of the Household washed the coriander and succory and lettuce and endive and thistles and horehound which were to constitute the Merorim of the Mosaic Law, and the Disciples ground the wheat and spelt and kale and oats and barley which were to form the unleavened bread.

Lastly, Asaph heated the oven, and strewed corners of the house with fermented grain—the latter because it is ordained that on the Great Day of the Passover the Israelite shall collect every species of leaven which may be within the confines of his habitation, and, for the ritual discovery of the same, make preliminary concealment of dough and seed not yet swelled to fullness.

That done, all marched around the chambers with lanterns in their hands, whilst the Head of the Household recited:

"Praise and glory unto Jehovah our God, unto the Lord Everlasting, who on this day hath sanctified us with his commandment, and bidden us destroy all manner of ferment. Wherefore be all ferment and leaven which are, or which may be, within this dwelling cast forth to become as dust upon the highway."
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And these words the Head of the Household repeated under each of the habitation's several roofs.

And, the ceremony completed, all went forth into the garden, and there burnt the forbidden seed and dough. In the garden, also, the two Disciples chose two pomegranate boughs, as green as possible, in that it has been ordained that for the roasting the sacrificial lamb shall be lashed or slung to two such boughs, since of all woods pomegranate is the most fireproof.

Then Simon and John repaired to the Paschal market for the purchase of a lamb as white and free from blemish as possible. And as they were bearing it homeward on their shoulders, and passing the Gate of Sur, they heard the golden trumpets being blown from one of the porches in token of the Hour of Sacrifice, and, the trumpets having sounded, Levite singers reciting the Psalms of triumph and thanksgiving which form the Hymn of Hallel, and begin:

"Extol, O children of Jehovah—  
Extol ye the name of the Lord!"

At the moment when the Head of the Household and his son were drawing the thin loaves from the oven Asaph entered to announce that Jesus and His Disciples were crossing the brook.

And, hastening forth, the old man had the Apostolic Band pointed out to him by his servant. Walking at the head of it was the Rabbi, between John and Cephas, who had gone to meet Him below the Hill of Zion.

And when the Band had covered the last portion of the steep ascent it halted to rest.

Thence could be seen the dwelling chosen for the Passover, a building large, and plain, and white; a building prominent against the twilight, and seeming, amid the eve-
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ning silence and purity and retirement, as though set in a woman’s lap. From the city below were ascending the dust and clamour of human multitudes, and of Paschal flocks penned in narrow streets.

Jesus approached the terrace. Then He halted again to view the prospect, with the rays of a sun now old and rounded and tremulous suffusing the loose ends of His turban, and the flowing locks of His hair.

First He turned towards the east, towards His beloved Mount of Olives, towards the long-stretching, well-watered, fertile eminence whose every path had His footprints upon it, and whose every tree had accorded Him food and shade, and whose every bough had brushed His temples and shoulders. And further away, where the palms of Bethany rose, He could distinguish the very trees which guarded His friends’ threshold, whilst, lower down, Gethsemane was thrusting up cypresses which the sunset was touching with flame, and olive trees of generous foliage over which a silvery sheen was shimmering. Nearer to hand lay fields of young barley which in time would provide sheaves to be sown by the High Priest in Paschal sanction of the harvest; and over Annas’ country-house, where the Jericho road wound around Olivet, two venerable cedars were waving sun-gilded branches amongst which were interlaced flights of the same turtle-doves and pigeons as had provided Mary with her thank-offerings on the occasion of the Rabbi’s birth. Lastly, on the Kidron’s marlstone watershed Bethphage’s fig-shoots were blending together in the glow until they looked like the candles of a rustic tabernacle.

Suddenly a chilly wisp of mist descended from the ravine, whilst the prevailing odours of green vineyard, of ripening grain, of fruit and of presage of fruit, took on a cooler touch. Jesus remembered the warnings of His followers. And His eyes sought those of Judas.
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Judas frowned. Bethinking Him that His glance had been uncharitable, Jesus moved onward toward the Cænaculum. And on the threshold the Head of the Household said with a lowly obeisance:

"Rabbi, suffer myself and my son Mark to attend Thee."
And so they entered.

The lanterns, just kindled, were smoking and crackling, and emitting a light which, dim and yellow, consorted well with the emotion of the walled dusk, and with the eventide quivering against the dark firmament.

Only Judas hung back from the Triclinium when the rest approached it—hung back, and shrank into a window.
Jesus bade him approach nearer, saying:
"Suffer thy brethren to yield thee room. Even the lowest place at my table is as a place by my side. Sit thou as John: he on the one side, and thou on the other."

But when they seated themselves they seated themselves thus: the Lord, with John and Andrew, in the middle; Peter at the head of the right-hand table; below him Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew; James the Elder at the head of the left-hand table; and, below him, James the son of Mary Cleophas, James's brother Thaddæus, Simon Zelotes, and Judas.

And, thus grouped, they prayed—then doffed their sandals, and extended themselves.

The Head of the Household took the great cup, and went to draw wine of Engedi from the vats, and water from the pitcher brought by Asaph.

And the voice of Jesus arose, saying:
"Blessed be God my Father, in that he hath created the fruit of the vine!"

And He tasted the cup, and delivered it to John with a sigh, saying:
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"With what desire I have desired this hour! Yet is it the Passover of my parting!"

And His eyes and brows (brows like a peak welcoming the sun at dawn) gleamed with momentary sorrow.

Then the basin of ablutions was brought, and He dipped His slender hand into it. But Judas' hand felt too deeply stained with recent villainy. He withdrew it hastily under the table.

And even as he did so Jesus straightened Himself.

Meanwhile Cephas and Thomas had grasped the cup jointly, and were looking angrily at James "the Son of Thunder," who was urging that the cup ought next to be given to him, as proper to his rank and station. And doubtless, had the mother of James and John been present, she would have interceded with the Lord on her son's behalf; but as it was, Peter cried out that the cup ought to circulate in regular sequence.

And so the dispute spread.

Jesus smiled bitterly. Nevertheless, failing to understand Him, the Disciples continued to contend with the mischievous air of boys, if not actually allowing the contest to grow heated. Between Peter and James alone did genuine rancour threaten to break out.

In vain the Head of the Household proffered the water of ablutions and the ritual bread. The excited disputants barely stopped to dip their fingers, and dry them, before falling to gesticulative argument again—so quick is anger in Israel, and so easy the giving of offence!

But at length, surmounting all other voices, dominating all other wills, standing out solitary amid the silence, the voice of Jesus arose. Without harshness or menace it said:

"How long will ye have passions and strivings like unto other men? The Gentiles do exercise dominion: but not
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so must it be with you. Let him that is eldest among you be as the youngest: and let him that is chief, and doth possess authority, be as him that followeth and doth serve. All have continued with me in my tribulations: wherefore should ye all humble yourselves before one another. Now I appoint unto you such a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me, wherein ye shall sit on twelve thrones, and judge the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Am I not in the midst of you? Do as I will do.”

And, rising, He removed His cloak, and girded Himself, slave-like, with a napkin, and poured fresh water into the basin, and, bending down, took unto Himself the feet of the Beloved Disciple.

But John withdrew the feet, crying:

“Lord, what wilt Thou? O Rabbi, do not so!”

But Jesus insisted with the supreme command: and upon that John suffered the feet to be washed. And when they had been washed he covered them over with the fold of his mantle, to preserve them from the dust of the flooring.

All approached to behold what was being done; and Judas, on seeing John turn pale with the ecstasy communicated to his skin by the Divine condescension, steamed, as from his very blood, with shame and abhorrence: whilst the further spectacle of seeing the Master humble Himself to kiss John’s feet before drying them plunged Judas’ whole body in anguish.

And Peter turned aside, and, shrinking behind a curtain, cried:

“Thou, John? Thou, John? Thou wert consenting unto it!”

But the Rabbi smiled, and bowed Himself at Judas’ feet. And Judas felt as though the heat in his cheeks must be cracking the skin. And he raised a hand to finger his face. Then he sought to smile. But the smile broke into a sob.

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And Jesus' glance rose to meet his eyes, and the Lord murmured softly, very softly:

"Judas, Judas! Still thou canst suffer for me?"

And the man of Kerioth sobbed again, and drew many a bitter breath. And the kiss imprinted on his feet by the Master left a coal destined to wound him to his life's end.

Then Jesus approached Simon Peter: and as He did so the Apostle turned towards Him with a shudder of rugged humility, yet also with a wistful glance towards the spot where his brethren, standing beside John and Judas, were awaiting their turn for the austere behest.

And Peter cried:

"Never shalt thou wash my feet, O Lord! Are the dust and sweat of my flesh meet to be touched with Thy hands, O Rabbi?"

Jesus straightened Himself, tall and severe. Warningly He said:

"Unless I wash thy feet, thou shalt have no part with me."

Then Cephas, bending himself in humble submission, said:

"O Lord, wash both my feet and my hands and my head. Nay, take Thou my very soul, and dip it in Thy grace. Set me not apart from Thee. I desire wholly to be cleansed."

"Ye are clean already. But not all."

And He interrupted Himself, and, glancing aside, quoted the words of the Psalmist:

"He that eateth bread with me, the same hath lifted against me his heel."

Then He washed Matthew, the man of subtle elegancies and refinements derived from past intercourse with the heathen, the man who had relinquished the emoluments of office for Jesus' sake; Philip the diffident and gentle;
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Bartholomew, the man with a forehead as of graven stone, the man who pondered upon words, pursued them like the flight of a bird, and ever demanded additional reasons; James the hot-headed and intractable; Thaddæus the clumsy and uproarious and jovial; James, his brother, the spare and withered and penitence-consumed, the man who never washed himself, or shaved, or used ointments; Andrew, the man whom the foretellings of the Baptist had converted to a belief in Jesus before he had so much as seen the Lord; and Simon Zelotes the rough and reserved, yet also the humble with the generous humbleness born of field-labour.

Then the Head of the Household and his son Mark helped to raise the Master, and lead Him back to the table.

And, gasping with weariness, He said:

"Ye do call me Lord and Master. Wherefore, if I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, so ought ye to humble yourselves unto one another: not in anger, but in loving-kindness. And a new commandment I give unto you: that ye do love one another as I have loved you."

And, His voice breaking with tenderness, He sank back upon the couch.

Then the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs were served.

And Mark poured out the second libation. And this time the Disciples drank of it like good brethren: in orderly sequence.

Then softly they sang the ritual Psalms beginning, "Praise the Lord, O Israel!" and "When Israel went out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from among a strange people," and ending, "The Lord hath delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling" and "I will praise the Lord for ever in the courts of the blessed."

Next, as an Essene, and, therefore, the most austere of the band, the most obedient to every injunction of the
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Mosaic Law, James put to Jesus (who for the moment, and in that chamber, was "Head of the Family") the four ritual questions: "Wherefore on this night do we eat of unleavened bread?" "Wherefore on this night do we eat of bitter herbs?" "Wherefore on this night do we eat of the lamb roasted, whereas on other nights we may see the it according unto our convenience and our liking?" and "Wherefore on this night partaketh the family of one board?"

Then all arose, and recited the Haggadah.

And the lamb was served—brown and savoury.

But from time to time, as Jesus was expounding the history of the Exodus before yet the dough was risen in the pans and the kneading-troughs, and of the bitterness of the Bondage Years, and of the passage of the Angel of the Lord, to reap, with the sickle of pestilence, the first-born of all on whose dwellings was not the sign of blood sacrifice, and of the journey of the Children of Israel to rest and freedom and possession of the Promised Land of "brooks and fountains and wheat and barley and vines and fig-trees and olives and pomegranates and oil and honey where an abundance of bread and of all things rejoiceth,"—as Jesus was expounding these Mosaic legends He kept stopping, and looking at Judas. And as He did so He grieved.

And Judas felt as though everything about him must be tremulous with the throbbing of his arteries. He withdrew his elbow from the couch, so much did that elbow seem to be supporting a failing heart. He withdrew his hand from the table, so loudly did the fingers seem to be registering the pulse's hard beating. Had his brethren divined his guilty fears? He said to himself:

"Already this man knoweth of my deceit. Hence he thinketh of those others rather than of me. To-day he did bid John and Simon go and prepare for him the Pass-
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over. He did send them only as his messengers, whilst concealing from the rest of us even the Goodman's name. And when I myself would have gone he stopped me. And never before have his eyes so waited upon me. Yet he did wash my feet, and press them to his bosom until they rested upon his very heart! And he smileth at me continually. His eyes seek mine to the very end that they may smile. Even now, if I were to turn myself about, his smile would receive me again. But I will not turn myself about, for his smile consumeth my spirit like a reproach. Nay, I will not turn myself about.”

But when he moved it was in Jesus' direction.
All were looking at the Master.
Was He weeping?
Gently the Disciples plucked Him by the mantle, and touched His shoulder, saying:
“What aileth Thee, O Lord? O Lord, what aileth Thee?”
Mark poured out the third libation.
Jesus passed His fingers over His eyelids, and recovered Himself. Selecting from amongst the bitter herbs “the fruit of an olive tree,” He broke in twain a loaf of unleavened bread and made as though to dip the pieces in the juice of the Kharosel, but stayed his hand, and said with a sigh:
“Before yet the sun of morningtide had arisen, and when yet we were speaking together under the palms of Bethany, the Levites had proclaimed my death to all the synagogues of Jerusalem. Yea, my shammatha hath been declared.”
Simon Peter cried in dismay:
“That Thou shouldst die, O Lord?”
“Yea. For so it is written. And that one of you should betray me.”
The words, as Jesus spoke them, seemed to echo to infinite solitudes.
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All sat awaiting the name of the betrayer. And the Master’s silence so disturbed and alarmed the Disciples that in their anxiety they groaned aloud, and the couches creaked beneath their movements, and their eyes grew wild and dilated, and sought those of their neighbour. For now the Disciples had conceived a doubt of themselves, and the anguish of the discovery led them to wail:

"Is it I, O Master?"
"Or I, Lord?"
"Or I?"

Nay, even Judas knitted his brows, and forced his tongue to ask the question:
"Is it I?"

Jesus bent towards his cheek, and whispered:
"Thou hast said."

John laid an arm about the Master’s neck, and murmured, as he sank his head upon Jesus’ shoulder:
"Unto me reveal the name, O Master."

Darkly the Lord replied:
"Watch unto whom I shall give a sop."

And He dipped a morsel of bread into the Kharosel, and offered it to Judas with the words:
"That which thou must do, do quickly."

"What said He unto thee?" murmured the other Disciples: but Judas, confused and half-choking with mastication of the morsel, rushed from the room.

Halting at the foot of the terrace, he listened to see whether he were being followed. But from the Cænaculum only a faint resonance was coming: wherefore he picked up his cloak and tunic, and continued his way to the High Priest’s house.

Night had fallen.

Jesus’ gaze sought the purity of the heavens. Over the Mount, so recently His resting-place, a great moon was rising, and He could see His Bethany showing white in
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a tender radiance permeated with perfumes as with the spikenard of the Mary who had always so rejoiced to hear Him.

And He drank the last cup of the Old Dispensation.

Streaming through the open windows, night caressed His spirit. In that hour He tasted to the full the grandeur of His destiny—He attained the moment of supreme, intimate rapture which falls only to heroes before the occasions of their sacrifice. And amid a Creation lying tenebrous, and scented, and dreamy with gardens and moonlight, and charged throughout with a delicate, quivering joy as though heaven and earth were innocently revelling in one another’s beauty like twin brethren, the Foreordained reviewed all things. As yet His agony seemed far distant. As yet He could contemplate it as on a remote horizon. But that destiny of suffering was His, and only His, and He must advance to it as to a favour reserved exclusively for Himself. Wherefore in the face of sacrifice serenity alone was befitting.

And Jesus rejoiced in His felicity and strength.

And still He had His friends with Him.

The Head of the Household and Mark had withdrawn to a little distance, but only whence they could still see the table, and minister to the Christ.

And the Disciples were resting on their elbows, and hanging upon the Rabbi’s words. Only John, with his head upon the Lord’s cool, graciously perfumed raiment, had fallen asleep.

For no longer did the Disciples believe the Rabbi to be menaced with danger: they conceived the words which He had recently uttered, His recent weakness, to have hinted at an occasion which might never befall. Do we not all know apprehensions of the sort which, on disappearing, leave us certain that we have passed the peril unscathed? We can forget even the day of our own deaths. How
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much less, therefore, is death to be thought of in connection with our loved ones?

Hence all were resting in Jesus. For a moment only did Cephas wrest himself clear of his ardent imaginings to remember Judas. Whither was the man of Kerioth gone? John pouted disdainfully, and Thaddæus opined that Judas was gone to execute commissions entrusted to him by the Master in connection with the stewardship. For the day was the eve of the Great Festival, and there would be congregated in Jerusalem not only the native poor of the city, but also multitudes of needy strangers, come in the wake of caravans. Hence, said Thaddæus, Judas must have gone to assist such of the latter as might be Galileans, since certainly the Rabbi would not have forgotten them.

Then, with breast heaving, Jesus expounded to His listeners His glorious Messianic work. That work was almost completed now, and the heavenly kingdom come, and the Father prepared to open the gates of the mansion of happiness.

These sayings brought to the Disciples a serene clarity of joy. As they reclined on their couches, and listened to the promise, Jesus' followers felt as though they were contemplating a landscape over which an ineffably pure and transparent dawn was breaking. They could see, they could touch, in advance the splendour that was to be theirs! And greater was that splendour even than the splendour encompassing the Tetrarch of Tiberias; more desirable even than the wealth held of the Roman Governor at Cæsarea Philippi! Yes, the Rabbi's triumph was going to wrest His followers free of their present poverty! He Himself had said it, and said it with no admixture of proverb or parable—said it in accents in which there had been none of the remoteness or mysticism which formerly they had breathed.
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Wherefore His listeners grew the paler, and withered the more with disappointment, when, turning upon them disconcerting eyes, He went on to warn them that soon He must leave them, in that He must go and prepare for them places in the house of His Father to which, now that they knew the way thither, they must subsequently repair alone, and rejoin Him.

Burst forth Thomas:

"O Master, go not from us, for we know not whither Thou goest, and how shall we know the way?"

Jesus raised Himself on His couch, and, striking a hand against His side, proclaimed:

"I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. Save through me shall no man come unto the Father."

Whereupon, dismayed and astonished that once more the Lord's utterance should have become mystical, withdrawn from visible reality, insistent that the Disciples should seek the house of a father whom they had never seen, Philip exclaimed:

"Lord, show unto us the Father!"

The Rabbi turned, and said bitterly:

"Have ye so long been with me, and so long listened unto me, and shared my life, that even yet ye understand me not? Whoso hath seen me hath seen also the Father."

Then, gazing upon His Disciples, and realising their imminent bereavement, He thrilled with compassion for their weakness. They must be joined together in one if the New Gospel was to attain verity and permanence. Gently He added:

"A new commandment I give unto you: that ye do love one another as I have loved you."

But even as He spoke an immense sob choked His utterance. For His destiny was inevitable. Its avoidance,
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or even its postponement, would undo His work, and stultify all the predictions of the Prophets.

Yearning to understand Him, the Disciples hung upon His words, peered into His sternly courageous eyes, searched their very hearts.

Peter's forehead became a whirlpool of wrinkles; Ze-lotes' as though constricted with a bandage, or plaited into a cord; Philip's eyebrows almost painfully raised; Thomas's eyebrows met in a straight line; Bartholomew's head thrust forward, cold, and stark; the mild, despondent Matthew's resting upon one hand; the eyes of the imaginative John lost amongst the rings of light quivering around the lantern flames.

All waited, waited, for the Rabbi to speak again.

And, smiling palely with the agony of His compassion, Jesus reassured His followers. Never, He said, would they lose Him altogether. Always would His spirit be with them, to strengthen them in their trials.

And now they comprehended Him more. Yet also they grieved more.

And, they said, He must give them some pledge, at once tangible and intimate, of His remembrance.

And He gazed upon them, and listened to them, and communed with Himself. Time was passing. It was passing like a breath of wind. In His soul every sound, every footfall, was awakening echoes. Soon the warnings of Nicodemus and the Head of the Household and the Man of Arimathea would be justified. Close at hand was the abode of His enemies. Even now the man of Kerioth was preparing an ambush. Hatred and death had the Christ encompassed on every side. He was breathing them in, drawing them into His very being, from the very atmosphere that was so soft and dulcet.

"O my Father, my Father!"

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For the Pascal Feast was ended now; gone was the hour so long desired as a last solace; approaching over the moon-flooded earth was the stark and stealthy figure of Pain.

He lowered His eyes—glanced at the neglected table. Two unleavened cakes were lying on it unbroken. His face brightened, and He said in soft, sad, loving accents: “Ye shall not lack me. Ever I will be held in your remembrance.”

And with the slender fingers which the sun of so many missionary journeys had tanned to gold He took up one of the cakes, and brake it into eleven pieces, and placed those pieces upon the second cake. Then His voice pronounced the words:

“This is my Body. Beneath these outward seemings ye shall behold it. It is my Body and my Spirit. Eat of this new manna, and be filled. And what I have now done do always in remembrance of me.”

And as each Disciple received his portion he devoutly, and with many a look upon the bread, consumed it.

Next, Jesus took the cup, which had been set aside after the last libation. And in holding it the aged Head of the Household assisted Him, as server.

Calm and clear the generous wine lay in the lamp-light. And the colour of it was as the colour of blood.

And Jesus’ voice said:

“Behold, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until I be come unto my Father’s Kingdom.”

And, raising the two-handled cup (of agate, and red- gleaming like one of His Wounds), He added:

“This is my Blood. Between heaven and earth it shall seal a bond which shall never be broken. Drink ye of it.”

And the voice which had so often moved multitudes to fervour, and fallen like a grace upon flood and field, broke with anguish.
The Head of the Household

And the Disciples drank, and intoned the Psalm of praise and affliction running:

"By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Zion."

"As for our harps, we hanged them up. We hanged them upon the willows in the midst thereof.

"For they which had carried us away captive required of us a song, saying: Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

Jesus went into the open, and lifted His brows to the night.

From the summit of Mount Olivet there was arising a silvery mist, whilst, lower down, the homesteads of the Mount were standing out against the darkness of the slopes, and above Annabath, blanched in the moonlight, two great cedars could be seen overtopping the surrounding verdure.

In ravines, and beneath the Kidron's bridges, and by the city walls there was showing a glare of camp fires, of the camp fires of travellers who had failed to find room in inn or habitation or cellar.

And over Jerusalem's roofs and cupolas there was stretched a haze of moonlight which enveloped the city like a nuptial robe, and made her resemble a huge, blossoming almond-tree.

Distant horizons untouched, as yet, by the moonlight were showing up dark behind the pinnacles of the Temple. And above those massive, yet phantasmal, adornments of the Lord's House there were scintillating stars unveiled with cloud.

Jesus shivered at He gazed, and His ears caught the groaning of His own spirit.

For the night of Nisan no longer lay between Him and His Agony, and there was approaching over the somno-
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

lent, scented earth the figure of Sorrow. In everything that Sorrow seemed to be. The impact of it caused His breast to shrink back as though smitten with a tide of bitterness. And sublimely He prayed:

"Father, the hour is come. Glorify thy Son, that he may glorify thee. I have exalted thee on earth. I have done the work which thou gavest me to do."

Listening to this tragic ecstasy, the Disciples gazed spellbound.

Jesus stood white and rigid in the moonlight.

The Disciples spoke to Him, and He smiled back at them a smile pale and agonised.

Then He spread His arms above their beloved heads, and cried:

"My Father, my Father, look upon these! They were thine, and thou gavest them unto me, and they have believed. And now that I shall be no more in the world, and they must abide alone, keep them as I have done. None of them is lost save the son of perdition. And as thou sentest me into the world, so send I them. O Father, my Father! I in thee, and thou in me. Righteous Father, the world hath not known thee. But these have known thee, and have loved thee."

The Disciples drew around him like children seeking protection, and, pressed close beside His body, could feel the prayer burgeoning in Him like sap, and springing from His blood, and rising to His lips, and finding flower in speech.

And as Jesus' utterance grew and spread through the night's purity and silence it seemed, though emanating from His lips, to echo to vast distances, and to attain to vast heights, and to permeate everything.

Then He ceased. And as He did so His forehead darkened over, and His hands fell to twitching like those of a man under strong emotion.
The Head of the Household

And in every nerve John's flesh seemed to feel the twitching of those hands.

A louring cloud like a monster escaped from the abysses of Gehenna obscured the moon, and masked the night, and plunged the group of watchers in a darkness through which the lights of the Caenaculum alone showed mournfully. Hoarsely, uneasily the Rabbi's voice cried:

"He that hath money in his purse, let him take it, and sell his clothing, and buy weapons!"

Peter and Zelotes showed Him two short, sharp swords.

"O Lord," they said, "here are two. Take these."

Then the cloud lifted again, and the moon showed clear and high.

And the Lord stood bathed in light. Weak and worn, He gasped:

"Enough. Let us go hence."

And once more He turned to contemplate each quarter of the night before wrestling Himself clear of His delicious ecstasy.

Then He embraced the Head of the Household, and descended the moonlit steps of the terrace.

And the Head of the Household and Mark and Asaph stood by the railings to watch Him go.

Dogs devouring refuse in the outskirts gave tongue, and from a tower there came through the mist the chilly hoot of an owl.

The Rabbi moved towards the Hill of Zion.

The Disciples, on sighting the valley below, drew closer together. For burning in the valley were bivouac fires of homeless travellers. Also, patrolling there were pickets sent out by the Pinkedrin and the Praetorium.

Jesus turned aside, and the Disciples followed, and, skirting the ravine under the shadow of the city walls, descended to the Sheep Gate, the Gate under whose archway, one Sabbath, He had halted to moisten clay with His
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spittle, anoint the paralysed eyelids of a blind man, and
reopen them to the light of day. And certain of the
Pharisees had fallen to disputing amongst themselves as to
whether the miracle had been lawful on the Sabbath. And
to them Jesus had replied:
"Ye yourselves are abiding in sin, and as blind as this
man was before I healed him, so that ye cannot see me.
I am the gate of the fold. Whoso entereth through me
shall be saved, and find pasture therein. I am the good
shepherd, and give my life for the sheep. . . ."
And now, as Jesus halted beneath the crown of the
archway, He said:
"Remember ye the Gate? It is my Gate."

The Head of the Household and Mark and Asaph
watched until the Lord had become lost to sight amongst
the dark walls of the outskirts, and the sound of His voice
had died away, and His footsteps become inaudible. Then
a great loneliness came upon the Head of the Household.
Mark and the servant went to ascertain the identity of
some men who had entered the compound. And presently
they returned to say that the men were servants of Annas' 
household, and guards sent by the Sanhedrin, and that they
had surrounded the garden, and were searching it.
The Head of the Household called for his staff, but,
before returning to his own chambers, turned aside into
the Caenaculum.
Two candles standing on the Triclinium had burned to
their sockets, and the moonlight was slanting across the
floor towards the spot where the Rabbi had lately reclined.
The Head of the Household detached himself from his
son’s shoulder, and walked forward with clasped hands.
And as he did so he was conscious of a great awe or chill:
he had about him a feeling as though the sandals of his
The Head of the Household

feet were treading upon a measureless profundity, and under an ever-mounting roof—his blood, his every bone, had in it an emotion which, unknown and vague, was yet expectant, and conscious of a non-corporeal presence which could pierce through walls, and touch with fingers as light as air.

For that emotion was the emotion of him who had just laid the first stone of Christ's first temple on earth.
The Young Man Who Cast Away His Vesture

"And he answered and said unto him: Master, all these things have I observed from my youth up. Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him, and said: One thing thou lackest, Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give unto the poor. Then come and follow me." *St. Mark* x, 20, 21.

"And there followed him a certain young man in a linen cloth. And they laid hold on him. And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." *St. Mark* xiv, 51, 52.

As Elipheleth left the chamber his parents gazed upon one another with disquietude.

The three sisters of Elipheleth, reclining upon divans, were unclasping their bracelets and silver instep bells and elbow circlets and ankle chains (designed to bind the feet together, and restrict the stride to the gait of the then aristocratic Hebrew woman), and doffing their delicate linen veils, and unfastening the clips which held the braids of hair apart, and casting loose the thorim or strings beaded with gems and golden trinkets and pine-cones which, falling beside the cheeks, curved around the throat, ended upon the bosom, and remained to rise and sink with the sweetness of the breasts. And whenever a catch or a loop proved obdurate in the fingers the maidens helped one another with kisses and laughter in all the delicious disarray of their jewels and tresses.

Yet, though they sported, the maidens ever kept an eye upon their parents, since it was purposely because of those parents’ grief, and for its banishment, that they were creating so much graceful turmoil before the hour of retirement.
Man Who Cast Away His Vesture

And as the mother looked at them her heart relented towards her first-born Elipheleth, even though a spirit of evil seemed to have taken possession of him.

And as she smiled her daughters arose like flowers—filling the room with honey-sweet fragrance of their bodies and pure white smocks and dainty intimacies—in order that the fingers of a mother who still had her dark and vigorous beauty remaining to her might touch them as gently as the wing-tips of a dove, and complete their toilet.

Respected by all, the mother was adored by her husband Elishama, who, as a leading exponent of the Hillelite doctrines, stood high in the counsels of the Sanhedrin, and belonged to the section of Elders privileged by the Mishna to mate their daughters with the priesthood.

As a young man, however, he had become so fired with the words of Judas the son of Shaphan, and Mattathias the son of Margaloth, as to join in the rebellion which had cleansed the Grand Entrance of the Temple of the foul golden eagle placed above it by the aged and disease-stricken Herod. And though Elishama, alone of his co-religionists, had escaped the penalty of immolation with horrible slowness, he had no sooner gained his estate at Jericho at the opening of the season for distilling and fermenting the precious juices of the balsam, when apple and jujube trees are weaving a setting as of Paradise, and there is flowering the rose which, at the love-touch of rain, opens its spun loveliness as to a caressing hand,—Elishama had no sooner gained his estate during that season of prime graciousness and abundance than men of the King's Bodyguard had appeared, and cast him into prison.

For resident in Jericho also had been the King himself, in his country villa of "Cypros": resident for the sake of the kindly airs of the "City of Perfumes."

But ever the King had been in torment. Amid those vernal stirrings of life, amid those vernal scents of earth,
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amid those vernal rejoicings of Creation’s every organism, he had been exhaling only the stench of mortality.

And he had wept also, in that he had known that on his departure his people would rejoice—whereas he had desired them, rather, to grieve: desired it for them even more than he had desired life for himself. And at length he had given orders for seizure of the first-born of all the chief families in Judea, and, on his demise, for their crucifixion, to the end that with the King there should go to the tomb the lamentations of all Israel. And though this last and most ferocious of Herod’s decrees had never been carried out, it was not until Herod’s death that the good Elishama had again found himself at liberty.

And later he had fallen in with a woman of Azariah’s stock, of the lineage of the priesthood, had been so blessed of the Lord as to beget a son and three daughters: Eliphleth, the first-born, Abigail, Leah, and Naomi.

And by these and other comforts of his hearth and home he had been enabled to remember always his past perils and adversities, and to keep clear of the temptations of pride and discontent. And he had become so beloved both of the indomitable Pharisee and of the Pro-Hellenic Sadducee as ever to feel himself “seated at a banquet of peace.”

And ever he had been ready to assist misfortune. And never had he maltreated a dependent, or mocked at a Samaritan. Wherefore both his camel-drivers, and his shepherds, and the workers in his vineyards and olive-groves and wheat-fields and spice-plantations, and the artisans of his loom and forge and pottery and similar crafts had yielded him more zealous service even than was rendered to the King himself.

The houses and estates possessed by this just man numbered three. One was in Jerusalem, near the Garden of
Man Who Cast Away His Vesture

Roses, the only garden permitted to exist within the Anointed City: the second in Jericho, amongst fields of grain, and plots of myrobalan, and clumps of the date-palm so praised of Pliny, the date-palm which has fruit of a milky juiciness productive of honey and wine alike, and is dry, and wrinkled, and large, and tender-fleshed, and exceedingly sweet, and thin and rough of skin, and crystallised outside with sugar, and long, and light, and gracefully curved like the fingers of a woman's hand: and the third estate on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, near the track from Bethany.

It was on this last estate that the family had been living since the day when Elipheleth had begun to be disturbed in mind.

The beginning of that disturbance had originated on a still, warm night during the crystal-clear winter of Jericho. Daily, in that Jericho home of the family's, the young man would offer his shoulder for the support of his father's tired hand, and walk with him around the cultivated plots, and superintend the propagation, pruning, and root-digging of the vines. And Elipheleth duly observed the scrolls of the Elders, and lent his ear to the voice of wisdom, and abode in fear of the Lord. And so much did he delight in the paternal estate as to make it his peculiar office to see to the teams, and to provide for the stock the freshest and most abundant pasture possible, and to furnish the most prudent instructions to the steward. And he never sapped his virility with resort to brothels: he never hearkened to the wiles of the courtesan: he fled ever from toils which are as bitter as wormwood, and as keen as a two-edged sword. However much women with seductive, ringed eyes might await him in dark corners, and solicit him with the words: "I have offered unto thy health a sacrifice, I have fulfilled my vows, and am come to seek and to find thee. Spread and swathed is my bed with Egyptian coverings,
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sprinkled hath been my chamber with aloes and myrrh. Come, let us drink of love until the day shall dawn”; and however much women of the sort “who do eat, and, having eaten, wipe their mouth and say: ‘No evil thing hath been done,’” might offer Elipheleth their shackling arms, and whisper: “Come unto my house. Stolen waters are ever the sweetest. The secret bread ever hath the choicest flavour,” the lad continued to live pleasingly unto God.

Nay, at times, the better to fix the precepts of wisdom upon the tablets of his memory, Elipheleth mortified his flesh with sackcloth and fasting.

But his parents said:
“What aileth our son, our first-born? He liveth encompassed with every blessing, he laboureth in love for us both, he is envied of the young men, and extolled of the old, and praised of Israel’s maidens as their chosen one. Yes he wasteth in heaviness!”

And his sisters wailed:
“What aileth our brother Elipheleth? We do embroider the borders and fringes of his vestments, and anoint his hair, and serve him before he goes to rest. Yet his mouth remaineth closed to speech, and his face looketh as though he were suffering in heart!"

And still heavier grief came upon Elipheleth’s father when that father learned that his son was consorting with exorcists and men skilled in cabalas and dreams. And he inquired on the estate and elsewhere, and discovered a man who, once possessed with a devil, was now in his right mind. And to him this man said:
“I know how it is with Elipheleth thy first-born. Along this road, awhile since, there passed to the Lord’s City a Prophet with whom were men and women. For he was one that consorted with Gentiles and sinners, and ate of their bread. And this Rabbi’s eyes and words had in them a fire which could consume every evil. Myself he did heal
Man Who Cast Away His Vesture

only by fixing his eyes upon my brow. And he railed continually against hypocrites, and said: 'If, on the eve of the Sabbath, we do lighten the burden of one who is not our neighbour, is thereby the Sabbath broken?' And good works he doeth even unto the folk of Samaria, though they be worse than the heathen. He said also: 'Do we transgress if, on the Lord's Day, we carry such straw as an ox may bear, or gather such corn as a lamb may pluck?' Wherefore on the Sabbath Day the Disciples of this Rabbi do gather and eat such grain as seemeth unto them good, seeing that their master hath said that 'man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for man.'"

"Be the fellow accursed!" was Elishama's involuntary interruption.

"Rather, I say that this Prophet is one favoured of Jehovah Himself. And one evening when the Prophet was standing among the children, and laying his hands upon them, and giving them his blessing, Elipheleth came unto him; and, with a lowly obeisance, asked: 'Good Master, what shall I do to obtain eternal life?' And the Prophet turned about, and replied: 'Only God is good. If thou wouldst obtain everlasting joy thou must keep the commandments "Do not kill," "Do not steal," "Do not commit fornication," "Do not bear false witness," and "Honour thy father and thy mother."' And Elipheleth exclaimed for joy. He said: 'All these things have I observed from my youth up.' And the Prophet, smiling tenderly, and looking upon Elipheleth as though he loved him greatly, replied: 'Thou lackest yet one thing. Go, sell thy goods, give unto the poor the price thereof, leave thy house, and follow me.'"

A spasm of grief and horror shot through Elishama. He plucked at his phylacteries, and groaned:

"Accursed be he who beguileth the heart!"

But the man delivered of the unclean spirit cried:
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"Nay, the Rabbi Jesus is a prophet of holiness. Moreover, thy son Elipheleth did depart from Him before that he could speak further—he departed from the Rabbi inspired of Jehovah."

Elishama interjected into the man's eulogy:

"Will this prophet of thine pass this way again?"—then sought his house in gloom.

And later he removed his wife and family to the estate on Mount Olivet.

The women peering from the latticed windows, and Elipheleth and the old man gazing from the flat roof, beheld a band of Passover pilgrims and folk from Bethphage waving olive branches, and shouting for joy.

And inasmuch as it was a time of uprisings, Elishama sent a slave to inquire the cause of the uproar. And the slave returned saying:

"They have mounted the Rabbi Jesus upon the foal of an ass, and his Disciples, and certain men of Gennesaret come for the Passover, and friends of one Lazarus of Bethany are blessing the Rabbi as a prophet of God, and bringing Him into the city. And though the Pharisees sent to bid Him rebuke the people for rejoicing, He replied unto them: 'I say that, should these keep silence, the very stones would cry out.' And they are saluting Him with 'Hosanna unto the Son of David!' and spreading their cloaks in the way, that the beast on which the Prophet is mounted may tread upon the same."

And Elishama, listening, turned pale with contending emotions. And even until Jesus’ company had receded into the far distance—a company surrounded with sunlight and song, and waving branches, as though the folk of a village had been keeping a rustic festival—did he stand gazing.
Man Who Cast Away His Vesture

Then he descended to his garden, and paced beneath his fig-trees. And as he did so he turned to look at his son, and thought to himself:

"He might have been the crown of my old age! Yet is he become the bitterness of my declining years!"

And another day, when Elishama was in the chamber where the priests assembled against the hours of their ministrations in the Temple, there began to penetrate from the Court of the Gentiles a growing clamour.

And Elishama went with some of the Levites to ascertain the cause.

And on the skurim, or keepers of the cloisters and entrances, pointing towards Solomon's Porch, and breathing the name of the Rabbi Jesus, grave disquietude came upon the father of Elipheleth, and hastily he directed his steps towards where the prophet might be.

And a grim and precipitate and sinister figure the old man looked as his hurried tread shattered the silence of the Lord's House, and rang through the repositories for ritual bread and salt and offal.

And, descending to the Gate of Oblations, he threaded thence the arcades, and beheld near the pilasters of the Gate of Susa—a Gate graven of cedar and gold which framed a chip-like vista of the foot of the Mount of Olives—a throng of disputants.

And amid that throng there were distinguishable the sonorous accents of the native Jerusalemite, the thick, guttural speech of the Galilean, and the clear, bright Latin of the Roman fiscal: there mingled the graceful diction of Greece with the clack of the Arab and the Phœnician merchant: there stood forth against the twang of the Syriac tongue the Hebrew of the Hillelite Scribe contending with the follower of Shammai, of the Temple guardian tendering advice to both, of the Rabbin rallying to himself his school, of the bland, exquisite, ironical Sadducee, of the
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stiff, formal, exclusive, heavily vestmented Pharisee (hampered with the thongs of his tēsis or monstrous frontal for the carriage of his phylactery cases) and of the Essene or anchorite brother from the Sea of Sodom—a man clad in a plain white tunic, with head shaven, and girdle hung about with thistles.

And between the turrets of the Antonia Fortress there were flashing the helmets and spears of Prætorian Guards.

Elishama approached the disputants. And as he did so the sound of the voices, and particularly of one voice which overtopped the rest, hurt him as though his body had been so much quick-flesh. And he plunged into the throng, and beheld before him, aglow with sunlight and heat of contest, the Rabbi from Nazareth.

A Scribe was saying to Jesus:

"Which, I pray thee, is the first of the Commandments?"

And Jesus replied (in the Aramaic dialect the warm sonority and provincial stresses and cadences of which fell pleasantly upon the ear, but with all the forcefulness of eyes pressed close to the listener's):

"The first of the Commandments is that thou shalt love the Lord with all thy soul: and the second is that thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

"So to live," the Scribe responded with emotion, "hath virtue greater than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices."

The Rabbi smiled at him as at a friend, touched him upon the breast with a forefinger, and said:

"Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

Elishama fled home. And later, though shy of his son, he spoke with him concerning the Prophet.

But that day he could not rest: he kept thinking to himself:

"If again my son Elipheleth should go and hearken unto that Prophet, he will become lost to us for ever. Terrible
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indeed is the Prophet's mingling of meekness with indignation!"

Clearly, mournfully there came through the evening air, from the olive-groves of Gethsemane, a cawing of rooks. Raucously there echoed along the highway, from Elishama's poultry ponds, a cackling of geese.

The old man returned to his house, and found awaiting him in the portico a Doctor of the Law, a Councillor of the Sanhedrin, with two runners in attendance, and the white mule proper to his Conciliary rank and office.

And Elishama held secret converse with him. Whereafter Elishama called for his own mule, and rode away behind that of the Councillor.

And the mistress of the house kept watch the night through. And as she did so she heard her son ever pacing his bedchamber in the eternal wanderings of doubt.

And when the trees were beginning to stir under the breath of dawn the father returned.

And his features looked old and worn as his wife had never before seen them. And though they were half-concealed by his turban, which had slipped down over his hollow cheeks, she could discern their pallor, and the feverish rings which weariness had drawn around his eyes.

And, seating himself in the great vestibule, he said:

"In the palace of the High Priest there hath been decreed the taking of Jesus. And one of his disciples hath promised to betray him. Gamaliel and Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were for sparing the prophet, but the High Priest cried out: 'Think ye not that one man should perish rather than that all the people should be lost?' And the most of the voices consented to this, and rebuked Gamaliel and Joseph and Nicodemus, and reviled the Prophet."

"And thou, Elishama?" his wife whispered.

Elishama buried his face in his hands.

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"I?" he repeated. "I said nought."
And with that he went to his son's chamber.
Elipheleth was lying plunged in sleep.

Like a young tree growing by the waterside the youth had become. In his joy and exuberance he spoke gently to his sisters, and found them beautiful, and listened with gladness to his old nurse as she related the story of Pilate's arrival from Cæsarea with a Roman mission, and of the manner in which the Gate of Jaffa had thundered with the passage of dromedaries piled and misshapen with delicate condiments for the entertainment of the abhorred Gentiles.

And Elipheleth smiled, and his parents gazed at one another in astonishment. Yet let him leave their side they dared not. No, nor dared they inquire the cause of his sudden elation. They grew easier only when they had conducted him to his chamber, and left him once more to sleep free from disturbing thoughts—as free from them as he had been when a little child. And, as then, so now the whole family prepared him for slumber. His sisters and his nurse accompanied him to the door, and there parted from him with many a kiss and smile. And his father unclasped his girdle and his embroidered robe. And his mother unhooked the brooches of his Magdala-woven tunic. Lastly, both kissed him and departed.

And then the young man, swathing himself in the loose white sindon or night robe which covered him warmly from head to foot, sank back luxuriously into pillows stuffed with herons' feathers, under coverlets of new-born lamb-skin of texture as light as foam, whilst above him, on a jasper bracket over the massive bedstead of Jordan sycamore which defied alike the splinterings of time and the borings of beetle, a lamp burnt with oil scented with juice of young cinnamon leaves and scented rush, and an ala-
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baster window looked coldly upon the surrounding countryside.

And then, opening the stone casement, Elipheleth leaned forth to gaze upon the corn-fields shimmering under the moon of Nisan, upon the stone-paved causeway descending from Jericho, and upon the walls of the Garden of Gethsemene.

Ah, Gethsemene, Gethsemene, the Asher, the "Blessed One," of the young man's fancy! And the Lord Himself had bidden him seek those ancient olive-groves on the day when the Commemoration of the Passage should begin! Holy, holy the name of the Lord God of Abraham!

Towards dawn Elipheleth issued from his home, and betook himself buoyantly, joyously towards the Garden, whilst promising himself once more that soon he would cast off for ever all that he had hitherto held dear.

The Garden was sending up warm odours of sprouting fig-tree and cactus and fennel, and all its atmosphere was an atmosphere as of fresh, delicious water. And above the flats and the high road and the great city the Mount of Olives was standing out against the calm purity of the dawn, with not a ripple raised upon the surface of the silence save by the occasional snapping of a twig, or by the occasional humming of a moth, or by the chance fluttering of a bird.

Heaped upon her heights, Jerusalem lay ponderous, and magnificent, and cinctured with smoke wreaths from caravans crowding her every trackway, with castellated crests outlined against the blue.

Elipheleth's smile towards her was the smile at once of a son and of a lover. Only a race created for her alone could have created her as she was. She was the distillation of a blood stream issuing from herself, and crystallised into a people, into a ritual, and into a God.

Just as Elipheleth was thinking of extending his wan-
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derings to the Mount itself he came upon a man seated on the low wall of the enclosure. As hard of texture as bark, and with cold eyes like pebbles, the man was regarding Elipheleth attentively, and pulling heads from field grasshoppers, and pounding their bodies into meal with a flintstone pestle.

Elipheleth placed a gold coin within a hand as horny and massive as the hoof of a bullock.

And the humble labourer said:

"Elipheleth, son of Elishama, I know that thou ministerest unto the poor with plenteous bounty that is not to be seen of men, nor to be praised of them. Hath, therefore, the word of the Rabbi Jesus come unto thee?"

The young man turned pale. He approached the man on the wall—so close to him that he could scent the odour of his poverty, and touch his coarse sackcloth garment—and exclaimed:

"Wherefore hast thou now named unto me the Rabbi Jesus?"

The man mixed grasshopper meal with some meal of barley and camel's milk—then laid the paste upon a clean stone, and tended the dough, and kneaded it, and basted it with oil. Only when that had been done did he murmur:

"Because the Rabbi Jesus also is one who hath compassion upon the meek and lowly. Of times, when He cometh by the road from Bethany, He halteth before my dwelling, seateth Himself upon my bench, and biddeth His steward Judas give me alms. And when He is abiding for the night in Jerusalem He cometh unto that oil-press, and resteth Himself beneath the olive-trees, and goeth to pray before the sepulchre of His dead, before the sepulchre of the dead of the House of David."

And Elipheleth besought the man, saying:

"Lead me unto such places as the Prophet most doth love!"
Man Who Cast Away His Vesture

Greedily the Gardener inhaled the paste's acid odour. Then he turned to baste it with milk again, and to see whether his oven were yet sending forth a good and steady stream of smoke. Then he set the paste within the oven, and, lastly, moved towards the trundle-gate, and, lifting the thong of the latch, said to Elipheleth:

"Always thou canst enter of thyself, as the Rabbi Jesus doth when He passeth His hand over the wall, and openeth unbidden. From my bench I hear a gracious voice say: 'I am a friend. Peace be unto this house!' And then, though I have none to care for me, I feel as though around me there were the family of a patriarch."

And Elipheleth, walking behind the barefooted, poorly-clad worker of Gethsemane, seemed to see him, despite the cold piercing the man's sorry raiment, clothed in all the love of Jesus.

And meanwhile Elipheleth kept touching trunks and shoots of olive-trees, and picking up pebbles and clods of earth, and burying his hands in lush herbage and shrubs, and turning this way and that in his desire to behold and feel the scene in its entirety. For he kept murmuring to himself:

"Peradventure the Lord Himself hath touched this branch, or beheld, as I, that root which, coming from the soil, is burying its twisted length again? And may not that twig have borne the Master's gaze?"

Until, as he communed thus, the smiling face of the Gardener lost something of its sweetness—lost it as a pitcher loses a few drops of its contents. Said the Gardener:

"The Prophet is able to see into all the secrets of life and His creatures, so that not a leaf may stir on the trees without the will of His Father. But thou canst not share His thoughts."

And when they came to the Gardener's house—a build-
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ing as white and foursquare as a block of limestone—Elipheleth beheld the rollers for straining the brown olive oil, and the Gardener's lantern and yoke and basket and scrip, and his mattress of straw, and his snares for catching marauding foxes, and, in a corner, the hearth and ash-pan which opened like the peel of a fruit, and revealed glowing embers.

And though Elipheleth glanced hastily at these things, he glanced at them also with eagerness, since in them too he hoped to discover traces of the Lord's recent presence.

Presently the voices of two persons called aloud from the road, and the Gardener shouted back a response, and then said, to Elipheleth:

"They are Disciples of the Lord, come down from Bethany. The one of them is John, and the other is Simon Peter."

And when the strangers had waved their staves in greeting, and continued upon their way, the man of Gethsemane went on:

"See how, in gazing, the younger of the twain turneth his head as doth the Master! That he might follow the Master, that man did forsake his boats, his own boats whereon he had kept paid fishermen, and whence he had furnished fish to the aged Annas and the High Priest. Aye, he did forsake riches and home alike. And his mother also followeth the Rabbi."

Elipheleth devoured John with his eyes until the two had become lost to view beyond the Kidron.

Then he said with a sigh:

"Oh that one day things better yet might be said of me!"

And he and the Gardener proceeded onward through the olive-groves until they came to a spot where workers were murmuring under the cypress-trees, and an ass, yoked to a
Man Who Cast Away His Vesture

well-wheel, was causing the conduits to flow amid the wheel's languid creaking.

And then came other olive-groves, and, lastly, at the foot of the Garden, and hemming it in, the living rock, and, hewn in it, a sepulchre with brambles and thistles about its weather-beaten sides, and a whitened top, conspicuous against the sky's sunlit blue.

The entrance-stone to the sepulchre had been rolled away, and from the interior there was coming a scent of new-mown hay, whilst a sickle and a pair of clippers were reflecting brightly a patch of morning radiance.

Elipheleth gazed at the sepulchre, and drank in the atmosphere of the cool, silent aperture where Jesus had been wont to pray. And as he did so there became more than ever borne in upon his mind the thought that he had come to view the Master's most favoured spots. And he exclaimed:

"Once the Master did call me to His side, and gaze upon me as He gazeth upon John. And I—I did basely depart from Him!"

And he embraced the Gardener with tears. Yet even as he did so he felt his breast become renewed with strength, and his chilly desolation of repining give place to a warmth of refreshment and comfort.

. . . . . . . . . .

Buried under skins and coverlets, Elipheleth reviewed his past life, and, amid the night silence, once more promised himself that he would yet attain complete renunciation of all that he had cherished.

Yes, still he would earn for himself a place at Jesus' right hand, and, when all the world was asleep, be able to hold confidential converse with the Master as most favoured subject might converse with monarch. Oh, to be

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even more beloved than John, to be marked of all men, to attain to such a position that if ever the Master should be vexed with some overbold Disciple, he, Elipheleth, might be able to plead, to intercede, on the transgressor’s behalf, and communicate to his utterances a force which should cause all men to marvel, and Jerusalem to cry: “See! There goes Elipheleth, the first-born of Elishama, the most favoured one of the Christ! . . .”

And he leapt from his bed, and paced the chamber. Already he could see himself receiving the homage of the priesthood, and the applause of the King and his captains, and the rapture of Judea’s virgins, and the amaze ment of the great city on finding itself redeemed from Rome through the Prophet’s glorified might.

And he halted before the alabaster window. In his heart there was such a fluttering of awe as almost to choke him. And he sobbed with pure rapture. The Rabbi was approaching. Already could the young man hear His gentle, sorrowful accents. He was coming that on the night sanctified with the moon of Nisan He might present Elipheleth to all the world!

Then, to meet Him, to prostrate himself before Him, to fall down before Him in adoration!—And Elipheleth rushed forth.

And he found himself on the road from Bethany—cold, white, and lonely in the moonlight. And as he turned towards the night’s several quarters he felt like a man lost in a waste of snow.

But presently his courage returned, for to his ears there came a murmuring of voices amongst the trees of the Garden. He approached the enclosure.

The Rabbi Jesus and the Disciples were just passing the oil-press, and the Gardener’s great, rude hand raising a lantern to lighten their passage through the wicket. But
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presently the Gardener's cottage grew dark again, and the Garden lay solitary and intimate in the moonlight.

Elipheleth unlatched the gate of the enclosure, passed within it, and moved towards a spot where shadows of olive-trees joined with, and became merged with, the shadow of the cottage.

Then he tried to draw back again, for the arm with the lantern had reappeared, and then Jesus at the head of His Disciples. John placed himself at the Master's side, and the company moved away towards where the sepulchre loomed darkly amid the obscurity.

A second time Elipheleth nearly turned back when two great birds of night brushed his forehead with a chilly, rapid, noiseless beating of wings.

Yet still he followed in the track of the broken sandal-prints. Then he halted again. Jesus and the Disciples were raising their arms in reverence towards where the Temple stood gleaming like a mighty glacier.

And as the Prophet disappeared within the blackness of the sepulchre's cavity the Disciples laid them down beneath the olive-trees.

Elipheleth crept nearer—scarifying his hands and knees as he did so: then halted again. The Rabbi was returning. He approached His Disciples, embraced them, and gasped:

"My soul is sorrowful! Yea, even unto death!"

And Elipheleth thought:

"Would that He had embraced me also!"

And he clutched at his breast convulsively. Such was the rapture of blood within it that even the night and its tremors lay dulled to his eyes and ears.

Again the Lord moved away—a solitary, lingering figure with head bent.

And as the white spectre withdrew into the darkness of
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the cavern the young man followed it until he had come near to reaching the tomb's entrance. But then weariness forced him to the ground. All his skin was beaded over with nervousness and fatigue, and he thought to himself:

"Here will I abide until I feel that I can go to Him, and beseech His grace, and kiss the hem of His garment."

Jesus reissued from His retirement. Then He re-entered it. And this time Elipheleth was forced to crouch against the swathes of hay, lest Jesus should become aware of his presence.

And a wind arose, and the foliage moaned, and the keen-edged moon cut more swiftly than ever through the tangled cloud-skeins.

Suddenly all the watch-dogs of the cots and sheep-folds on the Mount gave tongue, and there appeared at the bottom of the Garden a ruddy glare as of smoking torches, and, like a bough struck with an axe, the silence parted before an alarm-cry of:

"Rabbi! Rabbi!"

Jesus showed Himself in the open of the night—His mantle inflated with the speed of His coming, and His arms extended. He halted—then spoke to His sleeping friends. A second time the Gardener's cottage sent forth the alarm-cry of "Rabbi! Rabbi! Flee! Oh, flee!" and then all the Garden became a-quiver with tumult of plots being overrun, vine-stocks snapped off, and branches broken. Everywhere men seemed to be crossing and recrossing one another amid shadows projected from flickering, flaring torches which crackled as though caught within their ignition were the very scented vapours of Gethsemane, whilst the distorted shadows of two mules ridden by Scribes went gliding along the ancient walls of the enclosure, and all the trees of the Garden seemed to recoil backwards, and to fall prone upon the terraces.
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Elipheleth, as he darted away, looked like a corpse escaped from the sepulchre. Everywhere hands seemed to be brandishing swords and staves. Suddenly Elipheleth caught sight of Jesus Himself. The Lord, pale and wan in the moonlight and the torch-glare, was swaying to and fro amidst a bevy of fists, and men were fleeing past Him at whom He turned and looked, but who ran the faster, until, gotten safely away, they disappeared amongst adjoining ravines.

Chilly thrills of horror coursed over Elipheleth's shoulders and scalp. His heart seemed to turn in his side, and rise to, and beat in, his mouth. Subtle fingers seemed to catch at his garments. Frenziedly he called aloud, and, as he did so, Jesus, giving His head a slight shake to free it from the encumbering turban flap, turned and fixed upon him eyes humid with pain, yet eyes bright with sudden recognition, with remembrance of a day in Jericho.

And upon that Elipheleth trembled the more—trembled so greatly that his white mantle slipped from him, and he fled naked.

Shadows of trees and shrubs seemed to flit past him like weird birds. Around his panic-stricken flight there seemed to be streaming a vague murmur of walls and fields and sheep-cotes, as though not only he, but everything, were fleeing and palpitating. And the aching of his temples was such as to be like a festering sore, and the grief in his mind such as to be endless, and to communicate itself to all things.

Suddenly arms clasped themselves about him, and he screamed as he had done under the olive-trees, and halted, and turned round, and gasped. Ah! So the Rabbi's gaze was no longer upon Him! Before him were but slaves of his father's household, come to seek and recover him.

And they bore him to his bed, and his parents arrived pale with anguish, and were followed by his sisters with
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their loose braids drawn hurriedly across their bosoms to
veil their nakedness.
And the alabaster casement still was open, and the round,
metallic, icy-looking moon streaming through it.
And Elipheleth cried, quivering with sobs:
"He did look upon me! He did look upon me even as
He did that day in Jericho! Close to the window, lest also
the moon should look upon me!"
Some Guards of the Sanhedrin called aloud from the
highway, and a servant entered with a message from
Caiaphas that forthwith Elishama should attend a Council
of Justice about to be held upon Jesus.
And the old man cried:
"My son, my son! Look upon us, Elipheleth! No
longer is the Rabbi before thee. Let us abide for ever
in the riches of our love for one another, and for the Lord
God of Abraham."
But Elipheleth moaned as he sank upon his father's
breast:
"Leave me not! He did look upon me, and I would
fain be rich, and His gaze did seem to tell me that I never
should be!"
Caiaphas

"Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said: Where is he?" St. John vii, 11.

"But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him: Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" St. Mark xiv, 61.

Heaving, undulating lay Jerusalem beneath branches of palm and willow—branches of the two trees which shaded the Children of Israel during the forty years' wandering in the Wilderness.

The season was the Feast of Tabernacles, and arcades, terraces, booths, alley-ways, and street-joinings all were arbourd over with awnings and sheets and tarpaulins and greenery, in remembrance of the desert's tents and shelters. Whence the great city had about it not only a shadowy, autumnal air, but also a touch of the caravan life, a suggestion of the nomadic existence.

Also, the season was the season of maturity and plenitude, when earth rested after the labours of parturition, and wine-presses were full to overflowing, and resounding with the hum of bees grown fat and unctuous with the sugar of countless grapes, and storehouses and cellars bursting with honey and basketfuls of fruit and all the garnered opulence of the year.

And during that "Sabbatical" month of Tisri the nights and mornings were as sweet and odoriferous as the rough skins of figs and plums, and as richly ruddy as unthreshed grain. And especially at nightfall did the sky become like the blade of a sword in its curvature, in its stark garnishment of translucent gems.

And it was beneath such a sky that Jerusalem now lay
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glowing like a joyous torch in the hand of the Lord. Not a portal but had its brazier, not a booth but had its flare, not a waste-place but had its lamp-stand, not a suburban farm but had its bonfire of delicate, crackling vine leaves.

During the first day of the Feast, the Day of Atonement, the multitude remained plunged in silence and abstinence—abstinence even from ablutions, and from adornment of vesture, and from unction with perfumes “save as toucheth the King and a newly-wedded woman desirous of pleasing her husband.”

Also, on the eve of the Great Day the High Priest underwent solemn enthronement in the Temple’s precincts, that he might remain preserved from all contact with or audition of impurity. And the Elders would stand around him, and read to him the Holy Books, and fortify him with perfumes, and preserve his voice clear, and, if his eyes should seem to be in danger of closing, pluck him by the linen of his robe. For on the eve of the Atonement the High Priest had to take neither sleep nor nourishment if he was to be rendered pure enough to enter the Holy of Holies on the day ensuing.

That year the holder of the office was Caiaphas—a man corpulent of neck, sluggish of blood, and unctuous of mien: a man of such sort that everywhere his bare, spongy feet left humid imprints upon the pavements, as though his corpulence had been melting from him.

And frequently during the night of Caiaphas’ ordeal had the “masters of physic,” the doctors stationed in the Sanctuary to treat priests stricken with the “Levite ill” (an internal malady induced by constant treading with bare feet upon marble flagstones), to minister to this successor of Aaron.

And even when Annas, Caiaphas’ father-in-law, entered the Hall of Abstinence, with, on the forefront of his tiara, or upper turban, the plate of gold inscribed “Holiness unto
Caiaphas

the Lord," it was but heavy eyelids that Caiaphas raised to look at his kinsman.

Simultaneously a cry of pain rang out from within the chamber where was stored the wormproof wood for the burnt-offerings. And Caiaphas shrank back amongst his Elders, and trembled.

The cry had come of the fact that the Prefect of the Temple, discovering the custodian of the ritual wood to be asleep, had applied to the man’s bare body the flame of his torch. And the scorched victim could be heard yelling aloud, and colliding with the horns of the Altar, until, with a final shout of agony, came also the sound of a plunge into the great molten laver: whereupon the High Priest recovered his equanimity, and the Elders resumed their reading.

To the Vigil of Intercession succeeded the Feast proper, when throughout a space of eight days pilgrims arrived at the Lord’s House from every quarter of Palestine, and waved newly-cut branches, and sang praises unto the Lord.

And then the porches of the Court of the Gentiles—columnned with jasper, and roofed with cedar, and floored with red and blue mosaic-work—became thronged with craftsmen in groups, each of which bore the distinguishing sign of its function or office. Thus the money-changers, whose trade it was to barter the half-shekel required for the Sacred Tribute for a pagan coin, wore a denarius dangling from one ear; the dyers flaunted bunches of coloured wool; the goldsmiths and overlayers displayed neck-chains of copper sequins or cut brilliants; the sempsters exhibited a threaded needle; the perfumers and drug-sellers had the girdles of their cloaks garnished with phials of ointment or flasks of scented herbs; the fruiterers paraded with baskets full of citrons and dates and pomegranates and oranges and pears; the bird-dealers shouted their wares amongst heaped cages of turtle-doves and

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pigeons from the *Kanujoth* (as thank-offerings for the woman just delivered), palpitating netfuls of small birds (as thank-offerings for the purified leper), cratefuls of purple- and golden-dyed eggs, and poultry and geese; the pastry-cooks brandished feather whisks for scaring away flies and wasps before they drew from under mats patties made of wheat and honey, or cakes made of raisins and figs and beans and oil; the hucksters shouted at stalls garnished with clay amulets and kettles and cans and pitchers, flat and upright, and Cyprian *amphorae*; and the shepherds (relegated to without the Temple walls, or to the city gateways) brawled amongst monotonously bleating sheep and goats brought thither for the festal markets.

The Court of the Gentiles opened into the *Azarath Naschim*, or Court of the Women, wherein any Jewess might enter, but not the foot of the alien woman—the Pillars of the Law of Chastity debarred her thence. And from that Court the Israelite could, by skirting the Wall of Hell (beside which the thirteen coffers of the Sacred Treasury gaped above flagstones wet with the juice of trampled herbs), attain to the narrow *Azarath Yisrail*, or Court of Israel, where, within balustrades, were performed the ceremonial washings of unclean persons, the administering of brackish water to women accused of adultery, the piercings of slaves' ears, and the consignings of Nazarite hair to the brazier: where, also, after performance of obeisances, pilgrims could proffer their branches for infusion in the Sacred Perfumes, and then lay them aside.

To the *Azarath Yisrail* succeeded the *Azarath Cohenim*, or Court of the Priests, and to this the *Hieron*, or Holy Place, of marble and gold.

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All the steps, walls, and ceilings of the Royal Porch
Caiaphas

and Solomon's Porch, with their arcadings and panellings of bronze and cedar-wood, and their columns of jasper, and their colossal floor-blocks of pink stone laid and mortised in ritual silence, were resounding like a tomb invaded by a rude, clamorous, excited mob.

And upon the Hill of Moriah there seemed to be resting all the concentrated light of a sun flaming and stark and unveiled in the dry torridity of an Oriental autumn morning. It was as though, if a bird had sought to fly athwart the blue, the creature would have fallen shrivelled against those stones and roofs of dust and fire.

And over the kiln of human flesh and tumult and opulence there was ascending, through the glare, the pure smoke of the Oblations—Oblations of virgin myrrh (myrrh produced spontaneously from the tree, without a previous wounding), of onyx, of galbanum, and of Saban frankincense; whilst in wide and vigorous rings was ascending also the tallow vapour of the thirteen bulls slaughtered for the Grand Sacrifice.

Then Caiaphas appeared—a figure glistening with sweat beneath gorgeous mitre and scarlet ephod and twelve-jewelled breastplate and needleworked girdle.

And such a silence fell in the Temple that there could be heard the very tinkling against one another of the little purple pomegranates and golden bells bordering the Priest's robes of the ephod.

And wearily he ascended the twelve steps of Hieron, with tiara drooping over shoulders clothed in Babylonian stuff, and vestmented with the four elemental colours of red for fire, gold for earth, blue for air, and crimson for water.

With equal gorgeousness could there be seen glittering the gigantic vine carved upon the door-posts of the Sanctuary—a vine with branches of the thickness of a man's body, and tendrils of the span of an ostrich's wings.
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And at the moment when the Thirteen Perfumes issued from the Holy Thurible the multitude prostrated itself in a rustling mass of backs and sandals.

And when the High Priest's robe of the ephod tinkled again it meant that Caiaphas was about to rise amid a thundering of trumpeting and Psalm-singing.

Then, for a moment, the arrival of fresh devotees, folk of the latest caravan from Galilee, including Jesus' kinsfolk, cleft aside the throng in the Court of the Gentiles. Yet whereas many persons had been looking to behold also Jesus, seeing that He had failed to attend the previous Passover, and therefore was the more expected at the present festival, He was nowhere to be discerned, and they who hated Him said, remembering that but lately He had healed a lame man on the Sabbath Day:

"He is hiding himself, is this evildoer, for fear of the city."

Whereas they who loved Him retorted:

"Not so. He is a righteous prophet."

Then all gazed upon the newcomers, and inquired:

"Where is the Rabbi? Where is the Rabbi?"

And these murmurings penetrated to the inner precincts, and caused some even of the Levites to leave their ministrations, and come and gaze upon the newcomers. And the strangers flushed the more under this scrutiny, and redoubled their efforts to enter the cloisters.

Particularly, as ministers of the Sanctuary, and, therefore, as men of weight in Jerusalem, did the Rabbins and their schools ridicule the newcomers, and point fingers at them, and cry:

"Where is Jeshua? Where is Jeshua?"

Until, still panting from the fatigue of the journey, and treading more and more upon one another, and gazing in ever-increasing awe upon the oppressive magnificence around them, the Galileans realised to the full their pro-
Caiaphas

vinclial rawness, and winced under the dry malevolence of men who could walk, and talk, and bear themselves with all the self-assurance of habituation to a great city. And so, shrinking within themselves, the newcomers thought of Jesus, of the Father who had never hesitated to face insult and injury on behalf of His people, of the Father whom here men were traducing and slandering. And some even of the latest arrivals themselves began to do this. One, a man with a gashed cheek, muttered:

"We did go unto him, and say: 'The Feast is at hand. Go thou to Jerusalem, and show us if thou be mighty.' But always he withstood us, saying: 'My time is not yet!'—What think ye, therefore? 'My time is not yet!'"

And scornfully the speaker's voice and gestures mimicked the Rabbi's utterance.

And certain of his fellows, repeating the words, "My time is not yet," twisted themselves into mean contortions, and slapped their thighs.

Then the man with the slashed cheek continued:

"And another day I did bring his mother and brethren unto the house where he was preaching. And as in a trance he was. And when I said unto him: 'Behold, thy mother and thy brethren are sorrowing because they have thee not, and are come to seek thee,' he rejected me with the words: 'My mother and my brethren only are they who do hearken unto my sayings.'—So what think ye?"

A Jew glanced malevolently at the speaker, and exclaimed:

"I bethink me that he did well to reject one who resembleth but the rough-hewn stone of a sepulchre."

Whilst a young man in a perfumed tunic added with a gesture of excitement:

"There existeth not the stone which the lice and fishes of Gennesaret could not devour!"
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Then all set about returning to their tabernacles, and performing ablutions, and consuming oil cakes and stewed pigeons and yearling mutton and pickled fish, and circulating cupfuls and skinfuls of wine made from wheat, from fruit, from dates of Jericho, and from grapes of Engedi.

But Jesus' kinsfolk had been so long on the road to Jerusalem that their hands were hanging wearily by their sides, and their feet were caked and heavy with the mire of the Tyropeon.

And when, on leaving the Temple, they traversed the quarter of the cheese-makers, and crossed the ancient bridge between the Upper City and the Hill of Moriah, and descended thence to gaze with fear and admiration upon the splendid Sanhedrin Building and Herod's Gymnasium, and, entering the colonnades of Xystus, threaded the wards of the butchers and weavers, the whole weight of the great, stony, clamorous city seemed to be pressing upon their heads. And, with turbans pulled over their brows, and eyes scarcely raised from the ground as they walked, they sought an inn, where they opened wallets, and drew thence paste of figs and meal, with pomegranates and grapes from the recent garnerings, and consumed those viands amid the dung of camels crouching and grunting beside cribs, with mild pupils turned backwards. And then, this repast finished, they set forth again with tread shuffling audibly through the noisome dust of alley-ways, and clattering under arcades, and foraged in the markets with fingers pierced with the stings of hornets, and then sought the freshness of a vaulted passage-way, and reissued into a sunshine which seemed actually to hum over their heads, and, to avoid it, resought the awnings of the bazaars, where they became bewildered with the cries of hucksters, and were jostled against walls by slaves and porters carrying loads of green stuff and jars of mead. And whenever they met a Roman they made way for him with stares of
Caiaphas
deference: and whenever, seated on the steps of a mansion, they were passed by a Rabbi or a Scribe or a Pharisee ceremonially vested, and brow-bound with sacred parchments, again they rose to their feet, and did him obeisance. And at last, to escape the jesting of the harlots fluttering around the posterns, they issued from the city, halted at the foot of the gate towers, and gazed wistfully along the basalt causeway threading the cultivated lands, and losing itself amongst hills hot, blue, and misty.

And not until nightfall did they return to the Temple.

By that time two huge golden candelabra diffusing perfumes had been lighted in the Court of the Women, and maidens of Israel were dancing, languidly, silently, the prescribed dances, and youths, sated with liquor of fruit and fermented grain, were wreathing themselves in like liturgical exercises, and waving torches. Also, Levites were singing, and playing upon zithers and cymbals, and the multitude intoning hymns. And so the ceremony continued until, raising to the twilight straight-necked sacred trumpets, two priests sounded the instruments and, descending the fifteen steps from the Grand Entrance (each of whose massive bronze door-leaves called for the strength of forty picked men to move them) to the Eastern Gateway, raised aloft four fragrant, resinous torches, turned them towards the west, and proclaimed:

"From this place behind the Temple did our forefathers commit the sin of worshipping the sun. But we do turn ourselves toward the west, and from this place declare upon the Lord God a blessing."

And then all the trumpets of the Sanctuary united in a great, glorious fanfare.

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On the second day of the Feast twelve bulls were sacrificed, on the third day eleven, and on the fourth ten. By
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which time not only the air, but even the very branches and raiment of the devotees, had become saturated with the odours of burnt wool and tallow and flesh.

And meanwhile the inferior priests (priests not of Aaron's blood, of the regular priesthood, but yet fellows as hungry as mendicants through having allotted to them no share of the first-fruits and tithes)—meanwhile these inferior priests paced proudly and superciliously amongst the people, and cursed and denounced the greedy Sadducee (who smiled disdainfully, secure in the enjoyment of office), and cried, as they trailed their rags over the marble floors:

"Vain and extinct are the Sadducee's acts and counsels. Admit hither the Gentile, for short are the days of our life in this flesh. Down with the symbols of chastity and righteousness and simplicity! Down with the taking of thought for ornaments!"

And amid the smoke from the Altar of Burnt-Sacrifices the stately, ceremonial form of the High Priest was scarcely to be distinguished.

A Pharisee in a brown, faded mantle, a Pharisee obsessed with his austere creed, a Pharisee of the sort assigned by the Talmud to the seventh species as "a Pharisee of those who do love the Lord God, and are like unto Father Abraham," raised aloft an arm, and declaimed with Isaiah:

"Saith the Lord everlasting: What availeth me the number of your sacrifices? Filled am I with the savour of flesh-offerings, with the fat of bullocks, and with the blood of sheep. How is the faithful city become a harlot!"

But the old man's voice remained drowned in the turmoil of the Courts.

Suddenly the turbans and branches stirred, oscillated, like young corn pulsing under a south-west wind. And then the crowd parted, and in its midst appeared the Rabbi Jesus—His face white with fatigue, His eyes sunken, His lips tremulous, His hands thrust into His mantle. And even
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as certain trees, though surrounded with other verdure, remain ever isolated and remote in appearance, so, wherever Jesus moved, He left behind Him an impression of solitude. And behind Him came the Disciples, casting about them uneasy glances, and behind them, again, the women who believed in, and ministered to the Christ, namely:

Mary Salome, gaunt, and rigid, and full of fire, with a deep blue sheen in the luminance of her pupils, and her veil tucked into the nose-ring which pierced her dilated nostrils; Susanna, melancholy, and sickly, and smothered in masses of rough, rebellious, jet black hair; Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, self-possessed, and undismayed, and smiling a smile as cold and keen as steel; Mary the wife of Joseph, the Rabbi's Mother, a woman faded, and prematurely old, and ever peering in the direction of her Son's turban; Mary and Martha of Bethany, with eyes showing large and soft and youthful under a whiteness of head-dress and a splendour of jewels; and Mary of Magdala, with flesh apple-tinted, amber-like, and rising and falling beneath her cinnamon-coloured tunic as rises and falls a gracious breeze.

The Rabbi stepped aside from the crowd, and was followed by some of the skoterim and pilgrims. And the priesthood watched Him from the Hall of Blessings, and the Elders and Scribes glared at Him through the pillars forbidding entry to Gentiles.

Opening His arms, He turned towards the assemblage, and spoke as though moved to the heart. And no longer was His voice the warm, confident voice which had pierced through sunshine of eventide vineyard and field-track, and covered hillside, and crossed cottage threshold, and flooded homely board, and soared across Galilee's Lake and orchards. For whenever, in Galilee, the Rabbi had extended His arm towards water, or towards growing corn, or towards a fruit tree, or towards a human being, the move-

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ment had bespoken strong, imperious will-power which had seemed to be creating the object at which it had been directed: but here the Christ stood encompassed with the snares of a city which of old had put prophets to death, and ever a city is a sphere narrow, and limited, and apt to translate amity into ill-will. Nor were there present only persons of simple thought. From the very men who should have cherished Him now came a wounding scorpion-tongue of:

"Jesus, son of Joseph, how comest thou to possess a doctrine of thine own, and to be able to expound the Scriptures, when it is but from a place of ignorance that thou hailest?"

The Rabbi replied:

"A doctrine of mine own, ye say? But that doctrine is not mine own. It is of Him who hath sent me. And if ever ye had sought to approach my Father's glory, and to fulfil His words, ye would have known whether it is of God that I speak, or of myself. For whoso speaketh of himself seeketh only his own glory: but whoso glorifieth another, the same cannot speak falseness."

Pale and attenuated under vestments revealing glimpses of serpent skin, Annas rose and approached the High Priest. And Caiaphas cast off his grossness and somnolence to turn his sumptuous head and flat, spreading beard to listen.

And the Prefect of the Temple likewise approached. And so the three murmured together, looking at Jesus. Jesus exclaimed in a tone of anguish:

"Why conspire ye to my hurt? Why do ye abhor me, and seek my death?"

Whereupon certain men who had come to spy upon Him drew back, and eyed one another warily.

And the Rabbi went on:

"What have I done to make you hate me thus? Is it because, on an Holy Day, I did relieve a brother of his
Caiaphas

suffering? But do not ye yourselves circumcise on the Sabbath Day, according unto Moses' commandment?"

The multitude listened with gladness, for it ever desired of Him instruction.

Nay, some who had been bold against Him now turned to Caiaphas, and said:

"Verily doth this man speak and look as doth none other!"

And Jesus replied:

"Ye know whence I am. Yet I say unto you that not of myself am I come, but of One of whom ye have no knowledge."

Whereupon the people marvelled.

Then, the sixth hour being fallen, priests and people began to crowd towards the doorways. And as they did so they could see smoke wreaths arising from the ditches and waste-places, the smoke wreaths which, on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, furnished the bygone Israelite with auguries. For if those smoke wreaths arose towards the north, their doing so meant that during the ensuing year the people would rejoice, and the powerful grieve, since the sign foretold many rains, and, therefore, fruit abundant, though watery and lacking in flavour. And if the smoke wreaths arose towards the south, the sign meant that during the ensuing year the wealthy would rejoice, and the poor grieve, in that rains would be scanty, and fruit retentive of all its sweetness and perfume. And if towards the east, then that contentment would follow for all. And if towards the west, then that evil events would follow . . .

And so the Rabbi and His Disciples set forth upon the hill track to Bethany.

The men haling Jesus along chose as little frequented a route as possible, in that the Sanhedrin still had fears lest
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the caravan folk from Gennesaret should arise against His taking.

Wherefore the men entered the city below the steeps of Ophel, threaded the ancient, sunken streets of that quarter, plunged into the obscurity of the arched Tyropeon, and so reached Annas' house.

The slave-woman on guard at the janua or principal door (a door of elm-wood inlaid with bronze) closed the door's two halves as soon as the Rabbi had entered, and thenceforth opened no more than a wicket-gate, and that only when inspection had first been made through a peep-hole.

And when John arrived he was permitted to enter, for the reason that for long past he and his brother had furnished fish for the dignitary's table, and were well known to Annas' servants: but that night John came accompanied by an unknown man in a cloak whose arrival led the woman to seek to stop John with the question: "Is this man also one of the Rabbi's people?" John, however, before she could do so, pressed forward, and opened and passed through the ostium or inner door. Whereupon the stranger, finding himself alone, and fearing to be left so, thrust aside the slave-woman with the cry:

"Woman, let be! I know not what thou sayest."

But she clung to his mantle like a teasel, and called upon others also to come and view the man.

And though Peter heard John call to him from within the ostium, and again sought to join him, he yet found himself in the outer hall, with none present but the attendants. And upon that he became seized with a feeling of strangeness—of being cut off, of being suspicious of everyone, and of himself being an object of suspicion. And the very lanterns in the dim alcoves seemed to join the lofty gallery and echoing alabaster floor in expressing courteous insolence. If he remained still they seemed to
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mock him with the words: "So thou fearest to walk about!" and if he made any sort of a movement they seemed to dog him with a gaze saying: "So thou flutterest about like a jessed bird! Thou treadest as though on sackcloth!"

And, to avoid tripping over his mantle, he had actually to tuck up its skirts. And, anguished to the point of sickly, clammy sweat, he cried inwardly:

"What of the Rabbi? What of the Rabbi? Here are they holding Him from us, that He may not return unto Bethany, and seat Himself again in our midst! Yet how often He hath passed His fingers over the grass of my court, as over the brow of a sleeping sister, and bidden us keep silence as the sparrows awakened with tumult in the trees, and He sought to listen unto them!—And He is—here! Would that I might die!"

Then he gave a violent start, for the slave-woman had just brought the butler into the hall, and shown him the Disciple by touching Peter upon the collar of his rough sackcloth garment. And there had shot through Peter a damp and chilly spasm as though an asp had bitten him.

And the slave-woman said to the butler:

"Is not this man also one of the followers of that evil prophet?"

And the man grunted in accents as deep and flaccid as the reverberations from a well:

"It is truth that thou speakest. He hath not been here before, yet belongeth, nevertheless, unto the Rabbi."

And Simon, with a wry smile, shrugged his shoulders.

Then other menials came and kindled coals in a mangal or round copper brazier with flexible handles. This because the nights of Nisan were apt to burnish the soil of Jerusalem with frost, and the present night was to be spent in waking.

And as the coals sparkled and crackled, and shot short
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blue flames over the faces of the serving-people, the features of those faces showed like dead flesh, and the faces grinned at the newcomer like faces of corpses.

Once more Peter glanced at the pillars fronting the inner building. Hitherto there had been coming thence a glow of many lights, and a sound of many voices: but now there fell a sudden silence like the silence of persons apprehending a tumult; and for a moment the head of John showed itself. Instantly Simon made as though to regain his friend: but, as before, he found himself unable to stir for the stiffness born of the sense of being watched. Whereupon, not daring to remain quiescent, nor to flee, nor yet to go in search of John, but longing still for tidings of the Master, he dragged himself towards the servants, and, arrived within their circle, crouched down before the brazier, and with a humble look stretched his hands in its direction.

An elderly, pock-marked slave with a beard as full of patches and clots as the fleece of a scabby ram inquired of him:

"Hast thou seen thy friend the prophet? Young is he, whereas I am wellnigh spent. Yet would I not exchange my span of life for his."

Whereupon, the Disciple remaining silent, the rest began to exhort him, saying:

"Hearken unto what he is saying unto thee. He is speaking of thy master."

At length the remainder of Simon’s self-control gave way, and he cried:

"My master, ye say? Why, I do not so much as know the man!"

"But thou art a Galilean, as are the rest of His people? Or, if thou be not, then say ‘hâmôr’¹ and ‘hâmâr.’²"

¹ Dull or stupid fellow.
² Wine.
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"Aye, and 'tēi ôkelid' ⁸ and 'tōkelik'." ⁴

And when Peter obeyed all cried out:

"A Galilean he is! A Galilean he is! Always doth the Galilean say 'hāmōr' and 'tōkelik,' in that he hath a rough tongue, and it turneth heavily in his mouth."

And they stretched their necks, and flaunted their laughter, and belched upon him the odour of their stomachs.

Simon gnashed his teeth with loathing. In his stiff frame every socket yearned to open out and gyrate like a frenzied windmill.

Suddenly a scullion bounded forth from the inner chamber where the concourse was, and where many lanterns and torches were glowing. And, one who bore upon him the brand of Africa, the scullion said as, shorn and greasy, he chafed his rugged breast:

"Heard ye the smiting on the face awhile since? Verily the hands of Javan and his Guards are mightier than a crossbow, and the poor Christ standeth as marked as I."

A glimpse of John appeared behind soldiery, and this time Peter succeeded in following John's blue mantle, which the Disciple always wore folded across one shoulder, as the Rabbi did.

"John, John!" Peter cried.

And his friend turned about, and Peter perceived John's cheeks to be ashen, and running with sweat, and his eyes blazing, and his lips tremulous, and white, and bitten to the bone, above his virginal, pale, downy, dry-moss-like beard.

"John, John! What of the Lord?"

John wrung his hands, lowered his eyes, and groaned:

"They have been beating the Lord! They have been beating Him!"

And the Disciples gained the janua. Thence they per-

⁸ Come, and I will give thee to eat.
⁴ Give thyself to eat.
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ceived the High Priest's palace to be lighted up, and the icy-white face of the Hill of Zion to be growing red with a glare of torches in the moonlight.

Then the Disciples were swept aside with a rush of people, with a gust of lanterns and smoke wreaths and mantles and uproar.

And as they clung together they cried:
"The Rabbi hath seen us! The Rabbi hath seen us!"

On reaching the steps of Caiaphas' mansion, the Disciples were approached by a slave, who held to them a lantern. Whereupon John turned back the flap of his turban, that he might be recognised as one who attended thither with basketfuls of fish from Gennesaret.

And, that done, the two gained, through a corridor stark and cloistral and drear, the outer hall, in the centre of which a marble bason lay reflecting an ancient orange-tree. Beside the tree, like a petal fallen thence, a glow-worm was huddling to the fountain, and stretching itself in enjoyment of the grateful spray.

Assembled were constables and attendants of the Sacerdotal Chamber; groups of Levites and Masters of the Law (with robes liturgically pleated); warriors of the legion come with Pilate from Cæsarea—men who periodically cleft the hall's austere, depressing silence with departure upon patrol, men who, thunderous, upright, and haughty in the splendour of greaves and swords, ever felt that their bare legs were treading a tributary soil; and folk of Jerusalem, murmuring at all things admiringly, and present because, now that the Rabbi's friends had fled for concealment to ditches and torrent beds and ravines, and that the arraignment and mocking in Annas' house had shown a tumult to be no longer a danger, and that the majestic functions of the Sanhedrin might continue to be manifested in
public, the slaves guarding the entrance to the building had had their instructions modified.

With kefas or turban flaps drooping upon their shoulders, John and his companion walked slowly through the mansion. At every sound they turned about. And whenever they raised their eyes to the firmament above the mansion's storeys and pinnacles there recurred to them memories of nights spent in Galilee. And then they wept.

And just as the first crowings of cocks (birds not allowed to be kept within the city's confines) had begun to rend the distances, the towers on the city walls sent forth fanfares of Roman bucinae as the guards were changed.

Then the hall's arched beams and pilasters began to glow with reflected light, and, amid the torches which had been diffusing that light, and now cleft the obscurity of the hall, there entered Annas, and, about him, his sons and some Conciliary officials and slaves. As Ab Beth Din, or Father of the Court of Justice, he now stood next in dignity to the Nassi or President of the Sanhedrin (who was Caiaphas), and so to the High Priest. And as he stepped within the hall the sopher or student for a Mastership who was carrying his hierarchical staff of imperishable satinwood and mother-of-pearl spoke something in his ear, and he turned his gleaming turban of black silk embroidered with silver to scan the Galileans.

And they made him obeisance, and joined themselves to his train (whilst its members eyed them closely), and, with it, ascended, through a passage-way of cut stone, to an upper chamber with bare walls and a ceiling veiled with hangings of a beauty fit for Solomon's gallery, where candelabra were diffusing perfumes of scented oils.

But as soon as Peter entered the hall a withered hand caught him by the girdle, and the elderly slave with the clotted beard hissed into his ear:

"Strive not against me. Thou canst not escape."
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And he led the Disciple out into the hall again, where menials were assembled around the orange-tree, and listening to words spoken by Javan, Captain of the Sanhedrin Guards. Also, a slave-woman came and kindled a heap of palm boughs which sent flickers of light across the heads and garments of the bystanders, and made their figures foreshortened and distorted, and the waters of the marble basin glow with a reflection of the fresh, green orange-tree, and of the form of the Disciple as the aged slave impelled him thither, which seemed to be shot with fire. Said the slave:

"Look ye upon this man, for he likewise doth belong unto the Nazarene Rabbi, and was with us in the house of my Lord Annas. And that he would come hither also I knew well: wherefore have I followed him as though he had been a fox escaped."

Whereupon, the better to scan him, Javan picked up a lighted twig. Then he said:

"Aye. And I did see him in the Gardener's house in the olive-garden."

But Peter turned about, and, glowing with the firelight and with rage, smote upon his jaws and temples, and cried:

"Thou liest! Thou liest! Be I accursed if I know the man!"

And, with teeth chattering with repugnance, and the blood thundering in his swollen neck, he could have rent the rascals for their unbelief. And because of that unbelief he exclaimed the more, and then again, and, on hearing his own voice, again, and yet again and again.

Until, alarmed, the servants fell to mocking him, and saying:

"Lo, thou art howling like unto a trapped wolf!"

"Or as one possessed with a devil! Enter thou unto a tomb!"

"Whence thy prophet may deliver thee!"

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And all spat into the fire, and withdrew to a little distance.

And others, panting with haste, entered from the inner chamber. And one of them cried:

"He is as though dead. No longer is he the man who walked thus vaingloriously in the Temple!"

"Then let the people be called upon. Haply they may deliver him!"

"Not so. Since the hour of the proclaiming of his Anathema in the synagogues hath all the people held him in abhorrence. . . ."

Cocks in distant rural homesteads heralded the dawn.

The audience chamber lay filled with mist from the emanations of the crowd.

From the balustrades around all that could be discerned was a palpitating mass of turbans and tissue tiara horns.

And above them a ragged, faded turban—the turban of the Rabbi, amid a ring of steel-shod casques.

Annas' sinuous figure glided hither and thither as he spoke to the Judges, and in the centre of the hall the inert, sluggish features of the Nassi glistened like a greasy sponge.

Unhastingly a Scribe was reciting something. And whenever he paused in his task there resounded, amid the silence, two strokes of Caiaphas' staff upon the floor. And then the Scribe resumed his Psalmsic recital, and again the recital died away, and again Caiaphas' staff rang twice upon the flagstones.

Always the same words, and always the same strokes, that there might be presented any possible allegation on the Accused's behalf.

But nothing answered to the pauses save silence.

John pressed his fists against his shame-stricken forehead.
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Then a Master of the Law summoned the witnesses for the prosecution. And as he did so he named two names: the names of Ananias and Akaziah.

And the two men cited appeared. The first, a man as lithe and active and restless as a bat, advanced with rapid, mute salaams, and placed himself by Jesus’ side. And the other witness, a man coarse and rugged, with eyes half-hidden beneath a soiled hood, was forced to halt before ascending the marble entrance-step, and ponderously to balance himself.

Then the first of the two witnesses extended a hand towards the Accused, and, thrusting forward a pointed beard, deposed that:

“This man hath said: ‘I will destroy the Temple of God within three days, and raise it without the help of men’s hands.’”

And in agonised abhorrence at the blasphemy all cried out:

“It is the iniquity of iniquities! It is the iniquity of iniquities!”

And turbans and tiara swayed to and fro, and the Judges and the people bent voracious eyes upon the Rabbi.

But He stood, as before, with eyelids lowered, and only at times raised His bound hands to clear the hair from His cheeks. Whenever He did so He disclosed to view raw, livid swellings.

And the second witness testified:

“I have heard this man say: ‘I could destroy the Temple of God within three days, and build it anew.’”

And this gave rise to added tumult, though tumult of a more pointed intent, since the Israeliitish tribunals of the day demanded such exactitude of depositional agreement that, “if a Jew shall be accused of worshipping the heavenly light-giving powers, and one witness shall testify that ‘I saw him bow the knee unto the sun,’ and another witness
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affirm that 'I saw him adore the moon,' the accusations of the twain shall, together, lack validity of justice.'

Hence everywhere in the hall men began to dispute on the score that:

"To say 'I will destroy the Temple' is a threat against the Lord God, and mortal blasphemy; but to say 'I could destroy the Temple' is not so, in that the Temple was wrought of the cunning of Herod the Great, now dead: and how shall one man overthrow what many have erected?"

And all gazed once more upon Jesus, who now was standing with eyes lowered, but head coldly erect and motionless. Only the points of His elbows were quivering under His mantle.

Annas' black turban moved again: and as it did so the Elders and Scribes and Levites increased their uproar, and the President engaged in rapid colloquy.

And the two witnesses spoke again. And this time they spoke in identical words.

And someone cried:

"Jesus, son of Joseph! Jesus of Nazareth! Answerest thou nothing?"

And it was as though, amid the tense silence, Jesus' wearied breathing circled the whole chamber.

Glances passed between Annas and Caiaphas. Then the High Priest drew himself together, rose above all, and approached Jesus with a shuffling of sandals and a tinkling of sumptuous vestments. He raised aloft his arms, and cried:

"Herewith I adjure thee that thou tell us whether or not thou be the Christ, the Son of God, whose Name be for ever blessed!"

And he bowed his head at the Name. And all present did likewise.

The Rabbi trembled for a moment. Then, quoting
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David and Daniel, He said in stifled accents, whilst at times a dry cough of pain choked His utterance:

"I am he. And the day shall come when the Son of Man shall be lifted up upon clouds of glory, and seat himself on the right hand of God the Father."

Springing to their feet with faces of horror, the Judges stopped their ears, and cried:

"The abomination of abominations! The abomination of abominations!"

And all stood petrified as Caiaphas clutched at his breast, and the rending of the Sacred Vestment was heard.

Annas rearranged his son-in-law's clothing with hasty fingers, though the folds of the Vestment still gaped like the ripped belly of a bullock. And the Nassi's voice rang out, saying:

"This man hath blasphemed in our very presence. Of what further testimony have we need?"

And whilst Caiaphas remained standing, stern and forbidding, the priests and Scribes vociferated:

"He is worthy of death! He is worthy of death!"

John, worn and half-fainting, left the hall. As he halted at the entrance-door he wrapped his kefa closely around his neck, to conceal his convulsive sobs.

Dawn was breaking, and reawakening Jerusalem to joy.

On every track-way and terrace leading to the Spring of Gihon a throng of slaves and women was bearing pitchers, and caravan-men driving beasts laden with panniers full of dripping, bulging water-skins. And in the gateways of the city street-vendors and travellers and legionaries were assembling.

And, to salute the new day dawning upon the Rock of the Rose of Hebron, the trumpets of the Temple joined in a grand clarion call.
The Nazarene Who Saw Jesus Weep

"And they rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill, that they might cast him headlong." St. Luke iv, 29.

Throughout the Days of Unleavened Bread Jerusalem gave herself unto the Lord, and the Lord, opening His hearths like the arms of a patriarch, welcomed therein the Sons of Israel. Yet not every family could find room in house, or under archway; and therefore many had to turn back from the city walls, and pitch tent or shelter in moat, or under bridge, or on waste ground.

And during the perilous, seditious years preceding the fall of Jerusalem the city became more than ever populous with pilgrims for the Passover: so much so that when King Agrippa desired to make an estimate of the aggregate, and said to the priests of the Temple: "Divide ye from every lamb sacrificed a rein," there were divided thence (although of every Paschal supper there partook from five to twenty persons) reins to the number of six hundred thousand.

And previously heralds from the Sanhedrin would traverse all Palestine to proclaim the festival, and workmen leave their workshops, and landowners their estates, and women their garden-plots, to repair the roads, and cleanse the cobble-stones of dust, that the inevitable hardships of thirst and weariness might be lessened for the caravans, and whiten the sepulchres until they stood out clearly enough to be avoided of the pilgrims, and prevented from communicating to them ritual impurity.

And mountains and flat lands and desert wastes all would begin to re-echo with sacred song, and no one be left in
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village or homestead save such persons as could not travel —the mained and the deaf and the blind and the demented and the very old and "such young children as, for the ascending of Mount Moriah and Olivet, their Father would take by the hand, or raise upon his shoulders."

Judea of the period was a land "where the rocks are of iron, and in whose mountains" (mountains broken, jagged, excoriated, and red-hot: mountains resembling the charnel houses of a vanished world) "copper is delved and wrought"; a land of hills smooth-sided and conical-topped like military tents, and of territories intractable, and scarred, and slashed with wadis and dry torrent beds; a land of infinite silences; a land of groves of wild fig and cactus and thistle; a land where swarms of lizards and scorpions rustled and scraped across the calcined soil; a land of terrain of ashes and scoriae and gypsum pits and shale that was good only for vines and figs; a land of hard, unyielding desert, of boulders sunken amongst dwarf palm and reed; a land of wastes blinded with dust storms and billows of smoke-like sand; a land of calcareous highlands studded with shaggy tufts of wormwood, and with spreading outcrop, and with deep, notched ledges of basalt, and with belts of long grass and cane and Egyptian papyrus; a land where at first the river Jordan was wide, and turbid, and viscous, and halting to curdle itself around islets of ooze and weed from whose overhanging roots of poplar and tamarind kingfishers gazed upon the current in hungry immobility until, with sudden dart and plunge, the bird dived headlong, and rose again with a fish quivering in its mandibles, and chewed the fish as its wings skimmed the surface in swift and noiseless flight; a land where, further down the course of the river, there occurred quiet flats, and plantations, and brick- or limestone-built hamlets, and tilled fields, and fresh crops; until, as the river broadened further, and increased the speed of its flow, and began to
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become oxidised with silver, and to be coated with slime, dry rocks of vitreous composition were met with, and then the Sea of Sodom—a lake sunken, and oleaginous, and so dense as to support a man without swimming, and hemmed about with shores whereon members of the Sect of Essenes mortified the flesh and meditated with unseeing eyes seeming ever to be penetrating infinite vistas, and where from boulder and shingle and shallow pool there would arise with the harsh, silence-cleaving cry which resembles the bray of a wild ass the melancholy, monstrous silhouettes of pelicans.

Yet Judea also was the land of the forceful, imperious Tribe of Judah, a territory of kings and prophets, the home of Gaza the victorious, of Jericho the dainty daughter of the moon, of Engedi the distiller of wines and balsams, of lofty Hebron the keeper of the Patriarchs' tombs, of Joppa who laved her shores in depths of azure ocean, and of Jabneel the oldest of the Rabbinical schools.

And when the Passover was drawing nigh both the Judea of green pasture-land, and the Judea of brown cultivated plot, and the Judea bordering upon the Mediterranean would vomit upon roads and trackways pavemented by Solomon, and cut and driven by him through solid rock and over scarified desert face, a dust-blinding eruption of men and beasts, whilst by night the shaggy creatures of the wilderness howled frenziedly at the lanterns carried by the caravans' guides, and pilgrims saluted their camp fires with the song of praise commemorative of the pillar of flame which once walked before Israel.

And the same with Perea: Perea the refuge and breeding-ground of many races; a territory where the Moabite, the Ammonite, the Greek from Macedonia, and the Syrian Greek had taken up their abode; a territory where every extant strain of Gentile stood mingled with the True Believer; a territory of mastic groves and olive-
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orchards and tare-plots; a territory of dry, rugged valleys running down to the Jordan; a territory of cities with myrtle-trees and idolatrous temples and images and grottoes sacred to Pan the goatherd deity; a territory where Machærus, the massive fortress which once had seen the blood of John the Baptist spurt upon its stones, overlooked all the countryside; a territory alike Semitic and pagan; a territory where all roads came together for the passage of the river; a territory which embraced both desolation and abundance; a territory which, on the approach of the Days of Unleavened Bread, set forth en masse for Jerusalem.

And Samaria: Samaria, the land which, though fresh with idyllic meadows and orchards and snowy, perfumed showers of blossom, was nevertheless so abhorred of the Jew as to have given rise to a Jewish saying that “even a morsel of the Samaritan’s bread is fouler than all the flesh of swine”; a land once re-peopled by Shalmanezer with immigrants from Babylon and Cutha and Hamath and Sepharvaim—men who, though calling themselves Israelites, and following the creed of Israel, and reverencing the Pentateuch, were yet so contumacious of the Temple as to raise a Sanctuary of their own on Mount Gerizim, and to allow their priests to intermarry with strangers, and to join with the Jews such an implacable feud that thereafter no Jewish caravan could take the road through Samaria, but was forced to leave that road to the hordes from Decapolis and other alien parts whose principal object in attending the Paschal Festival was gain of booth and bazaar, and traffic in and exchange of merchandise, and titillation of the senses with the public executions carried out at that season in accordance with the Deuteronomical injunction that “all the people shall be present thereat and tremble.” And when these alien caravans passed through the country the men and women of Samaria would mount to their roofs, or assemble in ward or open
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space, to view the motley of merchant-adventurers, craftsmen, gamesters, musicians, herdsmen, soothsayers, and courtesans as they came filing past. And sometimes, also, the court of Herod Antipas would take that route; when the very red of the causeways, and the very blue of the air above, would become gleamingly resplendent with magnificent fabrics, and jewelled standards, and chased camel-thrones, and lances garlanded in thyrsus fashion, and tissue mitres and turbans of the gorgeous hues of birds of paradise; when the passage of the court’s supercilious, sybaritic voyagers would convert Samaria’s fields into such veritable pleasauntes that for long afterwards Samaria’s maidens would stand gazing and gasping, before, pale and thoughtful, they returned to the patriarchal simplicity of their own homes, and once again heard shut down the silence which the gallant spectacle had cleft as the golden prow of a ship cleaves the ocean, and realised that left to them thenceforth was only the aroma of a delight gone by, of a lover departed.

And, lastly, Galilee: Galilee, the land prolific of every species of tree and vegetable growth, whether of the rank, deep-rooted species, of the species rooting itself in gravel or chalk, of the species flourishing on terrace or in sheltered enclosure, or of the species loving to overhang banks, and mirror itself in the waters below; Galilee, the land of timbered torrent beds where soil and sunshine and water all were redolent of juicy verdure, and heavy with the perfume of privet and flowering orange, and with the subtle, pulverous odour of myrtle, and with the ranker aroma of the gum-bearing Cretan cytisus, and with the honeyed sweetness of the rose, and with the savour of fresh root and mother earth; a land in which was no uncultivated or fallow plot; a land where the orchard fruit was of such a flavour as none other in Palestine possessed—so much so that during times of festival in Jeru-
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salem that fruit was forbidden to be exposed for sale, lest dwellers from the more arid regions of the country should covet the produce to excess, and praise it, and say: "We will sell you our all for no more than a taste of your fruit"; a land where the fruit acquired its rareness of flavour and perfume from irrigation of hot, sun-scorched soil with snow-water melted from off Father Libanus, and filtered and refined by subsequent passage through rocks and sweet, aromatic meadow-land; a region of mountain and plain where the hamlets of Zebulun and Gennesaret so adjoined one another as to form a single joyous whole, and to be able to hear one another's speech, and to live in a self-contained belt of track-ways and gardens; the land where spirit and hand were swift to respond to confidence and generosity, and the widow could remain all her life on her dead husband's hearth (whereas in Judea she had to depart thence, and to restore her dowry), and where once there dwelt an Elder of Beth-Shean (the town concerning which a Rabbin put it on record that, "if Palestine be Paradise, then is Beth-Shean the door thereof")—there dwelt an Elder who, though originally blessed with many possessions, went forth, one day, to transact affairs, and returned home poor, but to whom, each morning, thenceforth, the inhabitants brought the breast of a fowl, in that such had been his usual sustenance during the season of his prosperity; the land whose native was so responsive to emotion as to pass easily, like a boy, from rage to enthusiasm, or to hesitancy, or to self-deception, yet whom Jerusalem rendered instantly self-diffident and backward and distrustful, in that he knew the haughty, subtle, formal Jew of the Metropolis to be viewing his simplicity with contempt, but who, on the approach of the ensuing Passover, would speedily forget his previous year's rebuffs and humiliations, and once more cause Galilee's
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roads to resound with his caravans, and feel Jerusalem the Holy again to have become a living force in his soul.

In Nazareth there was rising to the white, gleaming heavens the turmoil due to a general vacation of domiciles.

Dromedaries and mules and oxen and asses all were making for the village fountain, or, arrived there, drinking with necks outstretched beneath the packs of provisions or clothing (and, in some cases, whole families) which rested strapped across their loins. And foals were skipping behind their dams, and watch-dogs barking, and voices of women contending against the voices of men engaged in raising and securing the pack-saddles in place. And in every such cry or salutation there was a raciness of the soil, and from every threshold there was issuing a pilgrim laden with staff (or crook) and cooking-pots and waterskins and bundles of firewood and wallets of palpitating, fluttering birds or complaining infants—these last because some of the women of the caravan were to fulfil their vows of delivery in the House of the Lord, and undergo purifica-
tion. Only persons debarred from travelling by one or another infirmity—the leprous, the crippled, the diseased, persons through whose wrappings showed rent and dis-coloured flesh—were mounting to the housetops to view the departure.

The maidens of Nazareth were standing grouped around the Rosh Hakenesseth or Chief of the Synagogue, who, with the Chazzan or Reader, was to act as leader of the caravan. In the village square two aged fig-trees were trembling and cracking beneath the weight of boys and mendicants perched upon it to witness the start.

As day broke clear, and the sun cast his first beams upon Nazareth’s mountain, the Chief of the Synagogue raised
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clasped hands, and sent his voice soaring over the village like a raven.

"Hallelujah!" he cried. "The Lord keep thine entering in and thy going out! Praise ye Him who hath created the great givers of light!"

And the multitude responded with:
"For his mercy endureth for ever!"

The Chief of the Synagogue continued:
"He hath made the sun to rule the day, and the moon and the stars to rule the night."

And, as before, the multitude responded with:
"For his mercy endureth for ever!"

Then a camel was brought forward for the Chief, and, mildly turning its head to lick the bunch of water-skins suspended from its saddle-bow, the beast doubled its haunches beneath it, and the Chief of the Synagogue mounted—a figure white all over, with white beard, and no other colour showing save on the high bridge of his cold, sharp, yellow nose, and in the glint of his small black eye pupils.

And then every lane and enclosure broke into a quiver of voices and brayings and hoof-thuddings and camel-paddings, whilst dust flew upward, and odours of human beings and forage spread far and wide. For setting forth from Nazareth was the great Paschal caravan, in a huge, slow-moving, clamorous, closely marshalled cortège. And as it started upon its way over the countryside the sun, now broadened, and as ruddy as a wood fire, beat fiercely upon the bedunged hides of beasts still dribbling streams of water or spumes of milk from their lower lips, and upon heads nodding gaily under hoods of festival cotton-stuff, and upon koufehs, and upon blue-striped and -spotted linen shawls, and upon wine-coloured mantles, as, alternately lengthening and contracting, the shadows of the
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caravan fell upon ridge and wall and young vine-crop and newly-sown wheat.

And when a turn of the track was reached Nazareth became visible in her entirety, with houses crudely silhouetted and stark and square and luminous, and roof domes rising to the blue like women's breasts—a village swathed and huddled in folds of white stone, and resting upon a compact circle of green hills, and girdled with garden-plots and patches of cultivation, with fences of flintstone and bramble, with strips of vine-yard and seed-crop and terraced ridge, with sowings of tare and almond bean, and with masses of golden asphodel and violet iris and crimson scabious and purple crowfoot, all bursting into juicy colour.

And here a bank could be seen, and there a blueness of stubble, and there a field-path, and there a palm-tree, and there a round-topped sepulchre, with Nazareth vivid, and gleaming, and sharp-cut, and couched and rioting in the pink and grey and violet and crimson of her trees and wheat-fields and aloes and anemones and orchids, with beyond them, again, her gilded mountain, and the white doorposts of her synagogue showing up beside bushes of flowering broom and the adjacent well of purification.

The Chief turned and waved his staff towards the synagogue's portico. And as he did so every head was bent in reverence. Then he said:

"Behold also yonder dwelling, left desolate and in ruins. Once that dwelling had abiding in it a servant of God: but now there abide there but bats, and I myself have seen them hanging from the broken beams. From the hands of that just man came there, of old time, your ox yokes, and the troughs wherein ye kneaded your bread, and your bushel measures, and your coffers, and your staples. But now the walls of his workshop are falling,
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and his kinsfolk of the family of Jacob, the grandson of Matthat, have fled before the malice and the reviling brought upon them by Rabbi Jeshua. Joseph came hither a brief while after that I myself had joined the synagogue. And a man he was whose hands ever savoured of toil and freshly-cut wood. And, a man younger than I, he would offer me his shoulder for a staff, nor heed his own weariness, though already his shoulders and loins were more bent than mine. But at times his voice would fail him, and he would fain leave his lathe, and seat himself in the doorway, to breathe the soft, fresh air. And at length, of an eventide, his wife came seeking me. And, naming my name only, she stood and looked at me—dumb with anguish. Aye, before me I beheld, unveiled, the Mary whose father had been of such righteousness as ever to offer a twofold offering unto the Lord, in contrition that he had raised unto Israel no seed of posterity. Aye, the face of that Mary it was that I beheld. And as I did so compassion came upon me. A woman gentle and comely she was, with a graciousness of life's noonday encompassing her like the wings of a bird or running water. But also there was upon her a great weariness, in that her heart panted for her son Jeshua. . . . And with her I sought her home. And when, with arms moving like bruised wings, her husband had besought us to raise him upon his bed of rushes, that once again he might behold his Mary, and he had so beheld her, he bowed his head, and died. And later Zacchæus, the teacher of Jeshua, said unto me: 'For long hath Joseph laboured but in anguish, with a throat ever yearning for sustenance, but unable to swallow or bread or water.'

The caravan plunged into Galilee's luxuriant verdure, and everywhere there arose to meet it a perfume of shrubs and trampled shoots, whilst magpies wheeled around, and wild dogs followed from afar.
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Swarthy and flaccid, the Chazzan who was riding beside the Chief murmured:

"Rememberest thou the day when Jeshua, the son of Joseph, did blaspheme in our House of Meeting, after that I had yielded unto him the reading of the Scroll of Hephtarah, and we did follow him to cast him headlong, yet found him not?"

And the Chazzan closed his eyes, as though to blot out the very remembrance.

To avoid the dangerous and prohibited route through Samaria, the caravan wheeled aside to Perea, where, as the afternoon drew on, the sun tanned the travellers to gold, and enveloped them in clouds of dust.

And the Chief of the Synagogue's voice arose, saying:

"Praise ye the Lord who slew the first-born of the Egyptians, and delivered Israel out of the midst of His enemies!"

And in antiphon came the response:

"For His mercy endureth for ever!"

Now and then the people of the caravan caught glimpses of towns—of smoke wreaths, and cupolas, and tall, aged trees, and turrets, and sharp-cut walls, and brazier-shaped towers, and pillars and obelisks dedicated to pagan deities, and slopes smoothed with age-long passage, and dung heaps and mendicants encircled by gadflies amid the westering sun, and lopped plane-trees breaking into bud, and old men chatting in box-groves, with mantle over shoulder, and young men training horses, and matrons reclining in litters in gardens so massed with rose-bushes as half to conceal their occupants.

And so the caravan halted for the night at Scythopolis the exquisite.

Halters soon had festooned the massive rings let into the city walls, and the men of the caravan hung up their trappings, and the maidens taken pitchers to go in quest of
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well or spring. And as those maidens departed on their errand they brought back to the minds of all their own patriarchal fountain, seeing that here were Nazareth's own damsels once more, and the same slender pitchers balanced upon the familiar linen head-dresses. And as fires blazed up in stone-built ovens, and the sun sank, the Chazzan summoned the multitude together, and all recited the Evening Prayer, the Shema Yisraeli, the "Hear, O Israel!" whilst the frogs dwelling in the city's cisterns began to shower upon the city's gardens call notes like fine rain, and turtle-doves to coo plaintively, and the King's peacocks to rend the air with cries, and hyænas to howl coldly, hungrily, ululantly in the depths of the night's blackness.

And then there ensued another two days' journey for the people of Nazareth. First leaving the valleys of the Jordan, they skirted the gardens and pleasances of the gracious, stately new cities of Archelais (where Archelaus, son of Herod, had his seat) and Phasælis (the property of the brother of that son, of the Phasæl who had been the Grand Monarch's favourite child), and then, after sleeping a night beneath the palms of Jericho where the ruins of the mother city overthrown by Josuha lay buried beneath orchards and marbles, the caravan closed its ranks to enter upon the narrow, sunken stretch of road which, plunging at times into awe-inspiring defiles, and running between craggy, precipitous cliffs, would rise again by terraces cut in the rock, and lay so exposed to brigand ambushes as to have suggested to Jesus His parable of the Good Samaritan. And ever the pilgrims' passage was attended by clattering echoes, whilst light fell upon their heads from the heights above in bluish luminance only, and, though the sides of the surrounding crags would open out for a moment, and the caravan become bathed in daylight once more, the travellers soon would find themselves re-
encompassed by rocky immensities, and engulfed between steeps beneath whose ultimate blacknesses ran the swift, broad waters of the Kidron. But at length, after passing through a yet darker rocky defile, where daylight showed so far overhead as to seem to come from a lantern, and the murmurings of the pilgrims sounded like the murmurings of frightened souls in a tomb, a receding stretch of slope that was softened with dog-grass and iris brought open daylight once more, a daylight which touched the travellers with a sense almost as of physical contact.

And then Bethany, a sheep-fold set amid palms, had to be passed, and the Mount of Olives to be skirted, and the Brook to be crossed: after which, at long last, the caravan sighted Jerusalem—Jerusalem lying bathed in glorious western sunshine, Jerusalem showing white with her four hundred and eighty cupolaed synagogues, and blinding with her jasper and porphyry palaces and the Fortress of Antonia and her seventy-four wall towers and, above them, the roofs of the Temple (roughened to deter birds from alighting upon them), and the porticos and great bronze Corinthian pillars of the Temple (for whose smelting a chronicler declares the whole city to have been fired), and, in short, all that Temple which, as statelily white in sunlight as in moonlight, and heaped like a mountain of snow, showed the pilgrims that at last they had reached the Holy Jerusalem which had sent forth her call to them.

And, in salutation to her, the Chief of the Synagogue cried:

"The mountains are her girdle, and the Lord is about His people, now and for evermore!"

And the caravan clattered down the slope.

To the swarming mass of devotees in the temple the trumpets of the Levites were proclaiming the opening of
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the Hour of Sacrifice. All present had the Paschal lamb on their shoulders, and from time to time there penetrated thither the cries of the hucksters and vendors of unleavened bread and bitter herbs whom a recent outburst on the part of the Rabbi Jesus had caused to be restricted to the Temple’s porticoes—certain of the Pharisees and Zealots having revived their ancient scruples in that regard.

And from time to time, there penetrated thither also the broad, raucous notes of Roman bucinae, blown from the Citadel overhead. And whenever this happened the multitude would turn its eyes from its liturgical exercises to contemplate Cæsar’s men of war.

For the Procurator was now in residence. Also, he was a man so virulent in his hatred of the Jew that the same legionaries who had helped to mitigate the harshness of his rule during his absence in Cæsarea had since become transformed into men swift and cruel to repress even the slightest sign of disorder.

Yet though the turrets of the Prætorium hung fringed with helmets and spears, certain patricians from Rome whom Pilate had bidden thither as his guests were pacing to and fro amongst the soldiery with a carelessness of bearing, and in a courtliness of garb, which bespoke expectation of diversion rather than of peril. And whenever the centurion on duty came from a watch-tower on the walls with word of one or another item of interest the guests would mount into an embrasure, and survey the depths below, and point elegant hands at Xystus’ gleaming intercolumnia.

By now many of the pilgrims had left the Temple’s courts, and were ascending the western height, whilst the low-lying quarter of Acra (the region of herbalists’ and jewellers’ booths, and of wool-combers’ and gold-beaters’ workshops—all of them now closed, of course, for the festival) was growing black and undulant with crowds
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gravitating thither from the clattering streets of the Lower City and the slopes of Mounts Zion and Ophel.

Further away the arched entrance to the King's gardens could be seen gleaming like a clear, blue, open eye, whilst for a moment the spectacle of a cohort of Roman soldiers descending from the Praetorium with a trampling of horses and a glittering of armament subdued even the excited, gesticulative clamour of that Oriental multitude.

For the hour was the hour of executions, and for execution there were three criminals in waiting, whilst the same morning was to see the Greater Sanhedrin complete Jesus' case, and submit all the sentences for the approval of the Roman Governor. In the first instance the Rabbi had been arraigned in the audience-chamber of the High Priest's palace, but the law required actual sentences of death to be pronounced by daylight, and in the Hall of Justice—which procedure involved a double journey.

Formerly the Greater Sanhedrin had exercised its functions within the precincts of the Sanctuary, in the Gazith or Conclave Cæsi Lapidis, the Hall of Cut Stone, which lay contiguous to the Conclave Ligni or Hall of Wood and the Conclave Scaturiginum or Hall of Spring Water: but since those days the Council had vacated its meeting-place on Mount Moriah in favour of quarters in the Lower City, and Rome herself had assumed the Jus Gladii, and, by subordinating the validity of the will of the Seventy-one Judges of the old Asmonæan tribunal to the unchecked whim of the Imperial Procurator, profaned the holy soil of Jerusalem. True, the sentences of that tribunal still held good, but not so the Sanhedrin's ancient status: its rigour had weakened, and it had come to let fear of the people (which always regarded assassinations carried out by Zealots and their dagger-men as pardonable and patriotic acts, as meritorious wrackings of retribution upon the pro-foreigner) deflect the strict Law of Moses.

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But if the Mosaic Books were not to be weakened further, weakened beyond recall, and the Passover to become stripped of its principal popular attraction, sentences of death needed to be pronounced as hitherto. Wherefore presently the multitude could be seen parting before the wands of the Skurim or Sanhedrin's Constables, men clad in mulberry-coloured tunics, whilst to them succeeded the Sanhedrin Apparitors (officials in red garments, and carrying gilt-tipped almond-wood staves), and two Writers bearing the parchment of the tribunal's register, the great bronze inkhorn of their office, and the great reed pen—the latter suspended from the fillet which bound the register. And then came Jesus—His mantle tucked into and girded with the cord which bound His wrists, His head bare, and His locks limp, dishevelled, and hanging over His cheeks. And beside Jesus walked the Baal Rib, the Counsel for the Defence, a man spare of form, bright of eye, lean of neck, and puffy of hand. And then the Servitors of Justice, with girdles sword-bedight.

And as the people ran together to follow in Jesus' wake, they called to one another in the many tongues, and with the many inflections of laughter, of their many distinct races. And meanwhile they kept being thrust back by the staves of the Sanhedrin Constables, until, as Caiaphas passed by with his Chief Priests clad in crimson capes and white linen breeches and embroidered mitres, all prostrated themselves, and, the list of holders of the ancient hierarchical office being indelibly fixed upon the popular memory, recited reverently the names on the record-scroll, the scroll which eventually was to include Joazar, Eleazar the son of Simon Boëthus, Eleazar the first-born of Anna the Powerful, Joshua the son of Seth, Simon the son of Camithus (Joseph Caiaphas' nominee and successor), Helkias the custodian of the Sacred Treasury, Jonathan, Matthias, and Theophilus (all three sons of Anna, and
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priests who rose also to be High Priests), and Ismael the son of Phabi, a High Priest renowned for his gluttony and love of ease. Never, in accordance with custom, was the same robe seen on a High Priest twice during the same Passover, and each such robe cost many hundreds of minae; whilst monthly the stomach of its wearer had to consume as much fish, flesh, and fowl as would have nourished, for the same period, an ordinary hamlet.

To the High Priest, in the procession, there succeeded Annas, as Ab Beth Din or President of the Twenty-three Zegenim (Elders of Israel)—men who, descended in the direct line from Judah, were skilled in all the seventy dialects of the tongue, and so wealthy that the Talmud declares Nicodemus, the son of Gorion, to have been capable of maintaining the Holy City at his own expense for ten years, whilst Joseph of Arimathea, a man of punctilious courtesy, and the owner of huge landed estates, had won Pilate's favour in spite of the Roman's contempt for the Semite, and Elishama possessed the richest property in Jericho, a property once coveted by the queen beloved of Antony.

And then came the Hâkân, Head of the Levite and Lay Sopherim or Writers—of the body of theosophists or lay brethren or exegetics who, in their school chambers and cells, had evolved the Mishna, the Midras, and the Haggadah, and who included in their faculty Gamaliel the just and gentle son of Simeon, and grandson of the Hillel who was Saul's preceptor; Samuel, the author of the Birket Hammirim; Jonathan; the Rabbi Zadok; Honkelos; Hananias, son of Hishna; Ismael; Elijah; and the Rabbi Nahum.

And last of all came the three grades of alumni in jurisprudence, youths who, already pale and formal, and imitative of all the austerity of the Pharisaic bearing, were eager to store up in their minds, and, "like unto cisterns
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mortised with lime,” not to let escape them, every word of the Mosaic doctrine.

Annas traversed the walls of populace surrounding the Sanhedrin building with an air suave and feline and self-possessed. And as he did so only a single cry from an adherent of the Prophet betrayed the emotion under which the Galilean contingent was labouring. For extending to the very portals of the Hall of Justice was a fringe of Pontius’ spear-heads, and at a previous Passover those spear-heads had penetrated to the Altar of Burnt-Offerings itself, and mingled the blood of pilgrims with the blood of sacrifice. For now the last vestiges of Israel’s overlordship lay trampled upon for ever: and even though the Rabbi should be released that day, and become a leader of the multitude, those vestiges should remain as trampled upon as heretofore.

And so, the awe-stricken populace having followed the legal pageant to the Sanhedrin’s place of assembling, the session duly began. And it was the seat occupied by the President (a seat wrought of goldsmiths’ work, and covered with brilliant purple), and the stern bearing of the members of the tribunal as they reclined upon elaborate rugs and cushions, and the pale weariness of the brows conserving a whole knowledge of God’s liturgical bequest, and the superlative purity of stock expressed in ivory texture of feature, and the members’ reputation for spiritual power added to material wealth hoarded in jewell-box and massive-barred storeroom, that intimidated the popular spirit, and impressed the Oriental stranger (ever prone to venerate magnificence, whether theoretical or spectacular), more than any sort of love for, or respect for, Sanhedrital tradition.

But Annas none the less was trembling. True, the Rabbi was not the Christ. Yet might it not befall that some mysterious magic, or some miracle, or some spoken
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word, or some bold and gallant gesture, might yet enable him to wrest the multitude from its sheepish inertia and complacency, and show it to be as receptive as ever of the ferment of sedition?

Only when Jesus was actually set face to face with the tribunal did Annas breathe again, and sit watching, waiting, silent, like a man in the amenities of the bath. After all, Rabbi Jesus was a malefactor of the ordinary type, and a malefactor resigned and weakly at that, though passively disdainful.

For the binding of Jesus a hempen cord had been thought sufficient: although the multitude remembered that when the three robbers had been judged one of them, a certain Barabbas, had made his fetters crack until his wrists had dripped blood upon the stones.

A young flesher strained himself upward to look at Jesus. Then he said:

“Even though this fellow be released to-day, he will yet depart looking like unto one condemned!”

Whilst an elderly man who was consuming ewe cheese, and diffusing everywhere its sour, curdled odour, responded:

“Nay. He is but feigning. The fox doth feign in like manner when caught in a snare.”

Then all stretched their necks to view the Rabbi again.

First of all, the Hâkân, the most erudite of the erudite expositors, questioned Jesus concerning His doctrine. And as he did so he put to Jesus Jesus’ own words, and added amplifications to the same, and stood waiting for answers with his eyes half-closed.

But no answers came.

And at length the Baal Rib, casting a look of loathing upon the Accused, cleared his lips of the kousieh’s folds with one of his yellow hands, and took up the examination on the Accused’s behalf.

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Under their dark, bloodshot contusions Jesus’ features had about them a greenish pallor, and His neck looked long and weak, and on His throat there was the stamp of anguish, and frequently, as He gazed wanly at the Baal Rib, He had to pass a tongue over twisted, drooping lips through which breath came with difficulty.

Then a restless stir began amongst the multitude. Why should more questions be put to a man who, lowly and obscure, had manifestly sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and set at nought the Divine precepts, by raising himself up as the Anointed One? For themselves, the people had had sufficient of him. Already they were feeling repentant of ever having acclaimed him. True, a few more generous spirits differed from the Sanhedrin in so far as that they were ready to condone the man’s past faults and arrogance, and to compassionate his present plight. Yet even they, they said, would approve of his condemnation if it would conduce to the good of the race.

And as the crowd seethed hither and thither it indulged in refreshment, and laughed, and murmured, and left everywhere dirty sandal-prints, a smell of fusty garments, fragments of refuse, and trodden-upon expectorations.

Suddenly a cry arose, and was followed by a tapping of staves around the Presidential seat, whilst some one in the inner circle of spectators said to those in the agora:

“The prophet hath blasphemed again!”

“Then let him be put to silence again.”

A Roman cohort pushed forward with a clash of arms. And as it did so Caiaphas’ voice proclaimed from the tribune:

“Away with him unto the Praetorium!”

And just as the crowd caught up and repeated the command the pilgrims from Nazareth came riding over the ridge of Mount Moriah, and descending thence in a clamor-
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ous flutter of white and blue-fringed robes and goat-skin headgear.

But on these pilgrims reaching the portico of the Sanhedrin Building, they were halted by the spears of the legionaries.

For the Accused was being removed.

And the voice of the Chief of the Nazarene Synagogue arose, saying: "Jeshua, ye say? Jeshua, the son of Joseph, him whom once I did see weep upon our mountain?"

And when his folk of the Nazarene caravan and certain persons of Jerusalem came flocking about him with looks of interest, and requests that he would speak more concerning Jesus, he moved away towards the colonnades of Xystus, and, seating himself, said with shaking head:

"Aye, once I did see that Rabbi weep."

Then he continued:

"It was on the evening of a Sabbath in the month of Nisan, and already Jesus' sisters, Lydia and Asia, the daughters of Joseph, had strewn the floors of our synagogue with mint and cypress, and the faithful cast their gifts into the coffers at the doors, and the barrier dividing the women from the men been closed, and the Ten Elders gotten them to their places, and the chief persons been seated on the steps of the Tabernacle before the veil of Thebah, and the Chazzan opened the Most Holy Ark to take unto himself the scrolls of Torah and the Prophecies, and the people turned toward Jerusalem for the Prayer, when Jesus entered, and halted to pray under the lamp which ever burneth in the House of the Lord. And then, the time of the Reading being come, he besought us to suffer him to enter the Seat of Ministration: and though many murmured, and were astonished that such as he should dare to read the Books written in the mother He-

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brew tongue, seeing that that tongue is known unto none save the learned, he gat him within the railing, and, cast- ing loose the parchment girdles of the Scrolls, read unto us the words of Isaiah which say: 'The spirit of the Lord hath come upon me, and anointed me to preach unto the meek, and to bind up the broken-hearted, and to proclaim liberty unto the captives, and the opening of prisons unto them that are bound, and to give sight unto the blind, and to comfort them that mourn, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord's reconciliation.' And when he returned the Scroll of Prophecy unto the Chazzan (the same Chazzan as to-day hath come with us), he seated himself in token that also he would speak of the Reading. And thus he spake: 'To-day doth the prophecy stand fulfilled before you, in that I have been sent of my Father to bring you comfort, as unto them who have known my dwelling-place, and been the friends of my days in this village beneath the heavens which overshadow our fields. Yea, I have sought you first of all men, to proclaim unto you my kingdom.' And we looked upon one another, and said amongst ourselves: 'Is not this Joseph the carpenter's son? How, then, shall he perform the work of the Christ? Nevertheless, in that his people have declared him to have wrought wonders in Cana and in Capernaum, let him now perform the same in his own coasts.' And Jesus arose with the terrible rebuke: 'What ye are saying I know well. Ye are saying: "Physician, heal thyself," and marvelling at me. Yet I say that ever a prophet lacketh honour in his own country. Also I say that, in the days of Elijah, when there were many widows in Israel, and the heavens gave not of their rain for a space exceeding three years, and the land suffered hunger, because that Ahab had followed after idolatry, Elijah, the man of God, did go to abide in ravines by the Brook Cherith, and receive sustenance from ravens,
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and thence get him, at my Father's bidding, to the house of the widow of Zaraphath, and prefer her to all the daughters of Israel. And I say likewise that in the days of Elisha, when there were many lepers in Israel, Elisha did cleanse none of those lepers in Israel, but pitied, rather, the sorrows of Naaman, who was a stranger from the Syrian land.' And upon that some threw themselves upon Jesus, and cried: 'Reckonest thou thyself to be one of God's beloved, and ourselves to be of those whom the Prophets cursed and abhorred?' and thereat thrust Jesus from his seat, and drove him from the synagogue, and took up stones at him. But even as they were thinking to cast the stones be gat him out of the mountain. For terrible was the anger of the people, in that he had despised the holiness of the Sabbath. But I myself did wander unto a stony place, and find weariness come upon me amongst the rocks. And as the sun descended, and Nazareth began to shine forth over the fields like a lantern, I still could hear the tumult from afar. And then, amid the silence, I heard as it were a fountain of tears. And when I arose I beheld before me the persecuted one—gazing at his home, and at the synagogue, and remembering his past days therein, and weeping for the desolation of his heart.'

And after a pause the Chief of the Synagogue turned to the Chazzan, and added with a mournful smile:

"When we were journeying to the Passover, and I did show unto thee the workshop of Jesus' father, thou didst say unto me: 'Once Jesus did blaspheme in our synagogue, and we did drive him from the mountain, yet found him not to cast him headlong.' But I myself did find him. And when I had found him I opened unto him mine arms, and he laid his head upon my breast, and I guarded him from you whilst he wept. And he was weeping also when he appeared unto his mother, the gentle daughter of Joakin and Anna whom, when a child, her parents sanctified unto
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

God, and set within the Temple, to be nurtured of the priests as a pigeon plucketh corn from the hand. . . . And as I beheld Jesus weeping I loved him as a son."

And the Chief of the Nazarene Synagogue himself wept. But certain of the bystanders drew away from him, saying:

"It is not meet for the righteous thus to have compassion upon one who hath provoked the wrath of the Greater Sanhedrin. Such compassion is forbidden."

And they departed to the Upper City, and, with the legionaries and the multitude, passed thence to Herod Antipas' palace.
Annas

"One of the officers which stood by struck Jesus." St. John xviii, 22.

Every eventide the daughter of Rohab the leper would go and wait beneath the window of Annas' chamber. And from his villa of burnt brick, beside the Brook of Mandrakes, Annas would look out upon her as she stood awaiting alms.

And then the man whom Flavius Josephus declares to have been the wealthiest in Palestine would take unto himself a denarius, and send it flashing like a streak of light into the herbage around the foot of the verandah.

And upon that the young woman, shorn, spare, upright, barefooted, and girdled with a sorry grey and yellow cincture, would dart forward, and seize the gift. And so, with arms tense and quivering, she would render unto Annas an obeisance of thanksgiving which outlined still further her framework, and deepened the cavities of her stomach and armpits, and, with a cry like the cry of a sandpiper, depart with leaps down the slopes of the Hill of Zion.

And as Annas leaned forward to watch her go it would seem to him that at any moment any one of her leaps might bear her upward to the blue of the zenith, and leave her suspended there—as light and poised as a falcon.

And she would return to her leprous father, and deliver to him the coin, and disappear again amongst the gullies and escarpments of the vicinity.

... ... ... ... ... ... ...

The Valley of Hinnom was lying picked out in sharp
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

relief under the firmament’s crystal clearness. On the fertile eminence above it were shimmering terrace-gardens, and green corn strips, and hollow quarries. And on the summit was the fair white villa of Caiaphas—its western face, of chiselled stone, glowing to amber red, and, near it, two ancient cedar-trees “of the priestly stock,” with crests flanking the villa on the side towards the fruitful Mount of Olives.

That evening Annas’ five sons came to their father, and, with them, his son-in-law Caiaphas, Governor of the Sanctuary. All these sons were priests, and they saluted their sire with eyes and brows, and said:

“Behold, there is murmuring against thee, in that thou continuest to have compassion upon a stranger who is stricken with the abhorred evil. Other lepers do dwell apart from Ophel and the Holy Hill and all the ways of men, as the Scripture hath commanded: but still this Egyptian meriteth thy favour!”

With eyes burnished, and glowing like fire, and beard curled like driven snow, and perfumed with balsam and saffron essence, and trembling upon the scarlet of his tunic, Annas replied:

“Hearts ye have even smaller than grains of millet seed! Behold, just when I am seeking to clothe you with splendour before all the people are ye concerned, rather, with my fault of compassion upon an unclean man!”

But they continued to urge him touching the fault of his complacency. Until, gazing upon them, he said:

“For fifteen years I did abide in Alexandria the city of marvels. In that city beside the sea a hundred thousand Jews were dwelling, in that the same Israel which had known and loved but mountains, and been a people of the hill-top and sorrowful destiny, had since become happy beside the great, free waters which join the one half of the world unto the other. In Alexandria would I
watch ships set forth for Europa with stuffs and fruit and precious stones and spice and perfumes and all the goodliness of Egypt and India and our fathers, brought thither, across everlasting wastes, by caravans. And at times I would betake me to the Gate of the Moon, made as of hyacinth, and pass thence to the pleasant Quay of Good Arrival, and so, beside the Heptastadium and its stones of orange colour, to the Nile, that I might drink of the sweet waters brought thither through marble aqueducts. And I would gaze upon the island which ariseth from the sea in form as fair and stately and delicate as that of Bath-sheba when David beheld her in her bath, and then bid my slaves cushion for me a litter, to bear me across the rocks whither the beacon of Pharos shineth over three hundred stadia. And, lastly, before retiring to rest, I would read of Plato, and find in him our own precepts. And whenever, when reading thus, I was disturbed of a bee (for all the air of the city is charged with honey) the insect would seem to me to have come forth from the words of the philosopher himself, and I would gaze upon it until it had lost itself again amid the city's lights. For ever Alexandria seemed to me great beyond measure, and rich in wisdom, and as enticing as a pagan goddess. Crowned stood her crest with her golden Amphitheatre, and jewelled her breasts with her Museum and the Mart and the Mausoleum, where the tombs of her ancient rulers lie around the tomb of the great Macedonian Monarch as though they had been its sons. But the surpassing adornment and marvel of Alexandria was her Israel. For there, in the very land of the Captivity, Israel was blossoming as a rose, and had a Sanhedrin everywhere respected, and an armament everywhere feared, and treasures to blind the eyes, and Egyptian slaves one hundred thousand in number. And exceeding all the riches held in Alexandria of the Gentiles was our synagogue of
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

porphyry and sandalwood and alabaster, with seats of beaten gold for three score and ten Elders—whereas here, in the Promised Land, we are being trampled upon and oppressed of Rome like unto grapes trodden in a wine-vat!"

For a moment the old man’s eyes rested upon the gross and swollen features of Caiaphas. Then he continued:

“And after that I had laid the foundations of this dwelling which ye pass wh ensever ye go unto the Holy of Holies, whilst the people prostrateth itself to gaze upon you, it came to pass, one Sabbath, that I was issuing from the Temple when there fell down before me an unclean man who cried: ‘Hail unto thee, Annas, son of my Lord Seth!’ And when my friends and slaves would have thrust him from me I suffered it not, but bade him arise, and speak further. And with the great sore that was his mouth he said: ‘I beseech thee to have compassion upon thine ancient servant. From within the mirrors of the Pharos oftentimes thou hast gazed with me upon the ships of the West. And oftentimes I have supported thy cushion and thy rollers for thy reading of Plato and the books of Thucydides.’—Wherefore since that hour that leper hath been dearer to me than is many a mean fellow who cometh unto my chamber.”

Aye, Annas spake to his sons thus.

But one evening the ragged beggar-woman failed to appear as usual beneath the window, and the door of her father’s cottage was seen to be barred with a beam of palm-wood.

And Annas caused inquiry to be made. And the slave said to him when he returned:

“I have gained these tidings: that Rohab the leper and his daughter are gone with the Rabbi Jesus.”

And until the country-side lay veiled in night Annas continued to gaze downward into the herbage about the foot of his villa. And when he was retiring to rest, and
Annas

his eyes alighted upon Caiaphas’ villa silhouetted against the vault of stars, he curled his subtle lips in a scornful smile, and his pointed beard quivered on the scarlet of his tunic.

. . . . . . . . .

At the sixth hour, when Annas had laid him down upon his couch of silken fabrics, there came unto him the Chief Elders.

And they pressed about him, and said unctuously:

“Unto thee do we owe the salvation and the welfare of our race. It is thou who deliverest us from perils, and upholdest for us the honour of the priesthood, and discoverest before our feet the paths of wisdom. And because that we have followed thy counsel is Pilate now become afraid of us, and the people fallen to cursing the Prophet whom formerly they extolled.”

But Annas listened distraught, disdainfully, in silence.

And when the Elders were gone he called unto him his first-born, and said:

“See that Javan hath his thumbs cut off, in that the rascal did strike Jesus when the Rabbi was saying to me—when the Rabbi was saying to me—Ah, I know not what the poor Rabbi was saying.”

And the man who stood above all others in Palestine laid himself down in peace to rest.
Barabbas

"Now, at that feast the governor was wont to release unto
the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then
a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. St. Matthew xxvii,
15, 16.

In Nehelescol and the region the vines and fig-trees were
beginning to sprout.

There alternate rock and cultivation swelled up into a
plateau of soft brown earth on whose sunlit face a village
stood girdled with young cornfields, with gardens whose
wells were shaded with pomegranate and sycamore, with
terraces ridged and fenced with box, and with vineyards
containing huts or towers for the storage of the crop. For
at that period the Israelite loved his fields with a love
strengthened by instinct for ancient tradition, and inhaled
from the very shadows of the vines and fig-trees which he
tilled. And even his spouse would labour tirelessly over
her linen, nor ever drop the spindle from her fingers, that
one day she might be able to tell her neighbours that with
the fruit of her toil she had bought a plot of land, and was
going to plant therein her own vineyard.

And the season was the season for root-digging the
vine stocks, and settling and pressing them down for the
spring rains to irrigate their roots.

And such was the rural stillness that nothing was
audible save a croaking of ravens in the gullies below
Hebron (where always the birds could find a mule or an
ox in process of decay) and the thudding of the vineyard
workers' spades—a sound as dulled as though it had been
coming from a cistern.
Barabbas

And to the village there ran, between plots and stake rows, a smooth-worn road; and along this road, under the sunset, there was walking a group of travellers whose long, stilted shadows showed brown against the soil. Slowly the travellers were walking, with frequent halts for colloquy. And whenever the burst of conversation ceased there succeeded to it the sound of a single voice which threaded the surrounding silence as though the evening scene had been the intimate chamber of a dwelling. So warm, so simple, was the voice as seemingly to purify still further the air's soft folds, and the sweet scents of earth, and the grateful calmness: from its every tone there seemed to breathe a savour of juicy seed and clear spring water and honey of fruit.

The voice said:

"Hearken unto another likeness of the heavenly kingdom. Early in the morning a good man went forth to hire labourers unto his vineyard for a penny a day."

A spade reared itself over a neighbouring fence, and lay glittering upon the shoulder of its wielder whilst he listened to the speaker's words.

One of the travellers remarked:

"O Master, these fields are the fields of ancient Canaan."

"Yea. And by this same road the two men came from Moses, and gathered figs and pomegranates, and cut off a branch of grapes which they could carry slung upon a pole."

Then other travellers joined in.

"Peradventure, that brook is the Brook of Grapes?"

"And, O Rabbi, soon we shall be come unto the place whence Thy Father did take earth to make the first man."

The Master, who had been waiting, continued His parable, saying:

"And when the third hour was come the goodman went forth into the market-place, and hired yet other men."
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

One of the travellers, a man ruddy of beard, and patched of tunic, stepped aside towards the adjoining fence. And as he did so the vineyard worker said to him from within the field:

"Except ye journey more hastily, night will overtake you."

But the other replied:

"Not so. Our Rabbi feareth not the air of heaven. Nor hath He elsewhere to lay His head. We belong unto those who do believe the Rabbi's words alone to be sufficient unto man's subsistence."

"The Rabbi, ye say? Which of you is he?"

"He with the blue mantle and striped turban who even now is advancing to look upon thee."

"Aye, and he looketh upon me as never another hath looked!"

The man, a fellow with clothes and flesh of the colour of earth, and features as though carved from a block of oak, and pierced with a chilly, gleaming whiteness of savage teeth, and a body hairier than the carcase of a wolf of Gilead, was quivering all over. And rather than meet the eyes thus penetrating to his very marrow, to his very thoughts, he resumed his digging, nor ventured to raise himself again until the sound of the travellers' sandals had receded afar. But then he did raise himself again—cautiously, like a jackal.

One of the Rabbi's arms silhouetted itself against the glorious radiance of the sunset, whilst His voice resumed its parable amid the hush of eventide.

"When night was come the master of the vineyard said unto his steward: Call hither the labourers."

Suddenly the vineyard worker faced about, and leapt the fence on to the road. For approaching was an old man mounted upon an ass from the saddle-bow of which two money-bags were dangling. And as the old man came
Barabbas

riding along he was gazing ahead with a hand upraised to his bronzed brows. And on drawing near to the vineyard worker, he inquired:

"Art thou not the Jeshua Barabbas who this morning came seeking of me labour?"

The vineyard worker bowed with lowly obeisance, and the old man continued:

"Then wherefore art thou labouring so far from the other husbandmen, and now hast leaped over the fence?"

The vineyard worker bent himself lower yet, and murmured:

"Because that the others said unto me: 'Tarry thou here until the steward cometh. And when he cometh say unto him: 'Go not further across the estate, in that certain enemies of thy house are awaiting thee there, but go into the vineyard tower until thy people shall have come unto thee.'""

And the old man was alighting from the ass to follow Barabbas when Barabbas wounded him with the spade all wet and odoriferous with fresh earth, and killed him.

After which Barabbas took from the ass the two bags of money, and hied him across the fields unto a place of refuge.

Beside a grove of ancient palm-trees shading some deserted salt-wells a weary, dusty road ran to a great city reared upon three heights, and surrounded with gardens, and walled with noble, stately ramparts, and built of dwellings luminously white, and offering her crest to the gracious light of morning and the kisses of the sun.

And sorry men were moving about amongst the palm-trees like lice. And whenever they glanced at the city they did so with envy and abhorrence, even as a slave might glance at a fair and high-born lady whom he had
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

surprised when practising her seductive spells, but whom he perceived to be wholly unabashed in the presence of one who, she knew, could never enjoy her.

And then some travellers appeared upon the road. And as they drew level with the men of the salt-wells these men sprang forward with cries of:

"Share ye your bread with the hungry!"
"Despise not them who are of your own flesh!"
"Remember that all of us did serve in Egypt. May the Lord grant unto you rest, and refreshment unto your bones!"

And the men's cries pierced the morning air, and broke the silence, as though they had been croakings of jackdaws over newly-sown plots.

And when servants in the travellers' employ approached the men, and flung them oboli and scraps of food, the afflicted ones kissed the dust, raised arms in blessing upon the Lord, and devoured the broken meats with noisy, insatiable jaws.

And at noon there appeared also amongst the palm-trees a number of ragged labourers—men sullen of brow, and compressed of lip. And one, with strong teeth as white as snow, and a parti-coloured tunic, and the haft of a weapon gleaming in his girdle, cried to the labourers contemptuously, with a sneer:

"Verily Jehovah permittest you to continue in your hunger and your abominations in that, like unto castrated dogs, ye do continue to suffer your masters' breakings of the Law. Moses hath commanded: 'Refuse not payment unto thy needy brother the self-same day.' Yet rebel against the iniquity ye dare not!"

A second labourer, sunken and livid of face, and toothless, retorted in hissing accents:

"An error lieth in Barabhas' speech. All night long we do labour in the cesspools, and at break of day are

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Barabbas

dismissed with the words, 'Return ye at setting of the sun to receive your recompense.' And what hath been written is: 'Refuse not payment unto thy needy brother the self-same day, before that the sun hath set, that there be none to cry unto the Lord against thee.' And that sun which now we behold—is it not the self-same sun as will be lightening us when again we come forth unto our labours?'

Nevertheless, some of the man's fellows began to murmur, and raised cries which spread like gusts of wind swaying a palm-grove.

And Barabbas laughed hoarsely.

"Ye do deserve your shame," he repeated. "Ye do deserve it even as do those men yonder who ask for alms, and run back to the salt-wells to devour the refuse of caravans. Of old time certain hungry men like unto yourselves listened unto me, and turned their strength against the contemners of our Holy Books. And now those men are living in plenty."

In the malcontents' faces ferocious gleams began to show themselves, and more than one voice exclaimed:

"Be this man our leader. Peradventure, if it should guide us, he will bring us advantage."

The toothless veteran alone leapt and danced upon the stones, struck his flaccid hands against his forehead, and cried:

"'Thou shalt not kill!' 'Thou shalt not kill'!"

Then his fellows set forth upon the road, and all fled before their face, and abandoned money and vesture. And when they had entered the city certain slaves and others who abhorred the rule of Rome, and the oppression and excessive riches of their governors, joined the revolt.

And the legionaries heard of what was passing, and came and plunged spears into tattered bodies until the bodies clattered headlong like stones falling into a pit, and rustled under the horses' hooves like straw upon a threshing-floor.
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

And then, amid the yelling and blaspheming and stench of heaped-up carrion, the chief robber buried his sword in the mouth of a Praetorian Guard, and pushed the man backward until his head rested pinned against a wall. And upon that a decurion aimed a javelin at Barabbas, and Barabbas fled towards the ravines, but was assailed with stones from a building on the outskirts, and watch-dogs came forth and pursued him until, with cloak torn, and legs and a shoulder covered with blood, he was overtaken by his enemies, bound to the mane of a decurion’s horse, and haled back into the city, with the flat of the Roman soldier’s military sandal ever kicking him in the back. And said the decurion:

“We have awaiting thee a cross of new pine-wood. Prepared it was for a firer of the city: but he would not sit upon the bracket, nor yet hang from the cross-trees; wherefore, falling headlong, he brake his forehead in pieces against his knee-bones.”

In response, Barabbas spat upon the Roman’s fat, hairless leg.

The felon felt pass across his features a light caress, a touch as of air or smoke or mist—a touch as of the impact of a cool filament. And dangling, swaying from the ceiling of the dungeon he beheld, with an unset thread behind it, a spider.

And the sight brought back to him the fields of his native village, the fields where spiders’ webs had gleamed on terraces tender with blossom and sprouting verdure, on spongy margins of runlets, on joints of fig-trees: webs delicately coated with dew which the risen sun was destined to dissolve. And here in that dungeon just such another hairy, mottled little waif was cording its loom!

Barabbas conceived a loathing for the insect. Yet with his tongue (his hands were bound) he licked away a tear.
Barabbas

Then he sprang to his feet, and gnashed his teeth, as again the cool, fragile filament brushed his parched throat and gums.

Later that evening the doors of his cell were thrown open, and two men thrust within. One of the men sought to lay himself down, and the other also bent forward with a groan. For the two were lashed together with camel thongs. And thereafter they could be heard gasping, and bruising themselves against the stones, and gnawing at their lashings.

And when Barabbas chanced to touch one of the wretches with his bare foot he pushed the man away with a feeling as though already he were in his ditch sepulchre. And the two men shuffled away, and re-coiled themselves in a corner. Then he said:

"Ye need not fear me. All of us are joined together to 'drink of the wine of affliction.' All of us soon will see the crows soaring over our crosses."

And a deep voice replied:

"Now I know thee! Thou art he who did slay the leader of the Roman cohort. Also, thou art he who, on a day in Tizri, did stand and gaze with us upon the crucifixion of one of our brethren between two trees, and depart with us, and return after two hours to find our brother still alive, but rent asunder at the sinews, and having his eyes rotted with gadflies of the dunghill."

Barabbas cursed the fellow, and the other laughed with a sinister laugh—the laugh of a maniac, the laugh of one who, laughing from his bowels, abhors himself.

Then came the sound of a bleating of flocks being driven past the prison to the Paschal markets. And with it came the clamour of a multitude, and then a woman's voice, beneath the window, saying:

"A sandal of the Rabbi's! A sandal fallen from the Rabbi!"
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

And so the night resumed its lonely silence.
And towards dawn there came to one of the convicts a nightmare vision of his approaching agony.

Barabbas journeyed until he reached a land of vineyards, of shoots well grown, where a village stood smothered amongst ancient sycamores and tall crops of grain.
And amid the morning peacefulness he could hear the hollow, labouring, mattock-like strokes of his own heart, and the panting of his sides and gullet. And as he gazed at the heavens grief came upon him, for he saw again the dungeon spider spinning its web. And when he raised his wrists to his eyes (believing himself still to be bound), he smiled in self-derision, but with wet fingers. And again he saw as a boy the man who, standing there, was lonely and disgraced. Ah, never before had he realised what loneliness could be. O God!

And he wept. And then there began to steal upon him a sense of being surrounded with a Presence radiant and full of protection, and all his body seemed to become permeated with light, like an earthenware vessel, as eyes of mournful clarity contemplated him—the eyes of the Rabbi, the eyes which had seemed to be everywhere about him as he had journeyed—on the road, in the vineyards, in the air: the eyes which had on that very road once looked at him from below a turban, and terrified him. And again he had beheld those eyes in the corridor of the Prætorium, at the moment when Pilate, in a toga like clean-washed stone, had been showing the prisoners to the people, and the people yelling its choice of them, before that some of the members of the crowd had raised him, Barabbas, upon their shoulders, and women had come to tender him dried fish, and bread, and honey water, and perfumes. And a third time he had seen the eyes when Jesus had been
Barabbas

stripped and nailed to the Cross, and the multitude had deserted him, Barabbas, for a while, to go and shake their fists at the Rabbi, and pelt Him with the skins of oranges.

And when Barabbas had been descending from the Hill of Execution those eyes had still been looking at him. And all that night they had remained with him, and far into the following day... .

Barabbas gazed upon the country-side. And as he did so there was in his countenance and bearing a gentle resignation. He raised his hands to his mouth, and kissed the weals left by the gyves.

Then he went onward—very slowly, with mien saddened and subdued. And, on a little lame dog essaying to follow him, he turned, picked it up, and bore it with him towards the village.

And in the doorway of a certain house he halted. And his shaggy head, as he did so, displaced the mezzuzah suspended from the lintel—the small case within which were the parchments prescribed by Deuteronomy for thresholds.

And when a man came out with a greeting Barabbas said to him:

"It is a year agone since thy father was robbed and murdered."

And he drew nearer yet to the man, and offered himself quietly, saying:

"And thou beholdest in me thy father’s murderer."

The man turned with a cry, caught up from amongst his implements a sickle, and plunged it into the belly of the homicide.

And Barabbas staggered back, and fell without a groan, and with a smile upon his face. And as he gasped: "The eyes of the Rabbi are upon me!" the haft of the sickle quivered with the outrush of his blood and the convulsions of his severed entrails.
Herod Antipas

"At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus.

"And he said unto his servants: This is John the Baptist. He is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show themselves in him." St. Matthew xiv, 1, 2.

"And when Herod saw Jesus he set him at nought, and mocked him, and put upon him a gorgeous robe." St. Luke xxi, 8, 11.

"Eloi, Eloi, Iama sabachthani?" St. Mark xv, 34.

The blue waters of the Lake of Galilee lay reflecting the heaven's brightness, with their fresh azure pervading the verdure, and merging with the spotless marbles of Herod's palace, and with the amber-coloured pathways of the pleasure-grounds, and with the enamelled sheen of the swans in the ornamental waters, and with the opal-tinted plumage of the peacocks of Ophir perched on tanks and pavilions, and with the pen-feathers of the ostriches arching long necks over myrtle-trees and box-shrubs. Whence in everything there was an azure touch: in the surface of the ponds, in the pile of the lawns, in the shadows of the statues, in the recesses of the arbours. Only on the western faces of the Gergesene hills across the Lake there was showing a colour as of blood.

And from orange-trees and pistachio-trees and cypresses where they still held the evening sunlight there was arising a scent of sun-heated fruit.

Over Tiberias there was gleaming against the calm majesty of the sunset, like the crest surmounting a throne, a golden eagle.

Herodias, ascending an alabaster peristyle, drew her magnificent column of flesh to its full height to survey the scene.
Herod Antipas

Under the blossoming lemon-trees before her there were approaching a number of Sanhedrin dignitaries, men whose eagerness was causing them to jostle word upon word, and Antipas. But as soon as Antipas discerned the woman he ceased to have ears for his companions.

Herodias' every quick, subtle movement was such that it might have been a ripple breasting the air from a centre of beauty.

Antipas long had lain in wait for her. And she, for her part, had long held his every moment in thrall. And when at length he had wrested her from her husband, from his own brother Philip Boëthus, a man ever prone to yield, that brother had gone into retirement, and now was living as a private citizen in Rome. Antipas' principal reason for her abduction had been that every man had coveted her—from governors and patricians and philosophers to slaves; whilst even the women had admired her—though also they had abhorred her.

And thereafter Antipas had continued to be jealous of every man save of her husband, in that he loved her with his flesh alone, with the element which she so knew how to play upon as to make it as much a part of herself as her own shadow.

Her crowning grace lay in her grace of movement. Carpets and pavements responded to her tread as they did to no other woman's. And, in walking, she might have been a flower, so perfectly (albeit perversely) glorious was the rhythm of her personality. Yet, withal, she walked conscious of her own plenitude, and, whilst always herself, could don alternative allurements of chastity or wantonness or timidity or daring as skilfully as though each such phase had been conceived and elaborated of nature for her alone. Nor with aught save themselves could her feet
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or her knees or her waist or her elbows be compared: they summed up all possible elegance, all possible daintiness, of contour. On her feet would be mulberry-coloured sandals of doeskin laced and fretted with gems; from her neck suspended an ermine stole defining the bust to the hips, and continuing thence to a tight-clinging skirt which hinted at delicious intimacies; on her bare throat and arms no trace of the sparkle of jewellery; her breasts firm and projecting; the portion below them concave, and free from undue prominence, and developing solely from the fullness of the waist; the cheeks of a golden tan; the eyes dry, and splendid, and enlarged with antimony; the mouth juicy with a floral brilliance, the temples bisected with a band of amethysts which became steel under the coiffure; and the hair, braided upon the shoulders, full of an intimate undulancy. And, withal, she was a woman of no fixed, definite beauty, and her rivals had constantly to refer to her before they could follow her changes. Her fascination was less a fascination of body than a fascination of her faculty of self-harmonisation with environment. That is to say, she could, at will, take her environment, and stamp its imprint upon her every detail. And, after being realised, any one of her attitudes was like the sound of her voice after that she had finished speaking, in that both of them resembled an aromatic gum continuing to exude scent, or a steel plate continuing to vibrate. And the contemplation of her in motion was like the contemplation of a bird so limned as to inspire the beholder with a yearning to see it in flight. Yet, even so, that yearning to see Herodias in flight came less of any power of movement which she possessed than of the emotional force which governed all her movements. In other words, she resembled the birds principally through the fact that it is not so much the manner in which they ply their wings, or extend, or contract, their pinions, or display, or close, their
pen-feathers, that impresses the onlooker as the flight of the creatures as a whole—the whole charm of the spectacle which the passage of a bird across the clear-cut firmament communicates alike to the heavens and to our optical sense. And, similarly, Herodias thrilled as a whole. She was both bird and serpent. She was Antipas' serpent.

Yet though Antipas viewed her with a greedy eye, he viewed her also with a despondent one, whilst his attitude towards his fellow-men was that of a man cherishing jealousy against the very beggars in the street. At once crooked of figure and slave-like of bearing, with knees ever prone to bend beneath his body, he constituted a reminder of what his father's enemies had been wont to say even of the great Herod: that "he is but an Idumean serf, a bondsman unto Caesar, a Gentile consuming the Lord's treasures and produce, one whose palace, even unto the children's chamber and the household, payeth tribute unto Rome!"

And if the great Herod had had plebeian blood in him, assuredly it had descended into the veins of Antipas! And for that reason Antipas derived from his own muscles, swelled with the toil of others, with the toil of his slave forebears, and from his own slouching torso, and from his own pale, flaccid features, and from his own coarse and greasy hair, and from his own nomad gait only self-abhorrence. Yet, though he lifted his feet uncouthly in walking, and thrust them forward with an awkward gait, he could tread a carpet or a pavement with steps so stealthy as to give forth no sound whatsoever. For they were the steps of silence, of obedience, and of espionage. And though, at times, his will would seek to express itself with ferocious violence, or to achieve good, it soon became turned aside to cunning and distrust.

And always Antipas walked bareheaded. And however much he might don purple robes decked with jewels, they soon, on his shoulders, acquired the cut of sackcloth.
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Corpulent and short of breath, he ever coveted pleasures and accomplishments beyond his attainment.

Contrariwise, all the ferment of blood, the audacity of purpose, the magnificence of perversion, the turbulence of the senses, and the majesty of carriage peculiar to the old Herod had reappeared in his grand-daughter Herodias, the daughter of the executed Prince Aristobulus, who had owed his striking comeliness to the fact of his having been conceived by Mariamne, the best-beloved of Herod’s consorts, of pure passion, before that, falling a victim to her husband’s jealousy, she had been ceaselessly and irrevocably pined for as her murderer vainly sought in the bodies of other women the form of the lost and lamented one.

Hence, beside Herodias the Tetrarch looked a bastard indeed! Yet for the very reason that Herodias had inherited, and exemplified, all that he himself lacked Antipas desired her the more. For through her he enjoyed the rare and essential stimulus of contact with a caste at once his own and not his own—a caste of which, for its own sake, he cherished a mean abhorrence, but a caste which, as representing a lever for self-exaltation, he was fain to cultivate. Herodias had in her all the greatness and the racial assurance of the Asmonæans. Herod Antipas had in him only the diffidence, the lurking fearfulness, communicated to him in infancy by the horrors wrought upon his father’s hearth—by the feuds amongst the children of the slaughtered women, by the deeds of parricide, and by the tragic voices and silences which the pomp and circumstance of a monarchical establishment on the heroic model indifferently masked.

In short, his mother, the gentle Samaritan woman Malthace, a consort chosen that she might recall to her husband’s memory another, irrevocably lost, affection, had bequeathed to her son all the abjectness of her panic-stricken bowels.
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Antipas' adolescence was spent by Cæsar's side in Rome. Yet, even so, he never saw life clear and joyous, for, being neither a gallant nor a prince, but infirm of health, he was shunned alike by friend and vassal, and never knew what it was for the sun to shine upon his soul.

Later, to escape the menace of an Arab invasion, he espoused the daughter of the Arabian King Aretas IV—a princess as brittle, dry, and fiery as a desert cactus. And though his leaning towards her savagery and hungry torridity and insatiable marrow and sinister, gleaming eyes was greater than her attraction towards his moroseness, he feared her as much as he feared her people, and constantly sought to escape her, and always went to her arms trembling. And so, after that a Libyan slave had brought him a poison of snake venom, for such infusion into her bath that even the smallest chance abrasion made by a brooch-pin or a bruise might open a way for the poison to her blood, and Antipas, seizing the phial, had run to her room, and fled from it again before the outcry and the masterful eyes which in an instant had dragged from him the secret,—after this he produced apocryphal letters from the Senate, and betook himself to Rome, where finally Herodias laid hold upon his soul, fired him with jealousy of every man who looked upon her, and encouraged him to return to his own country, and there repudiate Aretas' daughter. And upon that the wife fled back to the tents of her Arabs, and those doughty warriors swung forward towards the stony wastes of Machærus, towards the region of clefts and walled rock, towards the land where, amid the rugged ranges of Moab and the Desert of Judea, the Dead Sea's slime had entombed the cities accursed of Jehovah under a crude, saline, gleaming, spumous deposit like the foam of a fixed billow, and where the eye could follow stone-cut tracks to the very furthest horizon, and where the flocks and herds driven from far
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Idumea for the maintenance of Machærus’ fortress left behind them only clattering pebbles and echoing ravines, and were tirelessly followed, from the shimmering zenith, by birds of prey. To the same fortress-eyrie of Machærus Antipas fled with Herodias. And with her Herodias took Salome, her offspring by her husband Philip, whilst, sheathed in bronze and steel, and shrouded in battle-cloak, and stepping with a clash in the chilly corridors, Antipas sought to cut at least a warlike figure, and, that he might seem the more puissant in Herodias’ eyes, would wait for her in corners, and surprise her with the unexpectedness of his martial aspect.

And Herodias, viewing the solitudes from the topmost battlements, found only the brooding silence of those solitudes answer to the silence of iron, of duress, within: wherefore she converted the stronghold into a courtesan’s bower, and was assisted in her purpose by the fact that the presence of Salome added to her allurements as mistress the tender, graceful attitudes of maternity.

For even amid that burning, desolate landscape the woman remained ever herself. Without there might be a broken, metallic, gleaming immensity, and the Waters of Malediction, and ravenous beasts of prey howling by night, and vultures screaming, and swooping to the flesh of still living carcases, by day: yet within, she determined, there should be the honey of gallantry, and a honey rendered the more luscious for being culled from a rock-set comb.

But in time there thundered through those wastes the voice of a man whose nakedness was covered with the skins of beasts, and flesh scoured with penitence and the desert’s storms. And, coming from Jordan as a lion emerges from a water-pool, and followed by disciples as lean and racked and ragged as himself, this man scaled the heights, and approached the fortress, and seemed, as
He did so, to convert the whole plateau into a pedestal for an indomitable statue. And as, gnawed by his thoughts, Antipas went forth on to the stone-bound terrain the nomad arose gigantic, and cried:

“Unclean it is to live with the wife of a brother! Pluck forth the sore now wounding thee! Even yet mayest thou be bold: even yet doth the way of the Lord lie open: but at hand is the day when every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain be brought low!”

And to Herodias’ ears also the man’s cry penetrated: and, donning a robe of purest tissue which revealed her glorious beauty almost as though she had been naked, she presented herself before the anchorite at the hour when sunset was beginning to gild the peaks.

And from amongst some desert scrub Antipas watched her.

Angrily the anchorite’s eyes passed over the woman, and the very fibre of his body seemed to crack.

And she? She stood drooping her eyes as though they had been twin virgin doves, and she the tree of their nesting. She felt herself to be wholly feminine, wholly dainty, wholly desirable and submissive. And Herod bit the rock as he watched her, and watered it with his tears.

Then there came from the man clothed in the skins of beasts strangled with his own fingers a cry. And to that cry the woman responded as with a caress.

And as she did so harsh laughter went echoing down the parched torrent beds. And the caverned cliffs caught it up, and repeated and prolonged it.

And Herodias felt shamed before the very night.

And thereafter she sought to learn the wanderer’s lurking-place, and impugned him to the Tetrarch, and declared his denunciations of incest to have rung through all the country-side. She added:

“Thy slaves and men of war do humble themselves in
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my presence. Yet is this man left free to raise his mouth and spit upon me!"

Herod, lowering his head, replied:

"Nought will I do against this man. He but is an Essene become mad with penitence and fasting. And always the Herods have protected the Essenes."

She pinned her pupils to his gloomy, nervous eyes, but he continued:

"Amid the many calamities and adversities of my father's house there was one old man—an old man barefooted, and clad in sackcloth—who passed untroubled through the fires of destruction, and took thence no scathe. Ever before his voice the King my father remained dumb. Ever of that man's freedom and life the King my father remained the guardian. The man was Manaen, an Essene."

Herodias shrugged her shoulders. And then Antipas went on:

"For when my father was yet but a poor stripling Manaen came unto him one day, smote him across the buttocks with a rod, and said, laughing: 'One day the Lord will bring thee to a throne. And thou shalt then remember these my strokes, and conceive of them that they brought thee a change of fortune. And though thou shalt be glorious, thou shalt not be virtuous, but see the anger of the Lord break oft against thine anointed forehead.' And never did the King forget him of that hour. He persecuted many nations and many sects: but he never ceased to protect the Essenes. And I will do likewise, and as all who have been of my blood have done—in remembrance of that Manaen."

Herodias dissembled her wrath, but continued to make inquiry after the wanderer. And they told her:

"He is one John who doth baptise in the river, and is a prophet of the just God. And the word which he preacheth is a word both of anger and of pity. Saith he:
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'Now is the axe laid unto the tree: and every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire.' And when we did ask of him: 'O Master, what shall we do?' he did reply unto us: 'He that hath two coats, let him give one of them unto him that hath none. And let him that hath meat minister unto the poor.'"

Next, Herodias descended to the casemates, to hear further of what John had said. And though the stench from the men made her shudder, she inquired of a man-at-arms, and he told her:

"We did go unto John, and ask, saying: 'What also shall we do?' And he said unto us: 'Do violence unto no man, nor accuse any falsely, but rest content with what be given unto you, and hurt not the weak.'"

And Herodias departed further to consider matters, for she desired to divine the prophet's purpose. And as she was burying her face and her sobs in the cushions of her couch, again there came to her—piercing the solitudes and the very walls of the fortress—the implacable cry of:

"Unclean it is to live with the wife of a brother!"

And through Herodias there shot such hatred and such terror that her will-power sank into abeyance.

Ah, that voice against them, the voice of the new Elias! As Machærus listened to it Machærus trembled. And though on the night of the tenth of Ab the voice fell silent, the axe trembled as it clave upon its way. Again and again did it seek to hew through to the Baptist's throat and many and many an attempt had to be made, but ever, as the stroke fell, the axe failed to present its cutting-edge.

Then reverently Apollos of Alexandria, John's disciple, removed the trunk and the fragments planed from the mangled neck.

And there fell upon the plateau a silence greater than ever.

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And, white as with a whiteness of slime, Herod's life plastered itself still closer upon the woman's triumphant carnality, whilst Salome served to link him with the past through evoking before his mental vision a mother possessed of a virginity which had never been hers.

But far away, amongst the surging sea of rocks, there were gathering the hosts of Aretas.

As Antipas returned towards Machærus he seemed to see John's spectre mounted upon every boulder and peak to gaze upon him.

And he turned back thence, and built for himself a pleasance in the orchards of Gennesaret, where already the Lake's blue waters reflected a girdle of happy cities. And from that pleasance burst forth the glorious city of Tiberias—Antipas' city, a city fashioned at speed of precious marble, but for whose founding the diggers had first to take out and replace the bottommost stratum of rock, in that the site had comprised the burial-place of Emmaus, and still had rising in its midst the hot springs declared by Estrabon to have been capable of corroding horns and hides and hooves. Otherwise would legal impurity and risk of offence have ensued for the inhabitants.

Yet for a while even the rigour and pomp of the purificatory rites, added to gifts of lands and dwelling of the kind usually effective in attracting new populations, failed to overcome the popular objection to the new township: so that in the end the authorities were constrained to people the place with families of Antipas' dependents, and with Gentiles from Perea, Decapolis, and Samaria. Only later did the gaieties and amenities of the city cause it to become generally acceptable: though, for his part, the orthodox Jew never ceased to murmur against a city tolerant of every sort of abominable image and sin, a city where the
beast unclean and forbidden to the True Believer, and to the Egyptian, and to the Ethiopian, and to the Phœnician, and to the Indian, and to the Arab, was bred in herds, and tended by pagan slaves, and sold and cooked in every hostel and caravanserai, and where the Gymnasium never lacked an Hellenic festival in whose games, as during the backsliding days of Zion, Israelites took part whilst cunningly concealing their circumcised flesh.

And the city grew, and came to have in its midst such flourishing families of erudition as the Miari and the Compso and the Pestic. And Antipas himself awarded it the preference over his other Tetrarchical palaces—over the palaces of Bethabar or Livias (so called in honour of the ruling Caesar's consort) and Sepphoris (whose gardens were laved from the sweet veins of Mount Tabor) and Sebaste and Jerusalem, and made it the permanent seat of his court of scientists and rhetoricians and gallants and musicians and jugglers and adventurers, a motley drawn from every state of the then civilised world, and reinforced with the huge guard of Thracians and Germans and Gauls which, after acting as escort to Cleopatra, had been devised by the vanquisher of Antony to the house of Herod.

And at that court of the arts of feast and song the adulteress Herodias and her daughter would figure as enthroned and hieratical and stately and mysterious and semi-divine, and then suddenly join in the revels, and, before the eyes of a pale, lugubriously smiling Tetrarch, infuse into them the whole power of their enchantments.

But in time there came floating to Tiberias from Galilee's fragrant meadows and white-washed villages and shimmering Lake-side the voice of a Man. And for ever that voice disturbed the Tetrarch's life.

And Herod was told that:

"This Rabbi not only calleth himself a prophet, but declareth himself to be the Prophet whom the prophets of
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yore foretold should be sent of God. And to follow him
there hath gone thy servant Levi who gathered unto him-
self riches through his taking of the tribute money at
Capernaum. Yea, money and office alike Levi hath for-
saken, in that the power of the Rabbi's eyes and words is
not to be withstood. And he can loosen the tongues of the
dumb, and the sinews of the halt, and cause them who are
possessed with devils to obey him as might a sleeping child.
And never doth he cease to extol humility, and to rail
against the might and the deceitfulness of the Pharisees
and Sadducees."

Antipas trembled. Also, he strengthened his guards,
lest the Man should enter within the very gates of Tiberias
itself.

But to the Man the grandeur of the city was as nought.
He Himself was poor, and one who ever preached that
for a journey a traveller should take nor scrip nor purse
nor change of raiment and sandals, but only a staff.

And the news of each fresh miracle caused Herod's
ponderous features to grow paler, and his flabby cheeks to
shrink, and his dreams to bring to him the name of John.

Then the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem sent Masters of the
Law, with a request that Antipas would purge his terri-
itories of the man who thus exalted himself as the Son of
God.

And Herod and the messengers from the Sanhedrin
ascended to the flat roof of the palace, and thence beheld
a multitude, with, in the midst of it, the Rabbi.

And Antipas shrunk back with his temples oozing sweat,
and his coarse underlip fringed with sweaty beads. And
he besought the Masters—he said to them:

"Take ye that man, and deal with him according unto
your wisdom. For he is John, the John who came from
the river, and showed himself unto me again on Machærus'.mountains. Yet I did behead John only for Herodias'
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sake—for the sake of her who, when yet the head was gushing blood, did seize upon it, gaze into the eyes horribly uplifted, and pierce the tongue with a needle of gold. Yea, it is John—John risen from the dead!"

And he fled away into the gloom of the corridors, and then issued from the corridors to hide himself in the orchards, and view thence the meeting of the Sanhedrites with the Prophet.

And the Doctors of the Law sought their white mules, and rode forth towards the Prophet with contempt for Herod in their hearts.

. . . . . . . . . . . .

The Rabbi halted on the garden-bordered road, and the people threw themselves down, and lay watching His blue mantle gleam against the blue of the skies. Also, they laid children and aged and infirm at His feet, that these likewise might receive comfort from His gaze.

And husbandmen left plough in furrow to run and hear Him, whilst the deserted teams—ox with ox, and ass with ass—stood motionless, with eyes turned towards the roadway.

The Rabbi waited awhile. Then He said:

"Unto what shall I liken the Kingdom of God? It is like unto a grain which a man soweth. And the grain cometh up until it becometh a tree, and the birds of the air lodge therein."

And women left oven and grindstone and spindle, and lingered not to tire themselves, but ran forthwith, and joined the rest of the group in flaming, fluttering garments.

And the Rabbi waited for them also. And when His Disciples would have turned about in anger He divined their thought, and, adapting His words to the last-comers, said:

"Unto what shall I liken the Kingdom of God? It is
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like unto leaven which a woman taketh, and hideth in three measures of meal until the whole be leavened."

Unable to restrain his anxiety, a delver cried:

"O Rabbi, shall only a few be saved?"

And when the Disciples were for chiding the novice's impatience the Rabbi rebuked them with a look, and said:

"He hath done nought amiss. Strive ye to enter in at the gate. Narrow is the gate, and many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able."

And He turned about, and saw the Sanhedrites approaching Him.

No need was there for the Sanhedrites to bid their virgiferi, or rod-bearers, clear a way, seeing that already the solemnity of the Masters' bearing, added to their robes and insignia, had anticipated any spoken command.

A woman faded, of waning beauty, placed herself beside the Rabbi, clasped her arms about His shoulders as though to shield Him, and gazed jealously at the men from Jerusalem.

A venerable Elder, spare of frame, detached himself from the rest. He was a man with sunken eyes and a beard of filaments as clear and pale as withered grass. And, pointing a thin, decrepit, accusatory finger towards the Worker of Miracles, he cried:

"Depart thou! The Prince knoweth of thy work of perdition, and hath decreed thy death."

Upon this the Disciples drew closer together, but He who was sought to be expelled straightened Himself, and replied:

"Go tell that fox that I do but give healing and salvation unto the possessed, and that never a prophet shall perish out of Jerusalem."

And He threw a sorrowful glance along the road to the Lord's City, opened wide His arms, and added:

"O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem! Thou that persecutest
them who are sent unto thee! How often would I have gathered thy children unto my breast as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings?"

The Doctors of the Law turned back, and re-sought the Tetrarch.

Said the old man with the faded beard:

"The Rabbi's doctrine is indeed a doctrine of peril. He hath been heard to say: 'I bring not peace, but variance, and, in that I am come to send fire upon the earth, what should I seek but that the fire may burn?'

"John it is—John risen from the dead! Upon me also in Machærus he did send fire, and constrain me to cast him into prison. But I did slay him only for Herodias' sake, after that she had charged her daughter to please me with dancing and playing upon the psaltery."

Here a Pharisee, lean, with cheek-bones as though oiled, raised a left arm and dangling cases of phylacteries.

"What thou sayest I know not," he cried. "I know but that the Rabbi Jeshua hath proclaimed that he is able to cleanse from sin, and that the water of ceremony whereby we do wash our bodies maketh but dirt, and that only his doctrine can lighten our darkness. But I say that such a torch will leave behind it nought save a yet greater darkness."

And the Pharisee's upraised arm remained tense and rigid and quivering.

The Tetrarch shook his head. He replied:

"Ptolemæus Euergetes also was a man of might, like unto myself. And even as I did he humble himself at a feast before the comeliness and the desires of a strange maiden and her psaltery. And shall that maiden of his have the advantage over Salome?"

But the grim Sanhedrites held him in their midst, and mingled enmity against the Rabbi with contempt for the Tetrarch.
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"If," they said, "John did conceive rebellion against his ruler, then John's punishment was just. And they who believed upon John are now following the Nazarene."

"He is John himself—John come from the river—John risen to enter upon my dominions like a lion!"

"Nay, he cannot have come from Jordan save that first he descended thither when fleeing from Nazareth."

"O Herod, let him be questioned of thy people. Let such of thy servants question him as Levi the publican, and Joanna the wife of Chuza thy steward at Capernaum."

"Yea, for the Rabbi is able to deceive with powers of magic, and calleth himself the Christ, and will cause the multitude to yield unto him through faith, and through their looking ever for a Messiah."

To Herod, wavering amongst the Pharisees, and regarding them with disquietude, every rustle of the trees seemed to pretend the appearance of the spectre of the beheaded prophet.

Then all went forth into meads of trefoil and anemone, where coppices of laurel and box stood tenanted by marble deities, and ornamental water-basins lay surrounded with rose-covered trellis on bamboo poles, and grotted fountains and tanks thrust forth fleshy-petalled blue and white water-lilies with chalices specked with rain as with sunlight, and everywhere was a murmur of runlets and bees and doves, a murmur occasionally broken by the wing-flappings of regal peacocks.

The cordon of Sanhedrites surged around Herod once more, and the Elder went on:

"When we sought to drive him from thy territories, and threatened him in thy name, he did laugh thine anger to scorn, and liken thee unto a fox dreading assault, yet creeping by night to ravage the vineyard."

Herod halted. Gloomily eyeing his reflection in the bosom of a water-basin, he asked himself:
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"Do I creep as the foxes do?"

Then the party debouched upon an avenue of lemon-trees in blossom which ran straight from the palace portico to the Lake. And a solitary eagle was passing across the heavens.

At the same moment there came into view, on a peristyle looking shoreward, the figure of Herodias, red-purple in the sunset.

And as soon as Antipas descried that figure his eyes dilated, and his flesh became one gigantic pupil, and he ceased to have ears for the Elders of the Sanhedrin.

She called to him, and he broke into a run—blundering against, tripping over, pilasters and outstretched, greasy bodies of barbarian guards dozing in the sultry calm of eventide.

And Herodias drew him towards the Lake. And though she seemed to hang upon his trembling, malodorous arm and sweaty, flacculent, feeble neck, she yet held her forehead high.

By this time the eagle had become a speck of gold in the cool, blue distance, and was fast disappearing.

Passionately Herodias said:

"That eagle hath been weaving over us a crown! O Herod, may not that crown have been a portent?"

Herod smiled a hollow smile, and the larynx of his bowed neck gasped with pusillanimity.

And then that pusillanimity took shape in the stertorous words:

"Bethink thee that they might behead me!"

She eyed his neck disdainfully, and said:

"It is not upon thy shoulders, but in thyself, that the peril threateneth. Remember thou how the kingdom of the great Herod did become rent in twain through his lack of sons of sufficient might to wear his mantle whole."

Antipas evaded her gaze, and murmured:

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“At least is a portion of that mantle mine.”
“Aye, and Rome’s!” she retorted.
“And another one is my brother’s.”
“Aye, and Rome’s! And Rome’s!” she repeated.
“Moreover, to Rome alone belong both Samaria and Judea and all, unto the Syrian Sea, which once thy father did rule and glorify.”

The Tetrarch gave a plebeian laugh, and reminded her:
“Mark thou that overmuch of the mantle yet remaineth, even though the shoulders of a King’s son of whom we wot are wearing but the grey of a Roman merchant.”

Whereupon, since recollection of the injury done to her husband could still bite home to the proud adulteress’ heart, she writhed as a serpent writhe within its skin. Then she drew a deep breath of displeasure, and burst forth with words borne upon the impetus of her magnificent blood rather than upon the current of her voice.

“Perish the thought!” she cried. “Philip, whom I did forsake for a glory which existeth in my thoughts alone was of a valour equal unto his meekness. He hath become that which he desired to be, and none should mock him for that. But thou and thy brother, the other Tetrarch, have taken upon yourselves the robe of kings, yet walk abroad with bare temples, in that ye have mislaid the crowns within your houses! And in those houses ye still have need of the Roman! For without his aid ye would soon become slaves of the Arab. Of his own doing Philip did set himself apart, but ye were set apart by Cæsar, and of your own peoples, and within your own Tetrarchies!”

Herod pressed his cheek against a pillar for the sake of the stone’s coolness. In the darkness and the bitterness of his soul he realised that he had lost courage both as lover and as prince, and was left with only the desolation of despair, and paralysis and decrepitude.

Above him the night lay quivering with stars. Clearly

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through the air came an echoing and trampling of hooves, with a jingling of harness, as a caravan arrived with honey and spices from Jericho.

Herodias sighed—then turned the braziers of her eyes upon Herod, softened, and said:

"Where now is the eagle which brought us that portent of glory? Ah, but thou shalt not flee me!" And she encircled him with her arms, and darted a kiss upon his eyelids.

"Become king of all that once was ours!" she cried. "Render unto Cæsar petition, for I do desire Jericho even more than Cleopatra did. O Herod make thyself great again! See! All of me thou hast. Look upon me! All of me thou hast, yet thou wouldst not seek a kingdom of might!"

Antipas thrilled. Choking down a sob, he put her from him, and fled into the darkness.

And there he beheld gazing upon him a trunkless head!

The leading company of Thracians, men ruddy and corpulent, came filing into Jerusalem just as eventide fell.

And their advent heralded the arrival of the Tetrarch, and people rushed from the Paschal caravans, and from the wards of the cheese-makers and other guildsmen, to the Hill of Acra, and thronged the intercolumnia of Xystus, and the half-circle of steps cut in the flank of Zion below the spot where the ancient Asmonæan palace projected its terraces over Xystus' roofs.

Meanwhile, as partisans of the Herods, the leading Sadducee families traversed the bridge across the Tyropeon to the Upper City, and descended thence by a subterranean passage guarded from the common people, and prepared themselves to welcome the Prince beneath a baldaquin hung with Pharaonic fabrics.
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Antipas arrived on a mule so heavily caparisoned and embossed with gold as to make the animal clatter under its rich ornamentation, and look as stately and amorphous as an idol. And beside him, in litters of sandalwood and lacquer fitted with crimson canopies, and slung between three camels yoked abreast, rode Herodias and Salome—the latter now the betrothed of Herod’s brother, the Tetrarch of Trachonitis and Paneas and Batanea. And next came the Court in general, and then the Prince’s slaves and horses and chariots, and, lastly, his escort of barbarians, of men old and young who, gigantesque and slow-moving, were impassable in battle, yet as docile as castrated lions, glittering with bronze and grease, and crested with horse-tails of a pale, dull red which, falling from their casques, streamed over their backs.

The populace evinced sign neither of jubilation nor of submission nor of assent. It had come just to gaze.

For, as Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea only, Herod represented, in David’s City, merely an alien prince arrived thither by the will of Rome, by the will of the detested Metropolis which now had thrust its hard and greedy rule over the whole of Palestine.

And even in Jerusalem Herod had left to him only the friendship of a few patrician houses, and the palace of Zion. All the other palaces aggrandised by his father—the Fortress of Baris or Antonia and the white marble towers or mansions of Hippicus and Phasael and Mariamne—were Cæsar’s property.

But, as Antipas’ scruples would not permit him ever to omit participation in the Paschal Festival during the month of Nisan, and in the Feast of Tabernacles during the month of Tizri, and in the Feast of Dedication during the month of Chislev, and in the Feast of Purim during the month of Adar, he complied, on each occasion, with every rite of the Mosaic Law.
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And once he sought to curry favour with Jewry by requesting Pilate to desist from his acts of sacrilege. But the Roman checkmated this political design by rejecting the proffered mediation.

Moreover, although, on Antipas' arrival in Jerusalem, six decurions never failed to descend from the Praetorium to greet him, those legionaries' bearing betokened Roman sovereignty rather than Roman respect for a tetrarch.

And meanwhile the Tribune watched from the Citadel's topmost turret: watched as a falcon watches from its crag.

That night all the intercolumnia of Xystus became aflame with spiced braziers, and Zion rang with sackbut, sistrum, flute, timbrel, and the instrument which impels wind from a bag into a reed similar to the reed of the oboe and the syrinx. Yet to the Pharisees players and tunes alike were sources of scandal, and, in passing the mansion of sin, those zealots bent themselves to the very earth rather than look upon it.

On the trumpets of the Temple proclaiming the new sun, Antipas repaired to the Sanctuary which his father had built, and deposited his meed of Sacred Tribute.

And even the eight cedar-wood trestles for hanging and skinning the sacrificial victims could not hold all the Prince's offerings: and until the third hour were his slaves feverishly bearing thither the panniers and jars containing the tithes rendered from the Tetrarchical estates.

Next, the three strokes sounded: and, upon their doing so, Antipas entered the Court of Israel—but without his retinue, in that the Law of Cleanliness discouraged Gentile entry within that reserved precinct of the building.

Later, also, Herod desired to show himself in the Sanctuary, and therefore attended the evening "Schema of Israel," but failed to support the mingled stench of sweat, incense, candle grease, and sacrificial offal, and retired without praying, and was mocked at of the people.
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As he issued from the Western Porch he perceived the valley below Acra to be thronged and clamorous, and soldiers to be riding their horses through the human torrents, and sheep from the Paschal flocks fleeing, terror-stricken, up gullies and cliffs, and all Jerusalem growing raucous with clarinets and trumpets.

For Pilate was arriving from Cæsarea.

The multitude which had been gazing at Herodias and the Prince forgot them in its desire to behold the abhorred Procurator, with whom was a mission come from Italia with greetings for the Passover.

And Herod returned towards his palace with increased haste, and found the Hill of Zion plunged in a solitariness as restful as that of a hill in some country spot, save that, on the opposite slope, a plainly-attired band of men were making their way to a house as white and bare as a barn.

In Antipas’ hearing a Pro-Herodian Jew remarked:

“Those yonder are the Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples.”

And Herodias, with a smile, reminded the Tetrarch of his former terrors. And he retorted:

“Rather would I speak with the Rabbi Jesus than with him.” And he nodded in the direction of Pilate’s litter.

Just then, borne on the shoulders of six Numidians, the Roman Governor was passing through an avenue of spears and shields massed upon the hill of the Praetorium, whilst still at a great distance from the city, the column of his baggage dromedaries, of his “ships of the desert,” was emerging from the red dust of the sunset.

Herod, having entered the portico of his palace, and found himself once more amongst the marvels accumulated by the Grand Monarch, gave himself up to the angry disquietude which Pontius always aroused in his breast.

The outer walls of the palace were faced with blocks of red stone, and had their angles pierced with windows of the
Herod Antipas

width of loopholes, whilst, within them, through a series of chambers of Assyrian stucco, ran frescoes whence huge brown figures outlined in black gazed with three-cornered, sleepy, cruel eyes, and where the reptiles and dragons of Ezekiel's vision writhed in a setting of broad, pulpy, red-and-blue-floated water-lilies. As regards the partition walls, they were panelled in purple, whilst the floors and pilasters were enamelled with reproductions of Susan fabrics which gleamed palely in the stone-filtered light.

But the apogee of all this magnificence lay in the two chambers known respectively as the "Cæsareion" and the "Agrippaeion"—chambers where from vaulted ceilings there gazed eyes of chrysolite and carbuncle and garnet and amethyst and feldspar and emerald, whilst waters tinted with beryl and lapis lazuli and lac and rock crystal and prase and obsidian and onyx and carnelian and shaded agate soughed over capitals of winged bulls and brackets and archways, with the whole designed into ovals, stars, roses, rings, and rhombs, and the pilasters seething with upheavals of nude, jewelled figures into whose amber and alabaster flesh old Herod had emptied entire caravans of gems from Sheba and Raamah, until everywhere the suite was undulant and reticulate with clusters of stones—but also charged everywhere with the intimate chill, the intimate sense of oppression, of treasures buried in a massive subterranean vault.

Between the several buildings of the palace were jasper courts shaded with awnings amaranthine, green, orange, blood-red, and self-colour.

Interlacing runlets discharged jets into glass piscinas set between pillars whose Grecian frets bore in relief copper apples, pomegranates, and grapes, whilst deep marble pots held fragrant Eubœan myrtles of the species which produces both fruit and perfume, and Greek statues projected from the myrtles' massed sweetness, and cloister-like arches
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord
stood hung with braziers fashioned from magnificent
shields, and diffusing odours of sandalwood, mastich, cistus,
myrrh, Indian saffron, cinnamon, and ginger.

At the further end was the banqueting-hall, a hall which,
lined with Iberian bronze and Mauritanian lemon-wood,
stood furnished with tables mounted on silver alligators
and asses, with Persian rugs and red-ochre-dyed halicore
skins such as were used for roofing the Tabernacle, with
elbow-cushions stuffed with the feathers of the francolin or
African partridge, and with a hundred couches whose
frames were of wrought-gold, and fitted with scarlet can-
opies slung upon rods of sabine-wood, orange-wood, and
ebony, and so heavily marquetried with masses of mother-
of-pearl and turquoise and chalcedony as to vie even with
the famous couches of Holofernes.

A throng of courtiers, minstrels, musicians, servitors,
and guards were standing clustered around the peristyles
and balustrades of the audience-chamber.

The chief steward, with the badge of a key embroidered
upon his leathern girdle, entered and informed Herod
that a centurion was approaching the palace with priests
and a multitude.

Antipas turned pale.

Next, his cup-bearer entered, a Mitylenian page with
tattoo-work on his arms. And the cup-bearer, prostrating
himself, announced pertly:

"O Basileus, how Rome doth love thee! Here is
Pontius sending unto thee the Rabbi Jeshua!"

"Rome?" the Tetrarch ejaculated with flickering eyelids.
Then he added with difficulty:

"See that thou tell Herodias of this. Go thou, and tell
her."

And with that he passed into the Hall of Justice.

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Between two pillars at the further end of the Hall stood the throne of Antipas' father, almost hidden beneath thyrsi, Bacchic wands, faded garlands, psalteries, vials of perfume, festal tunics, and other relics of past orgies.

Hastily a band of slaves set to work to remove the litter. The throne followed the model of Solomon in having six ivory steps of approach, arms formed of two pairs of lions, and a body constituted of a group of bulls, with their horns constituting the head-rest, and the whole wrought of solid gold.

Disposed about the throne were cushions and divans for the dignitaries of the Court, a bristling forest of spears with twisted blades, and pilasters swathed to one-half of their height with green, mauve, and cerise-coloured embroideries.

Antipas approached the Seat of Justice, his courtiers and officials ranged themselves around him, the bevy of Chief Priests and Elders and Apparitors and Pharisees and Rabbins and Praetorian Guards took possession of the space in front, and in the centre of that space there was set a Man upon whose features were livid bruises. Then the multitude flocked into the Hall.

The centurion stepped forward, but before he could speak Herod lurched from his throne, and approached a curtained doorway.

For there was echoing from the chambers within that doorway a clamour of feminine voices: and as Herod peeped through the curtains there met his eye the spectacle of Herodias, nude, joyous, and child-like, careering through one room after another, and upsetting tripods in her progress, and taking footstools and braziers in her stride, and, in her wake, female attendants rearranging the hangings which she flung apart: until, the doorway into the Hall of Justice reached, she thrust her head through

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the chink of the curtains, and, realising suddenly that she was nude, and still wet from the bath, and streaming with the ungents of her morning’s anointing, gave the curtains a twitch, and allowed no more of her person to be seen than a pair of eyes gleaming like a pair of jewels.

Herod gazed at those eyes as though fascinated. For though he could discern in them, divorced from the rest of the woman, a light and a purpose, that light and that purpose were not to be fathomed.

At length a courtier reminded him of the waiting centurion.

And the centurion said with an obeisance:

"O Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, unto thee Lucius Pontius Pilatus, Procurator in Judea and Samaria for Tiberius Caesar, sendeth amity and greeting."

Herod turned to look at the curtains again. Thence he received a gleam which penetrated to his very soul.

"Also," the Prætorian continued, "unto this tribunal of thine Pontius doth commit the cause presented against one Rabbi Jesus, a citizen of Nazareth, by the Greater Sanhedrin of Jerusalem."

Then he stepped aside, and allowed the Captive to be seen.

Herod murmured a few words of affection for Rome, and of compliment and gratitude to Pilate, and added:

"With gladness is it that I and my Court behold this soothsayer, in that fain would we witness some of his miracles."

Upon this a clamour of protest arose from the Sanhedrites.

The Tetrarch smiled at the centurion, and at the flaming eyes fixed upon Jesus, and at his giant guards.

Then his attention was caught by a jesting whisper which seemed to be spreading amongst his courtiers, and by a woman’s stifled laugh from within the curtained doorway.
Herod Antipas

—a laugh which besprinkled those present like the delicate spray of a spring tide.

And so darkly did he scowl, since ever he was the more suspicious in that never he could determine a cause of himself, that courtiers approached him with the hasty explanation:

“Behold the faces of the Pharisees!”

And the Tetrarch, feigning to suppress his anger, though still throwing jealous glances about him, turned his attention from the Rabbi, standing bound and solitary and submissive amid the ring of red chlamydes and crested helmets, to the Pharisaic Judges, who were tossing aloft arms in lacings of tefillah thongs for binding the first, second, and third fingers together, and stripping necks of scarves, and shoulders of stiff capes, and middles of napkins for ritual purification, and muffling their faces in these garments, and lurching backwards with sudden halts in poses of disgust before making for the exits again—all through scandalisation at the gods, men, and beasts portrayed in the paintings on the walls.

Eventually, however, the Sadducees (customarily the Pharisees’ enemies, but temporarily joined to them for common persecution of the seditious Prophet) sought to avert an untoward retreat on the Pharisees’ part by reminding them that, after all, the Tetrarch’s palace was no Gentile habitation, but belonged to a son of the rebuilders of the Lord’s Temple, and that that son offered the same sacrifices as themselves, and paid the Holy Tribute, and possessed the privilege of prayer in the Court reserved for True Believers.

To which the Sadducees added that only through the good-will of that son could there be obtained the sentence necessary for the good of the people.

And eventually the Pharisees turned back, though still with heads buried beneath the cowls of their cloaks.
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Then the Hâkân, Vice-President of the Sanhedrin, who had under him the care of the priesthood, expounded the law, and concluded:

"In the name of the Lord God of Israel!"

Again the Tetrarch left his throne, halted amongst his men of war, and consulted them. And all approved of his representations, and he said:

"O Rabbi Jeshua, show unto us a miracle."

And the priests murmured again.

Jesus continued to stand silent, motionless, apparently indifferent. The centurion touched Him with the vine-wood stock of his military baton: and as he did so a shaft of sunlight entered from the portico, penetrated the virgin ringlets of Jesus' beard, threw a gilding upon the skin of His features, and picked out the darkness of the hollows beneath His drooping eyelids.

Herod repeated the command—repeated it tolerantly, invitingly.

The Rabbi's lips and eyelids quivered faintly for a moment, but He made no reply.

Antipas turned sharply to the courtiers with a declaration (meant for Herodias' ear) that never should he have expected to find so much meekness in one who had swayed whole multitudes to enthusiasm. And this although, as a matter of fact, Antipas had been expecting Jesus to bow the knee to him!

A courtier said:

"He is come unto the Prince's presence but from the villages and fishing-boats of Tiberias!"

Herod reseated himself, and commanded the Captive to be removed. And as he spoke he looked at Jesus. And Jesus' eyes fixed his, and held them. Herod's eyes fell, and there passed over him the feeling which always made his legs bend. Again he raised his eyes. Again those eyes were met with a gaze so calm and boundless as to
submerge the Tetrarch’s whole being. For the Rabbi’s eyes had in them neither responsiveness nor fear nor supplication. They were eyes solely vibrant with will-power.

And the Tetrarch sought to evade them again. As he did so every brow seemed to have on it the thought: “So thou hast not prevailed! And it is he who called thee a fox! And this day he hath mocked thee!”

And the eyes which seemed to say this more than all the rest were the eyes burning between the door curtains.

Herod sat there humbled. Then the Jewish Judges, who had been biding their time, lifted their voices again.

And the Rabbi emerged from the flood of accusation as a man rebellious, and bold, and the forger of a sacrilegious crown.

Again the hidden woman’s gaze cried to Herod: “He is greater than thou! Thou hast not power even over his silence!”

And that brought the Tetrarch to himself again. The Sanhedrites surged around him, aflame with enxiety and rancour, and gesticulating, and repeating over and over their charges.

And now, Herod thought, it was not at the Captive that the courtiers and the guards and the woman were looking. It was at himself. And though the Worker of Miracles had challenged him, the Prince, with disdain, the Prince had nothing to oppose to that disdain save emotion!

Antipas felt smitten in every pore. He rushed forward, thrust aside the knot of priests, and, on reaching Jesus, vented a howl which cracked with its own force, and was wordless and beyond control. Yet also the howl was destitute of rancour, and thereafter he stood sobbing dully, with feet planted as though to resist attack.

Jesus moved aside, and transferred His gaze to the shaft which the great and goodly sun, the sun which even then
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was drying the nets at Bethsaida, had shot across His shoulders.

Herod stood powerless to advance, yet dared not retreat. He saw himself caught in a maze of indecision. Only a rustling of the coverings on the pilasters could be heard. The Rabbi Jeshua had conquered!

Antipas feinted at Jesus' mouth with a puffy fist, and Jesus slightly averted His face. Then the other laughed, and followed Him up with fist outstretched, and countenance mutely appealing to the courtiers to fall to with sport, and deliver him from his position of isolation with the Rabbi.

And courtiers ever are friends. Wherefore Herod's harsh laughter soon evoked flattery and compliance.

And the multitude roared, demanding sentence.

Yet still the Tetrarch laughed—laughed from a throat choking, dribbling saliva; laughed even as he was passing through the crowd; laughed even when he had returned to the throne.

By this time Herodias was no longer regarding him.

Tall and upright, the centurion was waiting.

Again the priests shouted, and Antipas flung back at them:

"What seek ye, ye who have brought unto me a varlet believing himself to be the Son of God and King of All Men?"

The tumult redoubled.

Herod's cup-bearer left the Hall, and returned dragging behind him a sheet of coarse linen.

The Tetrarch anticipated him with a cry of:

"A king's garment, a king's garment! Verily, in that shall he be sent back unto Pilate!"

And duly Herod's officers vested Jesus in the white sheet, a sheet parodying the robe worn by Persian monarchs, and used to embellish Persian deities, and thrown over the
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armour of noble youths of Rome when first they made their entry into the arena, and flaunted for a ceremonial tunic by the Augustans, and adopted as the "toga candida" for Romans aspiring to a quaestorship—whence the later term "candidate."

And then the centurion tightened the Rabbi's bonds, and translated the travesty of justice into juridicial form by uttering the cold command:

"Ad Forum Apprehensionis!"

And they removed the Captive.

Herod stretched his arms, and laughed again. Then, bringing those arms to his sides, he, still laughing, disappeared tremulously behind the pilaster draperies.

Outside an old man greeted him with a mutter of:

"Thou son of a dog!"

The chambers lately traversed by the nude Herodias were vacant. Here and there the carpets lay strewn with ribbands, anklets, furbelows, and alabaster perfume-cases. Herod took up a hand-mirror formed of a disc of silver—a toy fitted with an ebony handle, and a frame inlaid with ivory carvings of fruit. And the disc showed him his own laugh again, the laugh contracted of skin cold and oily and beaded with sweat. And as he flung the mirror away the same laugh ricocheted over chalcedony medallions and amber rhombs and polished woods and bronze braziers and marble statues and ornamental basins. And when he pressed his hands to his face the laugh still quivered with the quiver of the grimace, and seemed to communicate itself to everything. But in his bowels there was agonising humiliation, and agonising heartbreak and perplexity and despair.

Cautiously he approached the terrace. Courtiers and slaves—yes, and she, in her purple robe—were gazing together at the Rabbi. Herod might have been a beggar lying on the pavement!
Pilate


In the twelfth year of the reign of Tiberius, when Ælius Lamius was Legate of Syria, there was entrusted to Lucius Pontius Pilatus the Procuratorship of Judea.

Handsome, vigorous, and upright, Pontius had a round head covered with short, thick grizzled hair, a forehead low, yet prominent at the temples, eyes small, steely, restless, and apt to grow smaller yet when observing anything closely, lips clean-shaven and full, a nose blunt, a chin pointed, cheeks hard and kept free of hair, and hands soft, braceletèd with pale gold, and bearing the broad ring or anulus of a knight—a ring like a speck of moonlight.

True, the asperity of Pilate's voice and bearing could abate itself during fits of apathy and disgust: yet this temporary quiescence imperfectly veiled the forcefulness beating in the line of his temples, around his choleric mouth, and in the irascible curve of his jaw-bones, much as the bronzes of Myron retain the energy and the spirit of the wrestling-ring.

Yet, whilst opinionated, Pontius could also be inconsistent. Once he tortured a slave for breaking a vase of Thericles' make, and then gave the slave his freedom, and added to it goods of greater value than the broken vessel. Again, at one moment he would declare poets and philosophers to be parasites, and at another moment be-take himself with enthusiasm to the composition of epigrams and theses. Similarly, he would lament the fact that into the Schools of Greece there had crept the taste
Pilate

and the spirit of Rome, and then desert the amenities of the triclinium, and even the society and the conversation of his wife, to hear his lector distil full-flavoured honey from the Anacreontic vine, or diluted wisdom from the Platonic comb.

And when Claudia glanced at him affectionately, and chided his neglect, he would reply in self-defence:

"Not in all the world is there a brain so wise, so eternally youthful, as the brain of the old man of Teos. Ever the grapes crushed upon his palate yield pure wine of joy. And Plato, how shall I not love him also? He was the chosen of my kinsman Caius Pontius Herennius, and he and I have often discoursed of our tenderness for 'the discreet bowers of the Academia.'"

Similarly, after twitting the gods with their blunders on earth, and declaring the lives of natural creatures to be worth more than the life of any supernatural deity, Pontius would, with a sudden revulsion, prostrate himself in the temple of Jupiter Pater, and recant his presumptuous words. But, with all that, Pontius always rated the powers of the Pantheon inferior to the occult forces of divination and magic. Any and every document issued by Crispus and Posidonius and Panætius he collected and studied; whilst, in addition, he kept a paid soothsayer—a man stern, and sunken, and sapient of feature, and scoured with self-torture and expiatory rites, and resplendent in jewelled robes—to observe, on his behalf, all tokens and presages, and to mark whether a raven croaked to the left, or a crow to the right, and whether, when lifting its hot muzzle towards a rain-cloud, an ox broke into a snort. For at that period any and every doctrinal dart launched by a foreign magician found a billet in Rome's bowels: everywhere in Rome ascetics were mortifying and training their bodies with every rigour known to their science, with every ingenuity of cruelty, and
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guarding with the greatest jealousy their prodigies and oracles. Nay, according to Suetonius, even Cæsar, a man stinking of vice like a he-goat of hair, would pause, and turn pale, amid his wallowings in the Deliciae of Capri, if his Chief Augur happened to direct upon him a passing glance.

Pontius arrived in the land of Israel under the influence both of encomiums passed upon its natural beauties and of Marcus Tullius’ description of its people as “a race abased and born to servitude.” But at least the flowers and the fruit and the perfumes of Palestine were worthy of Rome!

And he dispatched to Jerusalem, from his Prætorium at Cæsarea-on-the-Mediterranean, a cohort of picked men. And these men bore with them the Gentile standards abhorred of Jacob’s Seed. And the Prætorians entered the city in the dead of night, and, with their entry, the roofs and pinnacles seemed to darken with shadows of malediction, and pariah-dogs and lepers ceased their scrapings and rakings in sewers, deserted their lairs in gateway and in cellar, and fled to the ravines of Bethphage. And all the Mount of Bethany broke into a chorus of barking, and a man possessed with a devil whose lurking-place was in a sepulchre by the Brook Kidron saw a bloody star traverse the heavens, and a monstrous bird, horrid, and ribbed of wing, cross the Brook in the red luminary’s wake.

And when day dawned there arose from the Levites officiating at the early sacrifices a cry of terror shrilling upwards to heaven through Jehovah’s smoke and perfumes.

For from every precinct of the Temple could be seen flashing upon the Citadel Roman manipuli garlanded with gold, and crested with the Open Hand, and Roman aquilæ, and Roman scuta graven with Tiberius’ image.

And all Jerusalem broke into thunderous sobbings of: “Wherefore are they who afflict me become multiplied?”
Pilate

"O Lord, the wicked have come upon Thy heritage! They have defiled Thy house! They are devouring Thy people like bread!"

"Send forth Thine anger upon them who know Thee not! Deliver us for the glory of Thy name, lest men murmur, and say amongst themselves: Whither is gone their God?"

"We are Thy people, and the sheep of Thy pasture!"

And thereafter the multitude issued on to the hills, and soon had choked the road to Caesarea. And there joined themselves to the concourse peasants of the country-side, and shepherds, and folk of the towns. And so the people came and threw themselves at Pontius' feet, and prayed that he would pluck from the Lord's stones the forbidden images.

And the Roman listened wearily. Then he ascended his bema or tribune of cypress inlaid with sardonyx.

And he turned towards the sea, and gazed at the smiling roadstead, and at the bay gleaming with gulls. And he turned towards the land, and gazed at the track-ways which ran shimmering through the blue, misty fields. And then, with patience gone, he raised a brow sweating, and as hard as molten bronze, folded his toga, leaned forward over the people, and, without even looking at them, uttered the single word negatory of their petition.

And an interpreter, with a nasal cry, broadcast that word.

And the bucine blared a blast.

Leaving the atrium, the Procurator slowly ascended the staircase of his marble mansion, a mansion looking as fresh and bright as a sea shell, and set amongst tender plane and palm and cedar. But at the moment when his foot touched the topmost stair he turned. He rested his elbow upon a pilaster, and stood waiting—a figure rugged and rigid, with ring flashing like the pupil in a
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tiger's eye, and form stained to blood colour with the
light of the purple awning above it.

For his ear had caught the sound of trotting hooves,
of shuffling camel-pads, and of jingling accoutrements.
And as the zenith hazed itself with dust there came into
view pleated mitres, and the red horse-hair plumes of the
Tetrarch's barbarian escort.

And Herod's pale-skinned giants bent their frames earth-
ward, and Herod's messenger—a man in a yellow turban,
with a sheathless poniard thrust into a belt of leopard
hide—tendered Pontius a parchment enclosed in the horn
of an antelope.

In that parchment Herod interceded on Judea's behalf.
Pontius' eyes contracted coldly as they met the emissary's
glassy stare, and there rang out a summons.

And, in answer to that summons, a secretary brought
a sheet of clean membrana, a newly-cut reed, and a flask
of sepia the blackness of which lay reflected upon the ves-
sel's lips. And, using the shoulder of a decurion as a
writing-desk, Pilate indited a reply haughtily rejecting the
Tetrarch's mediation.

For six days ocean's clear thunder beat against Israel's
dull wailings. For six days the beach, as ruddy as a heaped
threshing-floor, and the peristyles of the Prætorium, and
the myrtle shrubs in the gardens, and the statues in the
porticoes all reeked of that misery of choked humanity,
whilst heaps of ordure, soft, and wet, and seething with
torpid flies, spread their stench around, and over the mag-
nificent Latin firmament there seemed to grow a veritable
sediment of grey must from the ferment of Semitic flesh
and clothing below it.

And at last Pilate burst forth. Arising against a back-
ground of nude, frescoed figures, he shot up a right arm
against the blue of the sky—and there launched itself the
hurricane of the Syrian Legion, to rend and slash a multi-
Pilate
tude still continuing to bewail the wrong done to its vener-
erable stones, and fearlessly holding out its neck for the
destroying knife. And the leading centurion cut his way
forward until he stood buried and scarlet in the human
wine-press, whilst fingers and breasts and scalps flew up-
ward to the sweep of his dripping sword, and his helmet
lay heaped with fluttering fragments of kerchief, with sack-
cloth and girdles, with long hair still glued to the bleeding
skin. And Pontius leaned forward towards the pity-
blanched figure of Claudia, and cried:

"Behold that centurion of mine! Aye, the doughty
Domitius it is who ofttimes hath fought with a torch
bound unto his brow, and spread the battle, and fanned
the torch, until his very crest seemed aflame!"

And thus the elegance of that atrium, the meretricious
grace of those marbles, the gaiety of those gardens under
the soft, pulpy, honeyed light of sunset became thronged
with spectres.

And the basins of the fountains ran choked with blood,
and swans fluttered with ermine-plumaged wings distended,
and peacocks screeched upon box-tree and laurel, and
pigeons soared aloft, and the beautiful, white, fleecy, golden-
collared lamb which Claudia had been wont to tend with
her own hands, as it frisked over asphodel and anemone,
leapt madly to and fro, and left, upon white marble steps,
upon splendour of silken cloaks, and upon homespun laps
of slave-women hoof-prints reddened with the dye of
slaughter.

And, watching that slaughter, Pontius' hatred of Israel
became yet greater for the nausea induced by Israel's
punishment. Yet also, feeling hemmed about with Israel's
pain, he went forth, raised his baton, and stayed the
soldiery.

And then, and only then, he announced that the abomi-
nable images were to be removed from their position.

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And Israel, raising clasped hands, broke into thanksgivings of:

"I called upon the Lord in my sorrow, and He heard me out of His holy Temple. Turn again unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath done thee good."

The blood-sodden pathways at Cæsarea were cleansed. The wounded were removed on legionaries' shoulders. The air re-echoed with Psalms.

The season came for Pontius to go up to Jerusalem.

For, like his predecessors Coponius, Marcius Ambivius, Annius Rufus, and Valerius Gratus, all of whom had attended the major festivals, he had to follow a cautious policy, seeing that on such occasions Jerusalem swarmed not only with traders and itinerant shepherds (who left their flocks in the common folds on the city's outskirts) and craftsmen and peasants and mariners from Askelon and Joppa and Cæsarea and Ptolemais and Sidon and Tyre, but also with Rabbins who joined together in companies, and walked about with their "schools" behind them. And at all times Jerusalem had been a turbulent city, and was constantly contriving plots and resistance, to the embarrassment of Rome.

For the same reason, as soon as Ramah, on the stone-paved road through Samaria, had been passed Pilate's escort drew closer around their master's litter.

And sadly Claudia murmured:

"How they abhor us!"

Pontius took her in his arms, so that his fingers absorbed a delicate scent of ambergris from her warm, palpitating body, and said:

"My dear one, Israel ever is lying in wait for us. He is a beast of the desert which knoweth nor how to render obedience nor how to rule. Varus, who did crucify two
Pilate

thousand Jews in Jerusalem, so that a Lebanon of crosses
was swept with a hurricane of cries, and also did subdue
Germania—that same Varus trusted overmuch to the terror
of our Roman eagles. And they who were rebelling against
him in Germania set upon him spies. And the coming
of the assaulters was swift: they leapt upon him as leap
hyænas. And when they had plucked forth his tongue, and
sewn up his mouth with horse-hair, a barbarian did crush
the tongue between his fists, and cry: ‘No more shall the
viper hiss!’—O Claudia, may my tongue continue to hiss,
and to kill—and to enjoy!’

And just as he was pressing his lips to his wife’s rounded
bosom the cortège entered the Gate of Jaffa through heaps
of tinted fruit, and basketfuls and sackfuls of fish, and
clamourings of slaves and guards and heralds.

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The Prætorium of Jerusalem stood within the Fortress
of Antonia, beside the Hill of Bæris which separated the
Temple from the rising clustered with buildings, and known
as Bezetha, or “The New City.”

Founded, originally, by King David, the Fortress of
Antonia was aggrandised by the Maccabees, and enlarged
and extended by the brave Hyrcanus who always wore a
coat of mail beneath his robe of the ephod. And Herod
the Great, for his part, dug reservoirs around the Fortress,
and filled them from the Pool of the Prophets, and cut their
sides into surfaces so perfectly damped and mortised with
marble splinters as even to reflect the heavens with their
polish, and cause serpents of the swamp to slip thence, and
birds to be unable to perch thereon. And he built a watch-
tower at each angle of the Fortress, and between each pair
of watch-towers a strong, loopholed patrol-beat, for the
masking and protecting of the King’s gardens and pavilions.

And, later, this structure of David’s, this shield of the

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Temple, passed into the hands of Marcus Antoninus, who made of it both a residence for the Imperial Procurator and a menace to Israel, seeing that he constructed from it a staircase descending straight into the Courts of the Lord, and subterranean passages penetrating even to the Sacred Treasury's thirteen cellars, and thence to the very foundations of Moriah.

To the west of the Fortress projected arcaded galleries, and a castellated scala of white marble leading down to the atrium or main court. And around the atrium were cloisters upon whose arches opened the dark cavities of bakehouses and storerooms and still-rooms and cellars, as well as of the ergastulum or "chamber of correction," and of the torture-chamber, the armoury, the stables, and the castra prætoriana or guard-room.

And across the gorgeous laminae and squares of the mosaic flooring in that atrium the sun would throw its joyous, scintillating beams upon the Chair of Justice—a seat which, consisting of an oval pedestal of silver fir-wood polished to the brightness of jasper, had standing upon it the Sella or Chair proper, and, let into it, four rings for carrying-poles, whilst the deep entrance-way to the court was divided into three arches of which the large centre one was exact of span, and the two flanking arches were of a shorter and more graceful spring.

To the atrium succeeded the Lithostrotos, or Pavement, or Gabbatha—a level space outside the Prætorium which, floored with red and blue sets like the pavements of the Temple's porticoes, had to its left a bridge over the Tyropeon, and debouched, centrewise, upon a glacis of ribbed basalt running down to the wards and workshops of Acra.

When first visiting Jerusalem, Pilate made a complete survey of the Fortress, from the passages opening on to the Sanctuary, and issuing from the walls, to the conduit
Pilate

mouths placed at the highest points to receive first the rains of Marcheshvan (the rains which swelled the grape, and warmed the tilth against seed-time) and then the rains of Nisan (the rains which matured the wheat, and mellowed the orchards to red). And when Pilate had made the survey he threw himself down upon a cushion, and lay gazing about him with nostrils inhaling the warm vapour of the hill’s clefts and crannies, and eyelids aching with the glare of the chalk. And as he did so the city struck him as cramped, over-full of excoriated cracks and crevices, and parched with the dry whiteness which dews of night enhanced until frequently it impaired the Hebrew’s vision. In short, all Jerusalem seemed to him athirst.

Yet only thirty stadia away, at the head of the valley of Etam, were the Pools of Solomon, brimming over with calm, fresh water, and having above them a source which sent forth sweet, limpid streams from a crag pleated like a tunic, and guarded by the rock of the Seat of the Son of David. For that source was the “sealed fountain” of the Song of Songs, the fountain around which a pleasauence, a “garden enclosed” within trim mastich-hedges, lay “planted with vines and every manner of herb,” a garden where once a daughter of Pharaoh sat swooning for a king who should come in a light, graceful Egyptian chariot, and have floating over his steeds splendid, sun-gilded robes, and, behind him, a train of swift, magnificent retainers.

And Pontius so felt the call of the scored, naked, metallic ranges of Judea that he planned forthwith to fashion a new Jerusalem that should be sweet and retired like a second “garden enclosed”—a place delicious with murmuring runlets and foliage, and adorned with avenues of myrtle and of cypress, both for love and for meditation. In short, the stones of David should break forth into flower as those of Rome had done through the gardens planted by Julius Cæsar.

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And he invited Phœnician architects and water-workers to come to Jerusalem, and in person escorted them over rock and sand, and, with his javelin, pointed out the best routes for the aqueducts, and the best sites for the reservoirs. And to meet the resultant expenditure he took some of the gold from the sacrosanct vaults of Corban: he took that gold merely as he proposed to take also the free waters of the Solomonic Pools. But the gold in question belonged to the Lord God of Israel, and Israel’s priests demanded that it should be restored, and Israel’s multitude invaded the Prætorium, clung to the pilasters, buried its finger-nails in the mosaics, and raised voices of grief.

Then Pontius appeared. Striding over the mass of flesh and garments, he ascended his rostrum, and announced his project. And that project was merely that the city already extolled for its sanctity should become extolled also for its comeliness.

But Israel took no heed of this. It continued to wail and groan and sob and grovel and pray.

And then the Roman called aloud, and centurions appeared. And upon that the trumpets of the Legion blared a signal. For until that moment the Prætorian Guards had concealed their identity: they had covered over their armour with long Oriental gaberdines, issued through the secret ways, made a circuit of the Citadel, and re-entered the Prætorium in the guise of mere chance participators in the protest.

And as soon as Pontius raised his hand this disguised soldiery attacked the Jews from behind, and belaboured them with rods, and bludgeons and shafts of pikes and pommels of poniards—belaboured them until the atrium began to be encrusted with blood, and reek of torn and trodden-upon entrails.

Yet Israel stirred not. It just groaned, and besought the Lord’s treasure.
Pilate

And when night fell Pontius retired to his chambers with a face white with hatred and disgust.

And the people’s Psalms and cries continued to seethe below him, whilst fresh Jews continued to advance over the heaped bodies of their fellows—Jews in penitential garb, Jews weeping for the sacrilegious despoilment, nor heeding the arm waiting to deal them their death-wound. Their obstinacy was the obstinacy of the Semite: the obstinacy which can outwear the utmost fury of the soul.

And at length Pilate contemptuously renounced his dream.

Nevertheless, even this concession left between the Procurator and the Jewish people only the bond between implacable dislike and rankling humiliation. Everywhere the litter of the alien Governor continued to have trailing behind it timorous silence, furtive looks, and frigid scorn.

And, next, a scandalous story spread through Jerusalem.

The story came as comes one of those sandy desert-winds which penetrates to every hearth. Said the story: “Pontius was a freedman of a soldier in Iberia, but served his master unfaithfully, and went to prosper in Rome upon denunciations of offences. And Claudia, on her marriage, received the dowry allotted of Tiberius unto consenting husbands: the dowry of permission unto her husband to ravish a province. Wherefore the Procuratorship of Judea, which in the year past became lessened unto collection of tribute, and to the guardianship of Rome’s Eastern Treasury, and to a small military rule, hath regained its eminence and glory, and also acquired the jurisdictio et imperium merum formerly pertaining unto none save the Vicegerents of Mauritania and Thracia and Noricum. And for Claudia’s sake there hath been set aside the Lex Oppia, the ordinance whereby Procurators and Legates are forbidden to take their wives within the confines of their rule. And the endlessness of Claudia’s power cometh of
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her former wiles and graces when she was but a little fish in the Emperor's Aquarium. Yea, she was but one of the maidens of his Court of Deliciae: one of those fish-maidens who bathe with the Emperor, and dive between his thighs, whilst that six others of his damsels portray a lascivious painting wrought of Parrhasius."

Pontius' listeners repeated the slander to their chief: and one night the ergastulum saw his lictors hack out the tongues of certain captured revilers with their axes.

The only patrician in Israel to find favour with the Roman was a member of the Zegenim who, possessed of a place at Arimathea, owned also the fertile plain of Ebal—a plain so warm and rich of soil as often to have some of its soil removed, and used for root-nourishing the tare, darnel, and wheat-crops on Bethel, on that "House of the Lord" the terraces of which shelved down to where Jacob beheld the "ladder of angels."

And in his gardens beside the road from Damascus Joseph of Arimathea, the just Sanhedrite, lived a life of retirement, a life of soul-purification through austere thought. Well might he have said with Attalus and Seneca that he spent no portion of his time in ease, but caused it to resemble a lamp burning in a quiet room where no draught could set its flame a-flicker.

And, at eventide, sometimes, Pontius and Claudia would halt their litter to view Joseph's estate.

And Joseph would continue his reading as they viewed it, amongst his orange-trees and rose-bushes. Only occasionally would he leave his study of the Tohâroth, or of some papyrus of Alexandria, to straighten a bent shoot, or to inspect the work upon which his fellaths were engaged, the work of excavating a tomb for himself in a rock as red as the living flesh of a bosom.

But one evening, when Pontius halted at Joseph's, the Procurator so far disregarded what usually a Roman Gov-
Pilate

ernor never for a moment forgot as to leave his litter, and converse with the Hebrew grandee.

And Joseph replied to him in his own polished tongue of Latium, nor pharisically closed his eyes, nor refused to look at his alien guest, but treated him with cordial politeness.

And Pilate, on his side, felt cheered and stimulated at having discovered in a land of snares a friend.

And the Israelite's discourse, that evening, so wholly engrossed his guest with subtleties of intellect and graces of demeanour that Pontius came to feel as though he were like one of Cæsar's aquile—as though, through his eminence and prestige as a citizen of Rome, he were making a first victorious entry into Israel's sealed, mysterious soul.

And, thus feeling, he turned to glance for a moment at the Prætorium's splendid mass. Over its turrets there was passing, at the same moment, a cloud tinged with the sunset to the redness and shagginess of a lion's pelt.

And Pontius smiled. For to him everything seemed to be becoming subject to a sense of his imperious will. And when he turned again to Joseph he requested that sometimes the Man of Arimathea would accord him his company in his solitary leisure, at his solitary table.

But the Hebrew, whilst acknowledging the Gentile's courtesy, stated that the Law forbade.

"Thy Law!" And Pontius' cry seemed to stamp itself upon the very night. And, with hands plucking at the old man's cloak, and blood inflamed with the remembrance of the lying legend, and boiling with pain and rage, he fell to repeating the odious words of the story—to repeating them again and again, and spitting them forth, and grinding them between his teeth.

And as he did so the scarlet curtains of the litter parted for a moment, and Claudia showed a face pale with apprehension.
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Joseph listened compassionately. To his ear Pontius' choked, helpless cry spoke unmistakably of the fearfulness which can overwhelm even the most powerful of men, and render them as children crying in the dark: the fearfulness of a stranger in a strange land.

And soothingly he said:

"O Pontius, upon my own heart pride cannot set its foot, nor the hand of the sinner lay disquietude. The voice of slander halteth upon my threshold. I know of thee but that thou belongest unto the House of the Teresini; that once a Pontius did raise a siege of Rome by crossing the Tiber upon a bridge of hollow trees; that thou art sur-named Pilatus because thou hast earned the insigne of a pilum through many wars; and that thy wife cometh of the Sabine house of the Claudii—of a house which since the days of Atta hath been accorded burial in the Capitol. I know likewise—as do all of our Court of Justice—that thou art an eques illustrior, and therefore bearest the further title of 'Amicus Casaris.' And now let this my just and gentle answer turn away thy wrath, even as hath been promised unto us of our Proverbs."

Joseph spoke the words as though he had been repeating a message from another—calmly, and with neither added gesture nor inflection nor affected deference. And as Claudia leaned upon her husband, and gazed upon the old man, she smiled.

And Pontius laid an arm upon the Hebrew's frail, bony shoulders, and said propitiatorily:

"Unto what end have the gods suffered thee to have been born a Jew?"

And, folding his hands upon his breast as in prayer, the Man of Arimathea made a bow of exquisite courtesy before countering with the quiet witticism:

"My Lord, in my turn suffer me to lament thy heathen origin."
Pilate

And with that he departed, swift and subtle—glided like a spectre, yet turned to look at his guests again before becoming lost amongst the hedges of his garden.

... ...

After the upheaval of the festival (which had been the Feast of Tabernacles) Pontius returned to the peacefulness of Cæsarea.

And during the winter of the fourth year of his Governorship he received a private letter from Cæsar. In that letter he was advised of certain complaints preferred by Israel against “the violent and wayward rule of the Procurator.”

Not that Cæsar actually impugned Pontius: he displayed towards him neither animus nor censure. Merely, with his usual viscous sweetness, he reminded him of Rome’s policy: of the policy “which appeareth ever to lean, yet trampleth upon; which presseth under, but destroyeth not; which communicateth of its substance to a strange land, but also incorporateth the same.” “Not by the ears shalt thou catch the wolf, lest thou become his captive. How shalt thou leap from him save that he rend thee?” And in any case Cæsar’s concluding words, “Clip, but shear not utterly, the sheep,” meant not only that punishments were to be modified, but that the dictum was to be applied to every governmental step.

Pilate writhed with fear and resentment.

Not that Tiberius had addressed him personally. Rather, he had affected to be offering advice of a general, doctrinaire nature. For the Imperial missives never demanded or castigated in set terms. In reading them the recipient merely felt the menace of the poisoned dart, merely felt the impending shadow of disgrace.

Wherefore Pilate, thenceforth, suffered all the tortures of uncertainty. What before had meant, for him, but re-
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views of plans now came to be searchings of heart dominant of his every thought. And increasingly the probing of his inward self revealed to him doubts of his will-power.

And he thought with dread of his return to Jerusalem.
Yet he was bound to return, for again the Passover was near, and at it the memories of the Exodus might rekindle the embers of sedition.

And as Pontius pictured himself once more amongst the abhorrent multitudes he conceived a fear of his own impulses.

And in his perplexity he confessed as much to Claudia, and she advised him to surround himself with Roman friends and spectators, and relieve his gloom of soul with a reproduction of Italia's atmosphere of delight.

Hence invitations were dispatched, and preparations made for banquets and other festivities.

And on the eve of the departure for Jerusalem a ship previously sent to Gnido in Caria landed Pontius' guests at Cæsarea.

They consisted of five equites from Rome.
The first was Quintus Caius Stertinius, a man big, hard, and swarthy; a man with the crown of his head stamped indelibly with the half-circular mark of the brim of a warhelmet. And though under his costume of a military trabea and an amictus folded over the left shoulder he concealed a maimed left hand, the other hand revealed in its every line a fearlessness and strength and spirit which served to cloak his disability far better than did his dress. With his brother, Lucius Stertinius, he had taken part in Germanicus' glorious expeditions, and in the swampy saltmarshes of the North discovered a mouldering eagle abandoned by the Legio Decimana, and, through being obliged to throw himself prone in order to recover the standard, had a hand torn off by a fragment of flint. And previously, in the forests of Teutberg, he had seen un-
Pilate

buried bodies of Roman squadrons as blinding as heaps of chalk, and rusty armour, and bones, and entrails fallen like cast snake-skins from corpses liquefying and dissolving into corruption, and skeletons in attitudes of life, the skeletons of men who, dying of hunger, had crawled away into the thickets to gnaw their own flesh, and masses of carrion, and piled chips of bone, and fingers entwined in sections of vertebrae, and jaw-bones with teeth thrust into pits of noses, and hands and teeth of human beings reverted to the condition of beasts, and heads picked clean by vultures, and heads nailed to bellies or trunks of trees with darts of iron or pegs of wood, and ruins of the altars whereon the barbarians had beheaded Quintilius Varus’ tribunes and centurions. Wherefore the scowling, accursed plains of Germania had left upon the cripple’s large, fiery eyes an indelible imprint.

With this warrior there disembarked Phociadius—a Senator, and a colleague of Titus Cæsonius Priscus, then overseer of the Deliciae, a quaestorship created by Tiberius himself. Also, Phociadius was a knight, a devotee of poets, an arbiter of academic discussions, and, in general, a man elderly of years, slender of figure, feminine of apparel, disciplined, as to gait and carriage, on the severe, eurhythmic lines of a Rhetorician, whitened of breast with sweet honeywort, voiced according to pitch-notes given him by his flautist, and togaed without a girdle, in imitation of Julius Cæsar’s fashion of wearing that garment.

And with these came the brothers Antisticius—Marius and Cælius: the one a beau and bon-vivant, and a frequenter of the porticoes of Livy and Pompey (“dovecotes of Venus more fertile in love than is Methymna fertile in grapes, or the rich plains of Gargara in wheat”), and the other, Cælius, an experimenter in every origin and effect of sensibility, a man who could gain pleasure only from the touch of a new material, or from the odour of a new per-
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fume, or from the savour of a new taste. As a matter of fact, two days before receiving the news of Pontius' invitation, he had set about starving himself to death: not because he had had any definite idea of suicide in his mind, or hankered after it in any way, or felt any desire for death as an end in itself, but, rather, because he had wished to see himself in the guise of a little bird alighting so gently upon the twig of death as not even to bend it. But, of course, Marius had felt bound to break in upon these plans. He had sought to do this by introducing to Cælius courtesans who undertook to exhaust him with pleasures borrowed from out-of-the-way cults and resorts; whilst, in addition, the faithful slave-girls, the veræ, of the house, the damsels who had been wont to lull him to sleep by tickling his feet with their eyelashes, had plied him with their tears, and "Tricongius," the juvenile prodigy who in Tiberius' presence had swallowed three congi of Samian wine without once drawing breath, had exerted quips and jests, and servants and concubines and dependents all had united in striving to wrest Cælius from his disgust for life by once more inflaming his vicious appetites. Yet though for two hours a philosopher had in truth succeeded in distracting his attention with the sensations problematically experienced by the first human beings on beholding the first corpse, it needed Pontius' letter finally to bring about an abandonment of the notion of felo de se. For the letter meant to Cælius a friend's summons to a region as yet virgin to his eyes. It induced in him a sensation as of gazing upon a veil about to part. So he remarked, "Well, I shall return some day," and ordered his gala raiment to be packed. Nevertheless, it was in a state of advanced languor and prostration that he disembarked, leaning upon Marius' arm, at the fort of Drusus' Tower, with, clutched in his bony, ring-stiffened fingers, a crystal globe designed to check the sweating of their emaciated flesh.
Pilate

And, lastly, came Balbus Capito, a man keen, active, brilliantly clad, and the boldest, most enterprising, of all Rome’s merchant-adventurers. In fact, he was a man whom Cæsar himself would bid to the Imperial board, that he might hear tales of his tradings beyond the seas, and in hostile lands. For it was Balbus who provided Italia with wool from Miletus; with horses from Asturia; with metals from Cyprus; with purple of murex brandaris from Cythera, and of murex trunculus from the Tyrian coast; with pottery from Corinth; with jewellery and furniture from Agrigentum; with pearls stripped from necklaces of mummies under the sand-heaps of Egypt’s burial-grounds; and with marbles from Ethiopia. And once, when the supply of eye-teeth ran short, and he could not otherwise obtain them, he made an expedition into the African jungle, and sawed asunder the skeletons of fifteen elephants.

Sumptuous and magnificent was the progress of the Gentiles’ caravan.

As soon as it left Cæsarea Phocidius rose to his feet in his camel throne, and sang the glories of Herod as founder of the marble city lying couchant in radiant, immaculate, milky whiteness of flesh, and blooming amongst her magnolias, and thrusting upwards, between the azure of the Mediterranean Ocean and the blue of the Syrian heavens, shafted pillars, and peaked obelisks and monuments, and statues and towers of wharves in a harbour larger and safer even than the harbour of the Piræus, and one possessed of breakwaters the blocks of which might have been cut but yesterday, so bright was their gleam against the billows driven thither by the African wind. And further away was the red hill whereon stood a temple dedicated to Cæsar, a temple with a portico like a clouded opal. And still further away was the gracious picture of Mount Carmel, that “vineyard of the Lord,” that “mountain of plenty.”
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And, weeping with tender rhetorical emotion, the Senator swore that he could feel surging in his blood all the magnificent sensuality of the ancient Herod; whilst Marius Antisticius became so fired with the sunshine and "wild Falernian liquor" as to prick his dromedary with his thyrsus until the beast plunged into the surf, and sprinkled its rider's face and saddle-trappings with the salt spray. Nay, even Cælius gazed with a smile from his litter, placed alongside that of Pontius and Claudia.

Only the valiant Stertinius was on horseback, since he deemed a spirited military charger to be superior to a docile ruminant.

Balbus, a little apart from the rest, was deep in converse with a band of merchants bound from Dor to Joppa with asses laden with glass-beads, Cyprian jars, dyed clothes, and feathers of the sea-diver and ostrich.

Presently the road turned inshore, and began to run amongst boulders, and to skirt gullies, though still the ocean could be heard soughing in its eternity of torment.

And then came a wide, flat stretch of cactus and palm, bathed in fresh, sea-reflected light; and then a region close and shady, a sort of transitional phase to Western winter, and full of reed and sage and tamarind where moss-green sloughs lay around the dread lagoon of Cæsarea, the lagoon which still remained a lurking-place of Job's "Leviathan," of the monster with a "body of molten plates, and joined with scales, such as laugheth to scorn the sling and the arrow and the spear, and sendeth burning lamps from his mouth, and createth a light with its neezings, and beareth eyes like unto the eyelids of the morning."

And there the caravan mustered, and halted, whilst slaves hastened to spread cloths and cushions for the midday meal of truffle-and-spice patties, of dried Umbrian boar flesh, of oysters and mussels gathered before the full of the moon, of ortolans stuffed with pistachio-nut, of larded pea-
Pilate

cocks (over which Phocidius was to deliver an ode to the di-
vine Hortensius), of smoked grapes, of jars of lotus liquor, and
the wines and syrups brought in skins of ice. And in
the meantime, escorted by the Procurator's private guard, Pontius, Claudia, and their guests went for a stroll beside
the juniper-fringed lagoon whence water, after lying calm in
the upper lake, dashed white, and turbulent, and thunder-
ous as an avalanche when descending a mountain-pass.

And upon a bare, desolate eminence above it there was a
temple with portico beams bent and bulging, and pillars
reddened with a crust of mould, and roof falling in, and
walls displaced from their alignment and worn by the
centuries into cavities where owls, roosting in huddled
feathers with the grim, dour aspect of human beings, un-
covered blind, cold, rounded, glassy eyes to view Pilate
and his cortège.

Into the nave light penetrated but brokenly, and at the
further end, behind a huge quartz altar, Baal was stand-
ing with two wings outstretched, and two wings folded close;
two eyes in a forehead huge and grim, and two vacant eyes
in his neck. And, with hands clutching at his thighs, and
sides gaping, he seemed to be covered with sores, so thickly
had strips of mould fallen from him as flesh withers from a
leprous body.

As the group of Romans advanced they raised fluttering
echoes.

And suddenly there came from Claudia a cry which
cut the air like a streak of gold.

For from beside the deity there had risen two phantom-
like men who, as they approached the party with dumb,
hieratical mien, were seen to be clean-shaven of head, and
to have skin of a colour matching the colour of their tat-
tered, parchment-like tunics, and to be walking upon bare
feet the movements of which caused the bones within their
framework to rattle audibly. They glanced sharply at the
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visitors—then lowered their eyelids darkly, like roosting birds.

Pontius said:

"Peradventure they are philosophers who dwell in the ruins, and nourish the god."

Hungry, curiously, greedily the recluses eyed the Romans’ dress—their pleated aliculae, their amictus, their light stola, their pepla and palla exuding scent and glorified with a sunlight which must have seemed to the hermits a sunlight other than the radiance which was throwing into relief their own ragged limbs, eaten away like weevil-gnawed wood.

And then the courtiers passed onward into the annexes around the edifice, and sent their voices echoing over heaps of rubbish with a feeling of satisfaction that in a spot where once the mysteries of a god had made them tremble they could display carelessness and strength.

And their elegant sandals, and their buskins of violet chamois-leather, and their trim military boots trampled across the hermits’ straw pallets—squeezing thence a savour of wet dung, and skipped over slots of dried mire and pigeon pellets and droppings of goats and cattle, and crushed underfoot wrinkled wine-skins and empty wine flasks and scent-vials and charred braziers and other relics of past offerings, and stepped upon a hearth smelling of embers and stale smoke like an oven turned cold.

And hurriedly the two men of the desert followed the visitors, with hollow jaw-bones rattling, and a gleam of anger lurking in cavernous eyes, and forms dusty and bristly and lugubrious of aspect, and a presence which left everywhere the clinging chilliness of a tomb.

And so much did Claudia feel the unfortunates’ dart-like gaze to be beating upon her spikenard-scented skin that she ended by turning towards Pontius with a cry of uneasiness. And then the party left the building.

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Pilate

Pontius flung himself down beside the lagoon, and fell to gazing at the water, impatient of continuing the journey, while his chief centurion mounted guard over him as a mastiff mounts guard over its master.

But Marius lingered behind awhile, until the pompous Balbus summoned him through a huge shell which he carried suspended by a string of chalcedonies.

And on the youth appearing in hurried surprise—the ruins clattering and re-echoing as he came, he related that the two men were not philosophers, but priests of two still living divinities. "For," said Marius, "within those broken walls whereon the spider hath hung her veil to cover the moss as always she doth in the temples of Jupiter and Juno Sospita during the first days of the mensis augustus—within those walls and clamorous waters there is abiding not only Baal, but also the Dragon, the Sacred Crocodilius, the Water Lizard of Syria!"

Phocidius interrupted with an excited cry of:
"The same it must be as the Egyptian camposas of whom Herodotus hath spoken!" And he quoted from Cicero: "'The Syrians do worship a fish.'"

But Balbus cried with a laugh:
"Rather, the Syrians do sing hymns unto Adonis, and offer sacrifice upon the altar of Cæsar, and journey to Cæsarea, and perfume all the air of the sea with the merchandise which they exchange for Italia's luxuries."

"But not so with these two priests," Marius declared. "So faint with hunger are they that they do nourish themselves upon roots and mice and water serpents."

And the party, thus discoursing, descended to the shade of the thicket. And there the meal was begun, whilst dancing-girls dressed as shepherdesses and dryads trod measures upon a level space of turf, and a slave fed Cælius, and at intervals raised to his lips a cup of fresh grape juice.
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And from above, outlined against the temple's scoured walls, the priests' hairless heads could be seen peering down at the party.

Claudia begged that alms should be given to them, whilst Phocidius quoted the words, "'Be the matron's pious will fulfilled!'" But Stertinius, for his part, proposed that the viands should be dispatched to the priests on the points of two arrows.

And Pilate cried:
"By the maw of Chronos, it shall be done thus, and thereafter let them be devoured of their own water god!"

And he shouted an order to a legionary.

But Claudia interceded, and thereupon the most severe and inexorable of all Procurators arose in sportive mood, and, with his friends, approached the spot where the attendants were feeding, and took two geese, two kids, and two loaves, and had them loaded upon the shoulders of slaves.

And the patricians decided to accompany the slaves, and, half-way up the hill, Marius shouted:
"Behold the savory offerings which we are bringing you!"

Whereupon Baal's servants rushed forward to take the meats, with shanks, as rough and hairy as the legs of buffaloes, kicking to and fro their wrappings of sackcloth.

But Pontius repelled them. Suddenly his impulse of generosity had given place to a mood of frigid sarcasm.

And quietly he said:
"Nay. Your divine monster do we wish to see swallow our offerings."

And the priests, failing to understand him, yet yearning to know what he was saying, stood with faces contracted like death's-heads of shrivelled bone.

Only when a decurion had translated the Procurator's words into Syric did the priests prostrate themselves with loud prayers that the gifts, rather, should be surrendered
Pilate
to themselves. The Holy Alligator, they said, lay hidden
from daylight and the presence of men, but they would be-
seech him to appear at dead of the ensuing night, and at
daybreak the Romans should see his sanctified footprints on
the surrounding stones.

Pontius turned towards his slaves, and said with a laugh:
"Then we will anticipate the god’s night season."

And with his own hands he cast into the abyss of the
lagoon the poultry, the kids, and the bread.

And the faces of the priests became convulsed into hor-
rible grimaces.

And all drew closer to the water.

Presently the water moved. Down in its stagnant depths
a palpitation began, and the surface lapped against the sides,
and a dull crunching sound was heard, and a portion of the
surface parted, and blood and ooze and a stench of raw
flesh and mould came welling up, and a viscous shield of
glazed cartilage was seen approaching—a shield loathsome,
and exuding, as it came, curdles of slime, and a smell of
musk. Lastly, bloodstained bubbles eddied and swirled,
and the water reclosed.

And the priests disappeared into their ruins with tears.

Thence the caravan continued its way through the wooded
region between the seashore and the Mountains of Eph-
raim, a region inhabited by the descendants of outlaws.
And then, taking a short-cut, it debouched upon the Plain of
Sharon, where juicy herbage lay overspread with gracious-
ness of iris and scabious and anemone, and there were
pasturing flocks and herds such as once had provided the
hundred and twenty thousand sheep and the twenty-two
thousand oxen required for the burnt-sacrifices at the Tem-
ple’s dedication, and also the meed of twenty bullocks and
one hundred sheep (not counting stags and hinds and birds
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and half a score of fatted bulls) required for Solomon's daily table.

And on the road the dromedaries would halt to thrust stones from wayside banks with their thick underlips: and then slaves would probe the spot with goads, and discover mouths of wells, with troughs of clay or stone, dug out and fashioned by nomad herdsmen, and concealed again from the eyes of other tribesmen.

And next came a plain of figs, and of broad and shady carob-trees, and a township exuding pungent odours of shellfish and syrup.

And then, once more, the sea's glorious light, enriching and warming Joppa's gardens where they lay bursting with orange in fruit and flower, and with pomegranates like coals of flame, and with juicy mulberries and vines surrendering their clusters, like mother's breasts, to the young fig-trees' embraces.

And there palms were opening fronds to the blue, and according welcome to weary flights of pigeons which had eyes like points of light—the columbae Palestine extolled of the Shulamite Woman.

And there, too, were fields of grain and bean and indigo, and pistachios distilling gum like butter, and mountains in the distance with crowns of crystal, and, lastly, Joppa's white walls and cupolas, arising from the shore like linen turbans. For now there stood before the travellers that Gate of Israel which once, in earlier days, had reeked of the generous scent of great timber rafts brought from Lebanon for fashioning the capitals and carved vaultings and ceilings of the Temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel.

The travellers halted entranced with the city's perfumes of orange and lemon-flower and honeysuckle, and with her clarity and joyousness of life, and saluted her. Fresh and virgin in form all things were looking, and original in colour, and warm-tinted like a ceramic of purest make.

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Pilate

Said Pontius to Phocidius, as he pointed to a group of rocks shimmering like blocks of light:

"O poet, it is there that the beautiful Andromeda, the daughter of the Argonaut Cepheus and Cassiope, was stripped and bound—she who conceived herself to be fairer than Juno. And now she and her lover shine in heaven nightly, beside the constellation of Ursa Minor."

Phocidius gazed towards the spot, requested a pitch-note from his musician, and burst into the arrogantly compassionate invocation:

"O maiden who didst in no way merit bonds of torment, but, rather, those which Cupid bindeth upon his subjects, reveal unto us thy name and thy country, and the manner wherein the Fates brought thy comeliness to such a pass!"

And he added certain strophes written by a sublime friend who had passed away in solitude and exile after yearning to die amid bravery and pleasure.

And then the caravan set foot upon the city's pavements.

There quays once scorched in the expiatory holocaust carried out by Judas Maccabee were stretching forth arms a-shimmer, tremulous, with the multitudinous white patches of awnings of custom-houses, and with lanterns of trading-stores, and with the sweat-polished skins of slaves and beasts of burden.

And amongst the ships were towering ships of Tyre, built of yew of Sanir, ornamented of prow, masted of cedar, and rowed with ivory-inlaid oars; such ships as once had brought Phœnician craftsmen to work under the direction of Hiram, the "son of a woman of Dan," the "man learned in all devices of gold and silver and stone and bronze, and in all manner of carvings of cedar and juniper and olive-wood, and in all fashionings and purifyings of scarlet and white and blue and purple," the man whose designs had given birth to all the marvels of the Lord's House.

For the night the caravan pitched camp beside the sea,
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and had posted around it a hundred legionaries with torches.

And overhead the moon of Nisan rode flooding with its beams that peaceful scene of orchard and ocean.


Day dawned, and, breaking camp, Pontius' cortège took the road trending inland by Lydda—a road paved with porphyry, and running along the edges of brown gullies, and between plots of young vine and sycamore.

Everywhere a smoke-like dust was arising from pilgrims and flocks on their way to the Passover.

Marius and Balbus fell to extolling the opulence and pleasures of Jaffa: and as they were doing so the centurion in command of the auxiliary cohort fell to praising, rather, the town and the surroundings of Capernaum, of Capernaum in the Plain of Zebulun, in the territory of Gennesaret, as superior to all others. Capernaum, he said, produced such olives and myrtles and palms and mulberries and walnuts and pistachio-nuts and apples and oranges and lemons as did no other region. And its scented melons ripened sooner even than the scented melons of Damascus. And on trellis-work between its fig-trees hung vines bearing grapes as large and golden of tint as dates. For Capernaum stood out on the Waters of Comfort (brought thither, by the arts of a magician, through secret ways from Father Nilus himself), and fronted a Lake so beloved of its Israelitish god that that god's Rabbins customarily quoted Him as saying: “Seven seas have I created in the Land of Canaan, but only the Sea of Gennesaret have I chosen for my pleasure.” And to this the centurion added that around Capernaum stood the villas of many wealthy Galileans, and that it was the halting-place and hostel of caravans of treasure from Arabia, and of caravans of perfumes from Jericho, and of courtiers from Tiberias, and of
merchants from India and the Tetrarchy of Iturea and Paneas. For, the centurion said, in Capernaum met a road from Jerusalem, and a road from the Euphrates, and a road which crossed the valley of the Jordan by way of Jacob’s Bridge, and a road which, passing through Damascus, came out upon the shores of the Mediterranean, and trended southward towards Egypt. “Wherefore Capernaum and Tiberias are places of delight for every nation.”

And as soon as Marius and Balbus repeated this to Cælius, and saw a smile dawn upon the invalid’s weary face, Balbus interrupted his companions with:

“Behold, in my baggage there is, as always, honey of Hymettus, and the Thessalian bulb, and a flask of wine an hundred years old such as might rekindle even one so forgotten of Voluptas as our Cælius.”

And Marius repeated the information to Phocidius. Phocidius, however, heeded it not, for, with hands raised pontifically, he was reciting:

“O Jerusalem, set amid hills arid, sinister, and dark, although no gods have their delight in thee, upon thee are the eyes of Tiberius.”

And, in chorus, the patricians acclaimed Cæsar as “the Father of Rome, the most excellent of all mortals.”

And even as they were doing so there came into view, on the eastern horizon, the brows of the Hill of Zion.
Pilate and Christ

"But the Jews cried out saying: If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend." St. John xix, 12.

A circlet of copper confining her indomitable hair, and her form clad in a green tunic, a slave-woman of Alabanda, the home of mimes and dancing-girls, knelt down before Pilate, and drew upon his sinewy feet purple-strapped sandals, and laced the straps around his toes.

And Claudia, raising herself a little, revealed the outline of a magnificent figure with tints as pale and delicate as fruit. Then, with a graciousness of hips partially thrust forth from the bedstead of marble and lemon-wood, she lifted her hands, and clasped them behind her delicious neck as she continued the narrative of her dream.

The lantern's double, scented wick was discharging a stream of light like pulsing blood upon a statuette of Jupiter Optimus Maximus and gleaming, rustling rugs and coverlets of Pergamean woof as cool and crisp as moss.

"Upon me his eyes did shed a feeling of sorrow, but of a sorrow that was like the soft comforting of a precious ointment. And as I beheld their gaze my heart grew lighter, until it seemed to be hovering about itself as a bird hovers over its nest. And the sorrow and the lightness alike were such as come not either of adversity or of well-being. And had it been said unto me: 'Give that Jew the kiss of love,' and I had given it him, I still should not have been kissing that in him which so beguiled me, as though I had been kissing thee, O Pontius, who art in very truth my love and my beloved. Rather would it have been as though, to kiss music, I had kissed my lute in music's
stead. For music is in my flesh already, and standeth apart from it and from the lute alike. . . . O Pontius, conspire not against this man!"

Pontius wrapped about him the softness of his fleecy white bath-robe, and smiled.

And the slave-woman drew back the curtains from before a window of Syrian glass, and the Roman passed to his bath, with the sheen of the blue sky striking reflections from the *amphimallum*’s glistening folds.

And presently Pontius’ feet were heard cleaving the bath water.

Claudia stretched her diaphanously-robed figure in the sunlight, that she might catch to the full the light of the “husband ruddy and strong” who had entered, fresh from his rural anointing, to repose awhile upon Beauty’s couch. Yet though Claudia felt pleased for a moment with this self-contemplation, her delight in her own charms soon vanished before the remembrance of her dream. And, half-closing her eyes, and speaking very slowly, as though picking and choosing every word before using it to put into the best possible external shape the inward picture that was before her vision, she murmured:

“He hath a beard with two points, and curls of the same like unto young leaves of acanthus. And his lips are melancholy, and ever parted a little as though in weariness. And his head hath upon it a turban—high, and discovering the whole of his brow to the sun’s assault. And his hair hangeth down beside his cheeks, and they are of the pale colour of wheat. And when he looketh at aught, that which is before his gaze seemeth to quiver, and to become utterly revealed, and bare. And his tunic is wide, and wrought of brown stuff, and threaded with red. And falling from his blue mantle are the two cords which betoken him to be a Master of the People. And when he walketh he doth so with his body a little bent, and halteth at times,
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and turneth his gaze from side to side. And if he stretcheth forth his hands there becometh manifest the exquisite fashion of his fingers. . . . What hands they be!—hands as though sculptured!"

There came the sound of the bath water cracking beneath the impact of Pontius' palms, and of his voice crying jestingly:
"O Claudia, thine eagerness as thou didst look upon that man!"

"All this night hath he been by our side. When first I beheld him I was asleep; but even after that I had awakened I still could see him—and that without beguilement of dreams, for also I could hear the challengings of the guards. And the twin flames of the bilychnis were shining golden upon his head. But the sockets and hollows of the eyes were in darkness. And that darkness did seem to be looking upon me as without pupils. He was the same man as did refuse even to go unto the house of Ishmael-ben-Phabi that he might look upon us, although all men do ex-tol Ishmael for the splendour of his feasts and board."

Again Pontius sent his laughter ringing through the bath-chamber.

"My dear one," he cried, "I myself do turn not my head when I chance to pass by Ishmael and his grossness of paunch. And it vexeth me in no way that he hath a kitchen larger than our own—a kitchen the width of which men declare to be four score and ten cubits. Aye, I will yield unto him. By the Goddess of the Triclinium I will!"

Claudia continued:
"Yet, though Ishmael and his school and those like unto him abase their eyes in steadfast sternness when they meet our litter, this Rabbi did one day raise his brow, and gaze upon us direct. It was as though he beheld in us all Rome."
Pilate and Christ

Again Pontius’ laughter rang forth, though this time it sounded thinner, in that now the slave-women had opened the roof shutters to allow of the insolatio or permeation of the chambers with the light of the wide, free morning. And, stretched in nudity upon hides impregnated with floral oil and balsam the aroma of which the sun brought out, yet in no way evaporated, Pontius murmured in tones made tremulous with the friction that was being administered to him by the skilled hands of his bath attendants:

"By Jupiter, never until this hour have mine ears heard self-praises of such elegance! Verily would the minstrel of my household”—here the speaker paused, the better to enjoy the massage being applied to one of his shoulders—"verily would the minstrel of my household devour his stilus with envy if he could hear thee! 'It was as though he beheld in us all Rome!' O ardent one, take care that such eulogies of thee and myself reach not the ear of Ælius Lamius. For in him there abideth more of Rome than there abideth even in Pontius Pilatus."

But Claudia continued:

"Before that the figure of this man left my sight he did approach and gaze upon me with a look of agony. Yea, I could feel his body near me, and feel his fingers touch my shoulders, and the sweat of a dying man bedew me from a lock of his hair."

The turrets of the Prætorium sent forth the full, clear trumpet notes of guard-changing with an effect as though the cold, bright sound were cleaving the blue of the air like a flock of birds, and vanishing into the distance.

Then sharp footsteps began to stamp their imprint upon the silence of the stones in the main corridor before the Procurator’s chambers, and the voice of the Tribune of the Fortress called aloud some message.

Pontius sent forth a slave, and the Tribune returned a
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

report that present was a multitude headed by a group of Sanhedrites, come to request confirmation of a sentence of death.

For a moment Pontius only stretched his limbs—intoxicated with the delight of basking in the sun; but presently his steely voice shouted a command that the people must wait until the third hour, since then alone was it usual for the process of judicial administration to begin.

Turning, the footsteps became lost in the corridors, and silence resumed its envelopment of the walls and stones.

Down below, however, thunderous waves of populace were breaking against the Citadel. They represented an explosion of Jerusalem in a mood dangerous, broken free of fetters, charged with fanaticism.

Suddenly the Lithostrotos echoed to its uttermost corners with the passage across it of Prætorian cavalry.

And Pontius sprang to his feet, and Claudia called aloud, and the slave-women fell to fluttering hither and thither with pale, nervous faces.

But, on the Procurator’s guests approaching the bath-chamber from the battlements, they called to him quite tranquilly. It was not a tumult, they said: merely a burst of popular impatience. And as they stood waiting outside Pilate’s tiring-chamber they imitated for him the gestures and outcries of Israel, and suggested that, to behold them for himself, he should descend to the Prætorium.

And Pontius smiled, and made up his mind. Exchanging his light sandals for patrician calcei or half-boots of scarlet leather secured to the calves with black thongs crossed and fastened with ivory crescents, he also donned a short, tight-fitting tunic of Egyptian linen girded with a laticlavius or broad purple belt, threw over his shoulders the toga prætexta or full, heavy, purple-bordered robe which left the right arm free, and was worn by Roman magistrati of the higher rank, took into his hands his baton, and
Pilate and Christ

stepped forth from the doorway of carved sycamore-wood
to receive the morning greetings of his guests.

Waiting for him beside a pilaster was the Tribune of the
Fortress; and the Procurator interrupted his greetings for a
moment to command that the outer doors of the Prætorium
should be thrown open. Then calmly he passed to the head
of the staircase, whilst his friends hastened to the portico
roofs, from the arcading of which a view of the whole city
could be obtained.

Pontius halted at the head of the staircase.

The open space in front of the Prætorium was ablaze
with helmets and arm-pieces and shields and spears—the
armament of the cohort which had come from Cæsarea,
and formed the part of the Legio Duodecima Gemina;
whilst about the rostrum or movable dais were planted the
medallioned manipuli and the four canopy-poles.

Every moment the cries and hootings were increasing in
vehemence.

Again the Tribune of the Fortress came to report to
Pontius. And Pontius bent his head to listen—then smiled
disdainfully.

For the report was to the effect that the populace feared
to tread the stones of the Gentile mansion, lest contamina-
tion should ensue on the eve of the Passover.

Pontius gathered up his toga, and swiftly, grimly de-
scended the marble steps. Awaiting him at the foot of the
steps was his legal train, with, at its head, the lictors, a file
of men in white toge with brows bound with brazen laurel
circlets, and left shoulders crossed with the fasces—bundles
of birch staves lashed with scarlet thongs, and centred
with projecting axe-heads; the tabularii or recorders in
plain robes, and carrying clasped against their breasts the
two tabula dealbata, or thin, waxed plates for registering
conviction or acquittal as the case might be; the “criers” or
ushers, men who, bare-legged, had their sackcloth jerkins

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breasted with the straps of copper horns; the interpreter, with a turban (over a mulberry-coloured cape and short breeches of linen) bulked with green and yellow embroidery and feathers and glass-beads; and the four executioners, men in bronze casques, copper, dice-squared breast-plates, and red saga or chlamydes—the latter slung to their left sides.

Pontius crossed the square of the Prætorium with a warm breeze blowing asunder the white folds of his toga. Then he signed towards the entrance-gate with his ivory-mounted baton, and eight herculean Numidian slaves, giants with rough skins like elephant-hide, thrust poles through the staples of the rostrum, and dragged it to the entrance’s archway, whilst the Chief Centurion wheeled his detachment of cavalry outward, and the multitude shouted.

As Pilate stood upon the massive block of the threshold it was towards a Jerusalem of joyous cupolas softened with sunshine, and gilded with mist from the murky alleys of Acra, that his face was turned.

Forward came silence in billows until the whole of the space before the Prætorium lay enfolded with it.

Then the priests and the Sanhedrites advanced, broke up their group into deferential single file, and left the Rabbi Jesus standing alone amongst the steam of the cavalry’s horses.

But Pontius’ gaze passed Him by. Its stern shaft buried itself in the mob behind Him. Disdaining to ascend the rostrum, he raised his baton as a token that he might be addressed.

And, after that a Scribe had initiated the legal process with a Psalm, the interpreter translated into Latin the charges against Jesus: charges of blasphemy, of deception, and of adaptation of prophecies to the detriment of Israel.

The voice echoed coldly, fitfully down an empty cloister of the Prætorium; until Pontius, weary of a list of offenses
Pilate and Christ

which, for him, had no human reality, turned to his legal train, and a trumpet sounded, and the Sanhedrite, breaking off in his recital, abased his figure again.

Said Pontius:

"Do ye yourselves judge him, according unto your law."

The curt words were translated, and the circles nearest to the interpreter transmitted them to the more distant, until their passage had everywhere woven a pattern of angry protest.

Pontius, who had stepped back into the archway, reappeared with sinister forcefulness.

"What is it ye seek?"

And he stood looking fixedly at the multitude until over the groundwork of its murmurs there broke the steely, metallic voice of an elderly member of the Sanhedrin who said:

"The Rabbi Jeshua is worthy of death, but unto us the power of such a judgment pertaineth not. The Rabbi Jesh——"

"But what hath he done?" broke in the Roman brusquely, impatiently.

The lean, pale Simon-ben-Camithus threw into the colloquy: "If he hath not been guilty, we should not have brought him hither," and then the elderly Sanhedrite continued:

"The Rabbi Jeshua hath rebelled. He hath rebelled both against the Lord our God, and against ourselves, and against thee. He hath declared himself to be a king."

"A king!" And in a moment Pontius' haughty eyebrows had contracted suspiciously, and his head turned towards Jesus. Then he glanced at the Chief Centurion, who dismounted from his horse, and threw the bridle to a slave of the stables.

Pontius added:

"Bring him within."
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And the Centurion led Jesus forward.

Behind Him the mob hooted, but He never turned round. Merely, on the Centurion's approach, He and His slender shadow advanced across the mosaic flooring—the shadow wavering as it went.

Pilate straightened himself to look at Him. One of Jesus' feet was without a sandal, and bleeding at the nails, and the sandal on the other foot was cracked and broken through being trodden upon by other sandals, and stiff with mire and dung.

From the turrets pigeons flew encircling the Prætorium—the shadow of their flight breaking upon the walls in swift, graceful silhouette.

Pilate rested his right hand upon the pilaster bisecting the narrow, pointed window. The chamber, a large one, was hung with tapestries whereon thousands of slave-women had embroidered Egyptian and Libyan monsters and foliage, and had suspended from its carved ceiling bowls of flintware containing tow for torches, and clusters of quivers and clubs and shields of parti-coloured hide captured by Herod the Great in his wars with the Parthians. Under canopies stood couches of cypress-wood and cornelian, arrayed in the form of a star, whilst the centre of the room was filled with a huge bronze wolf recumbent upon a black marble pedestal, with, trailing over the pilaster, an enamelled reproduction of the vine which weighed five hundred golden talents, and was described by the Jews as "an enchantment unto the eyes," and presented by Aristobulus to Pompey. Lastly, upon an altar before the sacred beast there was placed a glass ampulla containing fish of Arethusa.

Pilate gazed through the window at the glory of the spring morning, at the tender green of the landscape, at the mountains chiselled to clarity by the vernal sunshine, at the sullen, dishevelled human throng massing itself ob-
Pilate and Christ

stantely in the space before the palace gates. And upon him there came such a hatred of that throng that all his blood seemed to pant with fever.

Then the Chief Centurion entered the chamber; then Jesus; then the interpreter; then the elderly Sanhedrite.

But Pontius disregarded them. He was thinking of his past massacres, and of Tiberius’ subsequent letter, and cursing himself for having let those cruelties of earlier date stand in the way of now crushing the multitude without the gates. For never before had he had Israel presented to him so compactly.

A burst of laughter came from the Roman knights.

And Pontius, turning to the Tribune of the Fortress, asked:

“What knowest thou of the Rabbi?”

The man, upright, freckled, and grinning like an awkward schoolboy, replied that he had seen the Rabbi once before. He had seen him in the Temple when he had been forced to descend thither with a cohort because Jesus was attacking the money-changers. The day when that had happened had been the day after Jesus’ progress of triumph.

“Progress of triumph? Then were many hailing him?”

The Tribune of the Fortress hesitated, and there dawned on his rugged forehead the anxiety of a dull man who is nevertheless concerned to remember aright. Blinking, breathing hard, he replied:

“They were poor men only, and countrymen, and fewer than to-day. And those whom he healed were folk of Galilee, with others of Bethany and Bethphage and Ophel.”

“Then is he the same soothsayer as Addai, the Prince of Edessa, did command unto his palace? Set thou him before me.”

And, turning his back to the light, Pontius seated himself in a gilded bisellium.
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

As he eyed Jesus his copperish pupils contracted, and he cried impulsively:

"Tell me where is thy kingdom."

As he spoke the Lord was still approaching him, with the radiance from the narrow window beating upon His brows and nose and chin.

And the interpreter, pompous and corpulent, translated Pontius' words into Syriac, and, as he did so, cast a meanly disparaging glance at the Rabbi's one sandal.

In a like spirit Pontius repelled the Rabbi with a thrust of his pointed calceus against the Lord's bare limbs.

Jesus looked at the Roman—then passed His tongue over His faded lips, and replied in Greek:

"My Kingdom is not of this world."

The Jews of that period had a saying that truly existent languages numbered only three: Hebrew for prayer, Latin for dominion, and Greek for oratory and intercourse.

The Rabbi had learnt Greek through having had to use it during His journey through Scythopolis, Gerasa, Hippos, Pella, and other Hellenised cities of Eastern Judea, and in certain towns of Galilee and Samaria where He had contended with Hellenists. Whilst to Pontius, of course, as an eques and a magistratus, Greek was the accepted idiom of erudition of the day.

Hence the need for a hired mouth to darken the conversation had ceased to be.

Involuntarily Pilate drew forward his seat, and Christ also advanced nearer.

And approvingly the Procurator's guests commented upon the Rabbi's accent. Phocidius, taking Cælius by the girdle, said:

"How this dreamer of dreams is to be preferred to the Jewish rabble of whom he is accused!"

Then despite himself, he added with a sigh:

"Alas that never it did befall me to hear Cleopatra, the
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queen skilled in every tongue, the queen whose throat could bend itself to tones as a nightingale’s to trills!"

Jesus repeated:
"My kingdom is not of this world. If it had been of this world my people would have released me."

Swift, ironical came Pilate’s counter-stroke:
"Released thee from me, or from that rabble when first it did seize upon thee?"

And he glanced at Christ’s hands. The cords were cracking the skin, and raising an outline of livid swellings. Those hands were neither the short, plebeian hands of the workman nor the oily, dead-white, predatory hands of the Jewish trader. And this fact Pilate pointed out to his friends.

By the rosy-fingered Aurora, the Senator swore, the Rabbi’s hands were purely Latin.

And Pilate complacently smoothed his own fingers.
"Thou believest thyself, therefore, to be a king?"

Jesus replied:
"Thou thyself hast said it."

"I? By thy gods, and by mine own, nay! In very truth nay! It is they who have brought thee hither, and thyself, that have said it."

Whereupon the Procurator’s guests laughed, and the Centurion and the Tribune and the legal officers nudged one another, and laughed with them.

But Jesus continued bitterly, persistently:
"I was born that I might be a king, and that I might bear witness unto the Truth. Whoso loveth the Truth will hear my voice."

Pontius extended his legs, crossed them, and sat jerking the tips of his toes to and fro, causing the sun to flash upon the ivory crescents of the calcei.

Meanwhile his patrician guests fell eagerly to repeating to one another the latest words uttered by the Accused.
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After a while Pontius straightened himself again, gathered his toga together, and said with a yawn:

"‘Truth’? ‘Truth’? What is that ‘Truth’ of thine?"

Which led Pilate’s friends to draw closer together yet, and wholly to forget Jesus in absorbed exchanges of ideas on the subject of truth—ideas culled from Sophists and Sophistic works.

But such theories were beneath Pontius’ notice. He had seen that in every people, and in every individual, truth could spring. And once readings upon such subjects had pleased even his wife. In weariness of vain apothegms and definitions, he left Phocidius and the rest of their erudition and erudite niceties, and descended again to the Prætorium.

And trumpets sounded, and there fell a silence amid which there could be heard the very tappings of Pontius’ baton against his gold bracelets.

The multitude heaved to and fro, and the Roman gazed over it—gazed abstractedly, impenetrably.

Then Jesus slowly, very slowly, arrived, and Pontius pointed to him, and cried:

"I find no fault in this man. Wherefore the Imperial Justice cannot affirm the sentence which ye have declared upon him."

The arms of the Sanhedrites flew upwards, as did the hands and staves of the people, even though as yet they could not have understood the Procurator’s words.

Only Jesus seemed to stand apart from it all.

So strident were the shouts as to cleave the air and beat upon the walls as though the very stones rebounded to their violence.

Pilate’s guests ran down the staircase, and every gallery became packed with cubicularii and other menials.

Pilate made a sign, and the Chief Centurion mounted his charger, and turned his cavalry about with a crash.

The priests approached the mob to quieten it, and then,
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returning to the Procurator's side, and collecting themselves into a knot, took mutual counsel, with glib contortions, and biting smiles, and much wringing of oleaginous hands, and much purporting to be stricken with mysterious, ritual dismay. And this although every brow had fixed upon it the sheep-skin and box-wood cases containing the words from the Books of Exodus and Deuteronomy which were supposed to inspire its every thought! Ceaselessly and incisively did they keep dinning their charges against Jesus into Pontius' ears, and insisting, and amending, with flapping elbows. Yet whenever they raised their eyes to Pilate's Pilate's at once forced them to the ground again.

"Many times have we sought Jeshua of Nazareth," the Sanhedrites said, "to dissuade him from his plottings. We have done so both with gentleness of counsel, and with harshness of threatenings, and with warnings of the wrath of Antipas and of Rome. Yet always hath the Rabbi withstood us with a saying that submission unto us would 'bring peril unto his doctrine.' And, now that he hath stirred up his own country of Galilee, he hath brought the evil also unto Jerusalem."

Upon this Pontius checked the interpreter, and asked more civilly, and with a sudden show of interest:

"Is the Rabbi, then, a Galilean?"

And, on the Sanhedrites answering in the affirmative, he closed the case with:

"Then I have no power over him. The tribunal meet for his judging is the tribunal of his native land. The Tetrarch is in his palace on Zion. Let him judge for you, and I will ensure that his decree shall find fulfilment in Judea."

And to the tabularii he added:

"Forum originis vel domicilii."

And he held up his baton, and the horns of the criers rang out, and the Procurator disappeared at the head of
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the officials and attendants of his jurisdiction, whilst the eight gigantic slaves removed the rostrum in his wake.

And the cavalry opened up a ford across the human river, and Jesus, surrounded by helmets and spears and turbans and tiaras, was led away across the bridge spanning the Tyropeon.

Pontius and his friends sought the shade of the cloisters, under whose rugged arches they formed a group of elegance and splendour.

After a while Balbus interrupted their comments upon the recent judgment with a renewal of the proposal to visit Galilee.

But Cælius, rather, was for Jericho, where he knew that he could wade to the knees in date-honey and delicious juices of myrobalan.

And Marius, for his part, cried:

"To Capernaum and Tiberias, where, as the Centurion hath told me, there are Hebrew women possessed both of the outward modesty of the virgin of the East, and of the inward skill and lasciviousness of her who is of every nation. These women can compound for their bodies a perfume which never our own compounders of perfumes can discover. To Tiberias!"

"To Tiberias the new-born, the fair, the froward!" the Senator chanted. "Aye, to Tiberias where unto his concubine a prince hath given a lesser sea for a bath—to Tiberias the Imperial name of whom alone rendereth her holy!"

Stertinius confessed that he should prefer to remain in Jerusalem.

Whereupon Cælius laid his pale, over-ornamented fingers upon the hero's mouth.

"Yet, by Venus' sweet girdle," said Pontius, "thy soldierly ardour need not detain these our other guests."
Pilate and Christ

And, in imitation of Marius' rhapsody, he added:

"O Tiberias, Tiberias, pleasure-house of the Tetrarch, city whose gardens harbour an Herodias so potent of allure-
ment that even swans gaze upon her with looks of love, as though each such swan had within him a Jupiter!"

"'Oh the words that come forth from thy lips!'" quoted Phocidius, whilst Marius, fired to frenzy, cried:

"Cruel judge who at once goadest our hunger for de-
lights and holdest us bound amongst a race in sackcloth! O Balbus, purchase with thy riches a kingdom whither straightway we may remove from Pontius and Stertinius and their like!"

Pontius smiled.

"This very day," he said, "the favour of the Rabbi Jeshua hath wrought a work of State which may in truth open the gates of Tiberias to your pleasure."

And when unanimously his guests inquired further he added:

"Know ye that my friendship with Antipas first became broken when certain of his subjects rebelled against me in the Temple, and constrained me to slay them, and to mingle the blood of Galileans with the blood of sheep and oxen of burnt-sacrifice. And later, in Cæsarea, I was constrained to cleave asunder other Jews, after that Herod had inter-
ceded for them, and I had been unable to incline unto him mine ear. But this day before all Jerusalem, the Imperial Procurator hath yielded unto the Tetrarch a prisoner! And flattery ever may convert a vain adversary into a friend."

Marius cried, embracing Pilate:

"I will offer two doves from Magdala's palm-groves unto Lubertina that thou mayest be appointed Cæsar's Legate in Syria!"

"Nay! By Olympus, nay! For, should rewards be
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asked of the gods forthright, those gods are like to act as do mortals who, in rendering succour, render it so as to make gratitude impossible."

Here they passed the doorway of the ergastulum. And as they did so Cælius shuddered, and was fain to seek his brother’s support.

For through a grating built into the wall-blocks on one side of the doorway there was gleaming a human gaze.

And the Tribune of the Fortress informed the visitors that confined therein were certain criminals under sentence of execution at the Passover, and that though the actual passing of the sentence had been deferred pending the arrival of the Procurator, such sentence must be carried out that day “before that the two light-givers together shall have appeared in the heavens”—the Jews’ mode of reckoning the passage from day to night—and therefore the sanctity of the Days of Unleavened Bread should come to an end.

Stertinius requested to see the prisoners, and two slaves removed the stanchions from the door, and plunged into the inner darkness with cylindrical lanterns of horn, and holly-wood rods in ox-hide sheaths. And there followed a sound as of rods cutting flesh, and rebounding from skulls, and fettered men were heard approaching, and shackles clattering over the stones. The first to be dragged forth was a stout, shaggy fellow who still had dirt and straw from his pallet adhering to his skin; whilst behind him came a monstrosity, a clammy, two-headed human mass, in the shape of two prisoners lashed together, with mouths and eyelids and ears and buttocks as caked with mire and dung as those of the first.

Pilate ordered the couple to be separated, and the guards unleashed them, and then hurled all three, with brutal violence, into the sunshine flooding the Prætorium, where they lay stretched upon their backs.

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A round pine-wood tab affixed to each prisoner’s heal-
bone enabled the Tribune to read aloud each prisoner’s
name and offense. And, the better to exhibit the captives,
he placed a foot upon each man’s forehead, and disturbed in
the act, clouds of greenish gadflies.

“‘Genas,’” he recited. “‘Robber and incendiary.’
‘Gesias. Robber and murder.’”

“And this one?” Stertinius pointed to the shaggy-
headed prisoner.
The officer bent down. And as he did so the fellow
eyed him like a trapped rat, and rolled over on to his
shoulder.

“‘Jeshua Barabbas,’” the Tribune read out. “‘Rob-
ber and twice murderer and rebel.’”

At this point there came a call from the sentries set to
watch for signs of disturbance.

And all made for the battlements.

Pontius ascended to the postern over the archway.

On his appearance, the Praetorians guarding the Litho-
stromes prepared themselves for a sally, since they knew
their master’s sinister mood.

The mob was returning towards the Fortress, and, as
it came, filling all the morning with clamour, and raising a
smoke-like dust of earth and flesh. From afar the Centu-
turion accompanying the throng divined Pontius’ anger, and
produced and raised the iron-shafted standard of purple
and gold before arriving under the rugged postern, and re-
porting to Pontius the abortive audience in Herod’s judg-
ment hall. Tumultuously the crowd lined itself against the
Fortress’s walls.

This time the Rabbi Jesus was wearing a white sheet
which, inflated by the breeze, and irradiated with the sun,
looked like a small sail.

And whilst some might have thought the sheet to symbo-
ise merely a theoretical insult, Pilate remembered its juridi-

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cial significance in the Hebratitical legal process. For, according to that process, the accused had to present himself in black sackcloth, and only when an acknowledgment of his innocence had been rendered could exchange that black vestment for a white.

Hence he extended his arms against the blue sky, and cried:

"Even as his Tetrarch hath been unable to condemn him, so find I no fault in him."

But, in subversion of his purpose, the people sent forth an unanimous roar which seemed to have been rehearsed, as though Israel were determined to rebel.

And on Pilate once more divining that he was hemmed about with enemy, a spark of cruelty gleamed in his eyes, though he knew that Rome was watching.

The group of Sanhedrites had grown more numerous, and was headed by the High Priest himself, assisted by the Hâkân.

And that High Priest was a hierarch able, by merely raising his staff with its jewelled crook, to overawe the multitude.

Caiaphas detached himself ponderously, and said in Latin:

"I request justice of Pontius Pilate. Such justice will bring unto the Lord's City joy, and unto the Roman Government peace."

Pontius smiled coldly.

Caiaphas hardened his tone of courtesy, continuing:

"Here is one Jeshua of Nazareth who hath had proclaimed upon him the Synagogue's Three Anathemas. And both in thy hall and in mine own hath the Sanhedrin condemned him to death. For many times he hath mocked our Holy Law, and shaken its precepts, by declaring himself to be the Messiah, the Anointed One of God, and feigning to be descended from David, and foreordained to be-

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come as the glorious King who overcame the Syrians, and conquered the Ammonites. Any impostor soever who thus exalteth himself as the Messiah should die the death.”

And the people repeated with a shout:
“Should die the death.”

“Our sentence,” the High Priest went on, “Rome cannot rightfully withstand. For Jerusalem accuseth this deceiver of plotting against her Temple: and I who have been her High Priest since the days of Valerius Gratus, without fault being found in me, either of him or of thyself, am the testifier of that. The Tetrarch doth not condemn him only because here the Tetrarch hath less power even than have we, now that the right of death, the jus gladii, hath come to belong unto Rome alone.”

Here Caiaphas turned about, and all tiaras were bent in reverence.

Pontius’ guests had arrived, but were keeping out of evidence. For a moment Pontius joined them, and at once they fell to plying him with thumbs and fore-fingers joined together in imitation of a stork’s bill—the conceit which then constituted the recognized Roman gesture of ridicule.

And Marius cried:
“Nigh unto being drained doth the sponge of laughter, or that which our Senator called the ‘pulpa lienis,’ become when beholding the Jehovah’s Pontiff!”

“Not but that I have seen other monsters of the sort,” said Stertinius. “Such I have seen in Germania, with like chin and eyes and belly and feet.”

“And thou hast one in thine own atrium,” Balbus added in gleeful reminder of Stertinius’ picture of a Germanic bison.

Cælius wailed:
“O Pontius, let this rabble priesthood be skinned and roasted in its own fat, or dosed with hellebore!”

While Phocidius clinched all with the quotation:
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"'Venti obesitas non gignit ingenium.'"

Pilate, however, did not join in the merriment. His glance had hardened, and the ivory crescent on one of his calcei could be heard tinkling as he tapped the foot against a balustrade.

To think that a whole priesthood and a whole people had come to indict a single charlatan!

And he bent forward to look at that charlatan.

And Caiaphas, who had been watching his every mood, said:

"Timid he is now, and fearful. Yet trust him not until thou hast examined him for thyself again, like a man cautious of one that is cunning."

A movement of the Procurator's hand followed. And upon that the Chief Centurion brought Jesus into the Prætorium itself.

The Elders crowded the one upon the other to peer through the gateway, and see what was passing. And foremost among them were Caiaphas and a lean, livid Scribe with a framework horribly outlined by a green- and yellow-striped tunic.

The multitude, for its part, called to the vendors of honey-water and pears and bitter oranges and fig-paste, until every face had become greasy and swollen with mastication and argument.

And meanwhile a warm breeze swept the smoke of burnt-offerings over the Lithostrotos, and under the crude glare of the sun long trails of sheep could be seen wending their way cityward in charge of Arab shepherds clad in stiff cloaks like booth awnings.

Pontius and Jesus came face to face at the point where the passage from the postern debouched upon the cloisters.

The Rabbi stumbled, as He approached, over His cords and the white sheet of Herod's jesting; whereupon the Roman cried:
"Halt where thou art!"
And again he and Jesus regarded one another.
From a balcony a woman gasped.
The patricians departed languidly, but shouted to Pilate, before entering the wolf-chamber:
"Advise thou Herod of our journey."
"We have had sufficient of this, most excellent one!"
"And do you counsel the poor magician that he make obeisance unto the bison."
"And be the repast of our parting set forth for us."

Pilate felt surprised at the Nazarene's fortitude and austerity of bearing, even though the Rabbi's eyes were set in a reposeful dreaminess, as though gazing at an infinite vista.

To the Procurator came one of Claudia's freed-women. And she handed him a tablet reading:
"Do thou nought against this just man. He is the man who did one day halt to gaze upon us. Also, he is the man of my vision."

The stilus which had traced the characters upon the waxen surface had wavered as it had traced them.

And Pontius could feel a hidden gaze beating passionately upon his brow from between the slender pillars of a gallery.

He read the message twice—then once more fixed his eyes upon the Lord.

And even as he did so there swept over him a sense of irritation, a sense of resentment, of annoyance, that this man should be not only a captive, but a captive made by the very Israel which was wallowing in the sunlit expanse without, and revelling in the prisoner's misery.

And as he gazed at the Arraigned, involuntarily his mien relaxed. And, with a curt command to the Chief Centurion, he went once more out to the postern.

And there his words had a sharp ring in them as he said:
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"Est autem consuetudo vobis ut unum dimittam vobis in Paschua."

Whereupon Caiaphas and the Sanhedrites, as persons conversant with the Latin tongue, became seized with a suspicion that this announcement of the Jus Agriatiandi veiled an intention of setting Jesus at liberty.

The people owed the derivation of this indulgence, this concession, to the Roman Lectisternium, or Feast of Banquets to the Gods, and to the Greek Thesmophoria. It was a concession which Rome permitted her provinces still to possess that they might retain at least an illusion of power: and the Jews had incorporated it into the close ring of their religious life as a form commemorative of the termination of the Bondage in Egypt.

The interpreter translated the words into Aramaic.

"Withal, ye have a custom," he recited, "that at the Passover I should release unto you a prisoner."

And Pontius waited.

And at length, gradually, there began to approach him a shuffling of bare feet, and a heavy breathing, and a clashing of fetters.

And side by side there came into view Jesus and Barabbas, with the former's frail figure thrown into a relief made greater by the rude bulk of the criminal and the statuesque comeliness of the Roman aristocrat.

From the latter there rang out:

"Quem vultis vobis dimitti? Barabbam, an Jesum qui dicitur Christus?"

"Whom wish you to be released unto you?" the interpreter repeated. "Barabbas, or this Jesus who is called Christ?"

Barabbas' elbows were trembling, and his jaws chattering. His mouth opened, and vented sounds like the bellow of a bullock, until the lictors checked him by tightening the bonds over his loins with the hafts of their axes. Suddenly
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the murderer's bloodshot eyes halted, and became fixed upon those of Jesus.

"Barabbas!" the High Priest cried. And "Barabbas!" the Sanhedrites repeated. And "Barabbas!" all the multitude yelled.

Pontius crushed his purple-bordered toga between his fingers. An access of fury gathered upon his puckered forehead and twitching lips. And though he bowed his head, and stepped from the postern, his jaws and temples, as he did so, were quivering as though their arteries would burst.

Below him there continued the shouts of:

"Barabbas! Barabbas!"

The moment that the malefactor had had his iron collar and fetters unreved by the executioners, and felt himself to be free, he inflated his chest, braced his muscles until the stout cords flew asunder, and rushed away in a frenzy, with, trailing behind him, as he went, a fragment of shackle which clashed against each successive step of the stairway, and echoed against the clash of his fellows' fetters in the dungeon.

The clatter and stir of his flight penetrated to every corner of the Prætorium.

Then the eyes of Jesus and the Roman met again.

And this time Pontius seemed to see projecting from the Rabbi, and looming angular and assertive, all the obstinacy and secretiveness which distinguished the hated race.

And at once whimsically and with stern compassion he muttered:

"O Christus, where are thy followers now? None of them who do love thee have come hither. Is that because thy kingdom 'is not of this world'? Yet, by the shades of Barathrum is there in this world a place where men put men to death."

The Rabbi gazed wistfully at the grim, hostile mass of humanity: at the Judeans who abhorred Him; at the Gen-
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tiles who were delighting in the tumult; at the Galileans who were meekly shrinking away from the haughty Jerusa-
lemites, or justifying the taunts levelled at them by declar-
ing that they had been deceived in "the evil Prophet"; at the many women, cripples, and aged whom He had tended; aye, at the little children, the tiny creatures, whom He had rocked fitfully upon His breast, and pressed close to the beating of His heart.

By now human grief, a human grief of despair, was be-
going to shorten and contract His figure, and cold, tragic tremors were coursing over the sharpened points of His frame's outline. An alien in Judea had taunted Him with His solitude. And in very truth, in that dim, weary, insen-
sible land of Judea, alone He was. He could have wished that He had always lived amongst its people.

For a moment there appeared a glimpse of one of Barabbas' sweaty, herculean shoulders, above an eddy of koufehs and turbans.

And Pontius cried:
"The hurt which the Rabbi Jeshua hath done you he shall expiate with scourging."

And with that he ordered the administration of a penalty which should at once gratify Israel and serve as a quaestio per tormenta for possible extraction of disclosures.

And the lictors conducted Jesus to the lower storey of the building, to a corner in the entrance-way where stood the pillar of flagellation, a broken column coated, encrusted, with old blood, perspiration, and dirt.

And with swift dexterity the Lord's feet were bound to the stocks of the pillar, and His form stripped to the loins, and His head masked in a hood foul and stiffened with scum and saliva and foam and tears—a hood serving both to blind the victim and partially to muffle his groans. As the Lord bent forward His shoulders emitted a crack-
ning sound. Then He remained bowed and motionless,
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with wrists clenched to His throat and lashed to a staple.

The lictor Proximus spoke to a slave who, elderly, clean-shaven, and oblique of vision, had a paunch projecting prominently from a girdle of esparto grass. And whilst the remainder of the lictors were unstrapping their rods the elderly slave dragged to the pillar a block of fig-wood, and fell to probing Jesus' shrunken flanks, back, and armpits, with his horny thumb.

Presently a tabularius said something to the Centurion.

For it appeared that Pontius was unwilling that the Rabbi should be beaten with rods, owing to the fact that they were apt to break a bone. His desire was merely to please the multitude with a spectacle of flesh-cutting.

Balbus, for his part, proposed the flagrum or scourge of leather thongs tipped with bone and lead and glass.

But Pontius rejected this also, since the flagrum always left unsightly wounds, with, sometimes, in addition, a lasting legacy of disablement, or even of death. In fact, many who were scourged with the flagrum became imbeciles for life, whilst others died in the sequel for the reason that, though their wounds might close after flogging, scurf formed, and fell away in strips.

Cælius remarked that he had never seen this particular form of agony inflicted upon his slaves, and proposed to witness it now.

The Procurator wrapped his toga about him, descended through the passage-way to the ground floor, halted before the Tribune of the Fortress, and said:

"Where is Mælius?"

Sweat started upon the Tribune's face, and he found himself at a loss to understand, or to remember who Mælius was.

"Where is Mælius?" shouted Pilate in a manner which set the Tribune's eyes blinking.

An intervention came from the Chief Centurion. It
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seemed that Mælius belonged to the cohort which had arrived from Cæsarea, and, though lorarius or scourger in the Cæsarean establishment, was known in the Prætorium of Jerusalem merely as a legionary nicknamed “Sisyphus.”

This relieved the Tribune of his dilemma, and “Sisyphus” was shouted for, and came and posted himself with the lictors.

For now Pontius had decided upon the flagellum or bundle of cords, an instrument which cut the skin to ribands, and, if the lorarius were not sufficiently expert, penetrated to the very muscles, or even to the entrails.

“Let Mælius begin.”

And Pontius turned to his friends, adding:

“This ‘Sisyphus’ of mine can flay bodies even with more zeal and skill than do the Assyrians with their prisoners. He can remove the skin until the life is seen uncovered, yet without causing death.”

The Centurion stood waiting.

Pontius looked at him, and the man said coldly:

“How many?”

“How many? How many? Well, if he speaketh, ‘forty less one,’ as they say in this land which is deceitful and abhorrent even in chastisement. And if he speaketh not, then accord the number thyself—save that I wish not that he die.”

And the Scourging began.

The patricians, leaning against the balustrading of the staircase, watched the torment, and shouted their comments to the Procurator, who meanwhile was feverishly pacing the floor.

Sertinius exclaimed:

“O Hand of Gold, what an exquisite texture of stripes may be woven upon a bared back!”

And Balbus too grew enthusiastic, but Cælius besought them to be silent with the mellifluous words:
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"O delicious pain which can torment without draining the sensibility or the power of resilience! Mark how changeless are the stroke and the groan alike. Listen as I."

And all listened.
Within the hood, with the creaking of the staple, there could be heard a moan of regular recurrence. The moan followed the rhythm of the scourge, and issued faintly, convulsively, as though falling reflected from the palate.

Phocidius took it for his pitch-note, and quoted from Horace's Third Satire the words running:
"Ne scutica dignum horribili sectere flagello!"

After which, wearying of the spectacle, all departed with Pontius, to stretch themselves upon cushions palpitating like amorous shoulders.

And Marius started a discussion upon intrigues carried out by noted matrons, whilst Pontius stretched himself upon the pedestal of the wolf statue, dipped his hand into the bowl of fish, closed his hand, and caught in it something that was cold and palpitating. Laughingly he said:
"See how the poor fish wriggleteth! And presently ye shall see me open the prison unto it, and no longer hold it in durance. The cool palpitation of the creature remindeth me of——"

He paused, for his ear had caught the sound of a chorus intoned like a liturgy.
"Salve!" the chorus ran. "Salve, Rex Judæorum! Salve!"

"——I say that the creature's cool palpitation remindeth me of the warm palpitation of a swallow which once I crushed with my hands. That was on the eve when I put off the toga candida and the golden bulla of boyhood, and put on the toga libera. Even now I can feel on my skin the torment of the bird!"
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"And soon, O Pontius, thou wilt be crushing something else."

"Nay, not I. But crush it I should if I were to hold it long enough: not through cruelty, but through loathing."

And he released the fish, which inflated its gills once more, and wriggled away into the sunlit water.

Suddenly there came from the Roman and Jewish crowd before and within the Prætorium a roar of jeering.

In the central archway of the entrance gate the lictors were standing around a bowed figure, and “Sisyphus,” kneeling on one knee, was vesting the figure in a tattered chlamys.

Some soldiers approached the group, halted, fronted, made a half-genuflexion, and raising their swords, cried: "Ave, Caesar!" Then they turned about with an exaggerated raising and stamping of their heels.

Pontius darted from between the pillars, and made the walls ring with the echoes of his imperious voice.

And the soldiers parted before him, and Jesus was seen to be lying huddled across the block of fire-wood, unable, as yet, to recover Himself. Into the cords around His ankles there had been twisted a bamboo rod for raising Him to, and suspending Him from, a hook in the crown of the archway, whilst around His head there had been twined some greenery. Pontius ordered the rod to be removed.

Then the Centurion reported in detail the mocking. The Rabbi had been given a sceptre, a mantle, a crown, and the lorarius’ block for a throne, but had been unable to sit upon the block, and, rolling over, had dyed red the pavement with the wounds in His shoulders. The making of the crown had been carried out by “Sisyphus” in haste, and the falls, added to bumpings against the bamboo rod, had driven the crown downward until it was lacerating the ears.

Then Jesus was dragged to His feet. Owing to congestion of blood, veins had opened in His gums, in His ears,
and in His nostrils. The crown had for basis some stout bullrushes, and, projecting from these, as from the cones or mitres of Chaldean kings, horns formed of shoots of the prickly darnel or box-thorn. And one of the shoots had bent outwards until it had caught under an eyebrow, and sent a long thorn through the eyelid to the very eyeball.

Cælius walked around the Lord with an admiring cry of: "What exquisite purple!"

And the Tribune of the Fortress forced the Captive to turn Himself about. And as he did so the courtiers had to step back quickly, so much did the movement of Jesus' body give rise to a sprinkling of blood. Carelessly Pontius extended his baton, and brushed away from Him a gaddfly.

And when the Lord's shoulders were exhibited they were seen to be diamonded all over, and the flesh stripped clean of sinew, and roots of muscles exposed like the filaments which generate the oyster pearl. And as each drop of blood formed, another one overtook it at its source, and, specked with a point of light, gradually thickened, grew dim, glimmered, and lost its lustre.

Phocidius murmured:

“O Pontius, thou spokest well, for before us we see the life uncovered, and a life so marvellous that it ought not to have suffered thus.”

Pontius glanced carelessly at Jesus' elbow, where one of the cords of the scourge had torn the skin open and left the flesh like unravelled plush. Moreover, the process of dragging Christ across the mosaic flooring had caused the flooring's fine, sharp facets to scour a knee, and expose the hinge of the knee muscle.

The whole of Jesus' body was writhing with the contortions of its bones, and moans were welling from somewhere within Him, and whenever He moved His head—causing flies to rise thence, and settle again in clusters—the head emitted a sound like crackling fibre.
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The sun was almost at the meridian, and the Lithostrotos as packed with humanity as a field with worm castings.

And everywhere the priests were gliding from group to group, to keep up the popular anger against an impostor who had deferred to the alien in his prediction that “one anointed of God shall set Jerusalem upon a throne in the Messiah’s Kingdom, and all peoples bring offerings unto her, and the Israelite eat of the bread and riches of the Gentile, and the house of Israel become lord over those who have made her captive,” and had deceived the humble, and sought to falsify “the promises of abundance,” and to “put to flight, like unto a bird, the Lord’s glory.”

And when the people’s wrath burst forth it did so in imprecations culled from vernacular dunghills, and charged with that zest for the ßætid which, ever to be found in the human dregs, engenders rage devoid of any protest save a mere blind desire for mischief, no matter what the cost.

And Pilate reappeared on the postern.

Below him there lay a raging sea of voracious eyes, cold, gleaming teeth, brown flesh, derisive features, hirsute arms, and greasy, sweat-beaded brows.

Then there showed themselves some glittering military cuirasses and crests, and then Christ’s thorn-crowned head.

And upon that there arose from the beast-lair to the pigeons a hurricane of jeers.

As a rule, Israel is sparing of laughter, for his Books of Wisdom account merriment an error, and declare that in excess of laughter lurks an element of tears. Moreover, every Jewish brow of the period had upon it the stamp of oppression of country, and it was only on that one morning of Nisan that, through the call of the Passover to an adventurous journey, to cosmopolitan revels at feast, and to self-indulgence in brothel and tavern and caravan amid an atmosphere of wine and holiday attire and spring fruits and all the sensuality of the East then concentrated
Pilate and Christ

in Jerusalem, the Jew became stimulated to mingle with his fellows, and to vent in laughter both the fervour and the rancour and the utterances of his religion.

Yet the crowd comprised also a Jewish element which, through protests and a sounding of horns, sought to repress the more clamorous section that was bidding fair to convert Justice into a low buffoon capering upon the stage of a booth.

And, though he noted this, Pilate sought, rather, to fall in with the dominant ribaldry. He drew himself up, and stretched forth a hand. And there fell such a silence that even the rich, heavy folds of his toga could be heard parting themselves. And with an ironical intonation he cried:

"Ecce homo!"

And, with mouth pursed so that he looked as grotesque as a gargoyle, the interpreter translated the Latin.

With the words the bony-framed Scribe darted to the archway, and waved aloft arms which had the appearance of being skewered upon hooks. And he cried from below the postern:

"O Pontius, the cross!"

And the multitude leapt, with every fist upraised and fixed against the sky, and repeated:

"O Pontius, the cross, the cross!"

And all the great space trembled with the menacing dance of a delirious mob stretching forth arms like wings of foul vultures.

And before its faetid embrace Pilate recoiled. He said to the Lord:

"What hast thou done that they should hate thee so?"

By this time yet more people were issuing from the Temple's gates, and from the square of Xystus, and from the craftsmen's quarters, and vociferating:

"The cross, the cross!"

Stertinius curled his lips in disgust.

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"In Rome," he said, "our people do roar and assault like unto a gigantic, horrible wild beast. But this people is like unto a scurrilous pack of jackals."

And even Pontius cried to the lictors:
"Withdraw ye the Rabbi, that the multitude see him not."
Yet the shouting swelled and swelled until all the Lithostrotos seemed to be bursting with it, and the people to be swarming over the cornices.
And Pontius stood forth, and was addressed again by Caiaphas.
"We have our own commandments of justice," the High Priest said, "and according unto those commandments this Jeshua of Nazareth ought to die. It is thus written in Moses' Book of Leviticus."
And Pilate commented:
"Aye, of that sorry Moses who was forced to cross the sandy kiln of the desert on a camel's hump, and to be troubled with a race of tribes which knew not citizenship!"
But the High Priest continued:
"And this evildoer doth call himself the Son of God, and persists in his blasphemy."
"The Son of God!" was Pilate's muttered comment. Then he turned to his guests. "Here is a whole people going in fear of one human deity, whereas in our groves of Rome are more deities even than mortals!"
But the next moment his brow darkened. He looked at the Rabbi, and said:
"Who, then, art thou?"
By this time Caiaphas and the Sanhedrites had departed to take counsel together in Annas' house. For they feared lest, should the Procurator dally further with the case, and darkness fall, the end of the sanctity of the Days of Unleavened Bread might ensue before the sentence could be carried into execution.
"Who, then, art thou?" Pilate repeated.

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The Rabbi answered with a moan only.
"Answerest not thou me who have power either to pro-
tect thee from thy foes or to nail thee to a cross?"
Said the voice of Calius:
"The matter should have been decided with the flagrum. 
After the flagrum the malefactor is no longer a male-
factor."
A smile dawned below the thorns and blood on Christ's 
head, and He said:
"Even such power as is thine is thine only if it be given 
thee from above."
Pontius rushed forward, but the Lord’s eyes checked him.
And at the same moment one of Claudia’s freed-women 
arrived, and, shrinking away from Jesus, said earnestly to 
the Procurator:
"My mistress is desiring thee with tears."
And he departed to her chamber. Sobbing, embracing 
him, she said:
"Put not that just man to death! I did feel his agony in 
my vision. O Pontius, slay him not!"
And as she spoke she spread around him both the per-
fume from her lips and hair, and from the magnolias in 
her hands, and from the bitterness of her tears.
The Tribune called aloud, and hurriedly Pontius freed 
himself from her caresses.
For Annas’ sons had arrived. And those sons were sons 
of a man who had served as High Priest, and made his 
house glorious, and attained to friendly terms with the 
Legate of Syria.
As Pontius appeared the tumult revived, and Eleazar, the 
first-born of “the man of fortune," said:
"My father saith: ‘Shouldest thou protect him who hath 
raised himself up to be the King of the Jews, thou wilt of-
fend Tiberius.’"
To which the priests added in a murmur:
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"And wouldst thou desire to be recalled unto Cæsar's remembrance?"

Continued Eleazar:
"And this Rabbi hath rebelled against Rome. And thou dost bear the title of Amicus Cæsaris."
And the multitude thundered:
"The cross, the cross!"
Pontius smiled wearily.
"What?" he cried. "Shall I crucify your king?"
And as he spoke he turned towards his guests. But they received his jest coldly.

For Tiberius had been invoked, and the patricians preferred thenceforth to stand clear of the affair.

But the scandalized Elders smote fist upon jaw, and exclaimed:
"Behold the king whom he is offering unto the Lord's people! He is afflict ing him only to afflict us, in that he hateth us, and is seeking to set this man free."

The High Priest raised his staff, and called aloud:
"We will have none other king than Cæsar."
To which other voices added:
"And thou art Cæsar's friend, thou art Cæsar's friend!"

This disturbed Pilate. He felt that Jerusalem was girding herself to attack him. He wiped his brow, and thought: "Here am I sweating like unto the Rabbi!"

And he drew further apart from Jesus, for the cry, "Thou art Cæsar's friend!" had seemed to hint not only mockery, but denunciation. And he turned to his Roman equites, and said in a tone of railery, but a tone so forced as to render his voice almost unrecognisable:
"Here are they accusing of being king a man who hath not a subject!"

The patricians made no reply.
And Pontius repeated:
"Here is a king desolate and without a subject!"
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There ensued a pause. Then Balbus met the jesting smile with his hawk-like gaze, and said:

"None, sayest thou? Yet all Jerusalem hath he to accuse him."

Pontius reddened as though he had felt the merchant's words to mean: "All Jerusalem hast thou to accuse thee."

And as he cast a mental eye over the Roman patria, and probed the world's mists to the world's ultimate confines, he saw everywhere meet his gaze a sense of Tiberius' universal sovereignty—of a sovereignty which, like a cluster of roots supported and nourished upon Rome's far-flung colonies, registered their every heart-beat.

And next, to his surprise, he found himself gazing at Jesus with resentment. Yes, Cælius had been right. "After the flagrum the malefactor is no longer a malefactor."

Yet the gaze fixed upon him remained, as ever, a gaze of fortitude mingled with suffering.

Pontius hated himself and all things—Jerusalem, and Cæsar, and Christ's figure, and his friends, and his insignia, and his sweat, and the glorious morning sky, and Claudia's tears.

He felt irritated, baffled, walled in, futile. It was as though everything had conspired to thwart his life.

However, despite his rankling sense of being belittled and bound to others, all present still were subject to his will. If he stepped forward his friends had to follow him. If he stepped backward they had to bear him company. He was he: he was the master. And he extended his hand, and thundered:

"Below with him unto the Prætorium!"

And he himself departed thither so hastily as to rend his toga apart, and force the legal retinue in his wake to descend the white marble staircase almost at a run. Then the cohort, flashing in the sunshine, opened out to receive
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him, and once more he was amid brilliance and bronze and red chlamydes and clashing, clanging trumpets and multitudes, and a rostrum was being dragged forward like a triumphal car by steel-clad giants, and splendid standards were pointing to the heavens of blue, and before him lay massed the whole gallantry and grace of a pompous court.

And he made his way to the Hall of Justice. For the Roman Law required that sentence of death should be pronounced only from an elevation. And only in the Hall of Justice was the requisite elevation accessible.

In his right hand, as he stood with it resting upon the arm of the Judgment Seat, a precipitate eagerness was beating.

Beside that Seat the crown of thorns on Jesus' bowed head could be heard rustling.

And, in passing, Pilate thought to himself: "Thus must he have looked as, in the vision, he stood over Claudia's shoulders."

And, to avoid seeing Him, he seated himself, and spread the train of his toga over the steps like foam. Yet even so at least the diadem of thorns remained visible.

Wherefore he commanded that it should be removed from Jesus' head.

Silent stood helmets, spears, shields, staves, and tiaras. For all Jerusalem was holding its breath.

Holding its breath, and waiting. But Pontius sat resting his chin upon a nervous fist, with nostrils dilated, and eyes drawn inward, and eyebrows twitching as though they had been serving as organs of vision.

Then he leaned aside, and a legionary, receiving a swift command, brought him a shield held with the concave side uppermost, and a golden pitcher with a neck as long and slender and gleaming as a swan's.

And the Tribune bared his arms, and poured forth upon Pontius' hands water which, breaking through the fingers, laved the wrists, and leapt thence, fresh and resounding,
Pilate and Christ

into the shield. In a moment the spiritual emotion inspired by the ancient symbol swept the Hall clear of murmurings as though swept by a scythe.

For water ever has connoted the idea of purity. The Sage of Miletus ranked it above all other origins of things, and the Singer of Thebes extolled it as life’s prime grace. And from it arose both the lustral rite and the lustral cure whence water came to express innocence—to express innocence even earlier than did speech, when men had not yet penetrated to the full inwardness of verbal utterance, and when a symbolic act still was the more accurate exposition of that which still was dormant and dumb. And even when the human voice had dowered human thought with pliant, durable form, the symbol still continued to be practised—the Jews, in particular, using it if justice was thought to be in hazard, and, self-exonerated to be called for with a maximum of modesty and efficiency.

Hence, though, that day the popular outcry had overruled the counsel of the prudent, it could not vanquish the contagious silence which the spectacle of the lustral ceremony inspired. Pontius Pilate used the rite merely to relieve his feelings. But Jerusalem trembled as he did so. For a Gentile was recalling both the Psalmist’s words: “I will wash mine hands amongst the innocent,” and Deuteronomy’s stern and solemn injunction that “if one shall be found slain in the land, and none know who hath slain him, thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and measure the land from where he lieth unto the nearest city. And of that city the judges shall take a young heifer which never hath borne the yoke, nor covered the field with the plough. And when they be come unto a rough valley they shall strike off the heifer’s neck, and the elders shall wash their hands over the slain heifer, and say: Our hands have shed not the blood of that man, nor our eyes beheld him. O Lord, be favourable unto the people whom thou hast re-

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deemed, nor impute unto us the innocent blood. And there
shall be removed from the judges thereby all the blood-
guiltiness and the burden of the man’s slaying.”

And to this Glossa of Sotah adds the Mosaic words:
“Even as the hands which we have washed are pure and
undefiled, so are our consciences free from blood.”

Pontius extended his arms, and the water sprinkled
Christ’s drooping head. And the Roman cried:
“Of this man’s blood I am innocent.”

And then the Priests and the Scribes and the Elders
gathered around the Judgment Seat in a circle, and the High
Priest and the Hákán, raising eyes and foreheads, recited,
instead of the timorous formula of self-exoneration, “Be
the blood of this man upon himself!” the stronger pledge
of sincerity, “Be the blood of this man upon us, and upon
our children!”

And the legal retinue repeated the formula with faces
to the multitude, and the multitude roared the curse so ve-
hemently as to tear open every mouth, and inflate every
gullet, like a pack of hounds giving tongue.

Pontius stood rugged and motionless and supreme above
that sea of sackcloth and robes and shepherds’ crooks and
yells and gestures; above that crowd of beggars and crip-
ples and vagabonds and craftsmen and labourers and camel-
drivers and Rabbis and lawyers and merchants and pilgrims;
above that sprinkling of weighty, honourable men in whose
hearts was no thought of rebellion, or of disobedience, or
of hatred, or of jealousy; above that human mass on the
road dunged by every breed of human cattle.

And Pontius gazed at the mob with lordly coldness and
a sense of exultation in being himself, in being, amid that
scene, the only figure white, and upright, and togaed, and
sculpted in all the excellence of its caste and race.

But at length the multitude grew exhausted with its
Pilate and Christ

frenzy, and once more pressed forward against the cavalry horses’ breastplates, and sent the stench of its fætid breath and parched tongues floating upwards.

And Pontius started. For again he had seemed to feel upon his shoulders the fingers of his Roman guests—imitating the clatter of stork’s beaks. And though the guests were not there, it was as though their gaze were beating upon him unseen, and no longer conveying to him the gratifying sense of having behind him friendly support.

And he rose with a languid movement. Yet evidently the movement was one familiar to his tabularii, for, with it, they bent their eyes upon their waxed laminae. All things now were ready; a people demanding sentence in the Emperor’s name; a criminal, faint, drained of blood; the requisite officers of the law; the executioners; the external juridical form, with its pietistic gloss, hovering upon the lips of the necessary magistratus of Rome.

Pilate dictated the basic accusations with:

"Jesu Nazarene, subversor gentis, contemptor Cæsaris"
—Then he raised himself yet higher, extended a hand towards the Accused, and concluded without looking at Him:

"Ibis ad crucem."

And, swiftly gathering together his train, he descended the steps with his face now confronting Jesus, and said to the lictor Proximus:

"I, lictor: expedi crucem."

Then slowly he departed.

From pavements, walls, and battlements a hot vapour was arising, and cupolas and awnings all seemed to be looking down upon him with an invitation to silence and the repose of a siesta.

Against purple cushions he could see outlined Claudia’s white figure.

But he entered the shady inner hall.

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There he found his guests asleep upon the great couches of the chamber. He unclasped his *toga*, and cast it down between the bronze wolf's paws.

Cælius awoke and said with a smile:

"Ah, remorseless Procurator, then a single cross can depress thy spirit? How gentle that spirit must be!"

Pontius paused.

"I am gentle," he said, "in so far as that this day I have not raised a cross upon every dwelling in Jerusalem."

And the most exquisite of Rome's merchants had wakened. And he exclaimed:

"Upon every dwelling in Jerusalem? Then, *carissime*, do thou purchase of me my Sicilian forests!"

And Marius rolled over upon his crimson cushions, and cried as he nibbled at them:

"To Capernaum, to Tiberias, where the arms of Herodias gleam sweeter than Tiber's apples! Ah that I could clasp them!"

Through the stillness of the Praetorium *bucinae* were sending clangorous proclamation of the sixth hour.
Simon of Cyrene

“And they compelled one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear Jesus’ cross.” St. Mark xv, 21.

Simon exchanged his smock of sackcloth for his festal tunic of coarse, saffron-coloured material with sleeves slashed at the elbow. Also, he wound around his hips the broad scarf which, serving him both as wallet and girdle, left bare the muscular legs whereon the down was like feather-grass, and lay compressed with straps securing upon his feet sandals shod with iron, and made of hyæna-skin. Lastly, taking a napkin, and swathing it round his neck, he went to wash himself beside the well. The moonlight flooding his figure, as he went, made it look like a statue forged of metal and bright marble, with, upon it, a head small and close-clipped, and stamped with the soft lineaments of the Libyan race.

Rufus drew the water, with the dipper ringing clearly and sharply as he plunged it into the trough. And as it issued from the brim, and discharged its contents, the jet of falling water looked like a beam of toothed light, now that the moon, large and round, was permeating everything with radiance like a glowing coal, and dissolving everywhere soft, diaphanous webs of mist, and causing the very night-beetles in the trees to gleam like filaments and trinkets of silver.

Next, Alexander opened the hurdle of the sheep-fold, and the flock came leaping towards the entrance, eager to issue, now that it had caught the scent of fresh, dew-soaked grass.

And the father chose from the flock a white lamb with
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pink legs yet bare of wool. And this lamb Rufus, who, now that his mother was dead, spent his whole time on the farm, whether in grinding grain or in the care of the house, caught by the tender flanks, and removed to the stable, that the little creature might be kept in readiness for the evening's celebration of the Passover.

And Simon, having washed, took up his crook, and set forth with his son Alexander at the head of the flock. Ceaselessly there followed behind them a pattering of hoof-trottings and buttings and friskings and bleatings anticipatory of hillside fodder and deep, clear waters, whilst, overhead, eagles screeched as they soared away towards a dawn as full of purity as the ever-beatific dawn when Moses had stood on the Mount of Passage, on Mount Abarim, and showed his people the beginning of the Promised Land "whose rocks do yield honey and oil and the pure juice of grapes."

Simon sang as he looked at his well-tilled plots, or turned to call to a sheep which, lingering behind, was standing still and bleating. And in the homestead the stock left in byre and stable could be heard raising a broken chorus.

And Alexander said to his father:
"My father, tell me of that Cyrene which mine eyes have never beheld."

And Simon replied:
"Of that Cyrene? Of that Cyrene? Ah, verily Cyrene is a city with walls and fields and dwellings like unto wheat or ripe apples for colour. And her mountains are like unto honeycombs. Only unto a ruddy damsel can she be compared. And the road from the Gate of Apollonia is a road broader even than the Jordan, and one ever thronged with merchants. And under tentings before the King there used to be weighed and sold the silfon or cane which is coveted of the Greeks for pressing thence juice for drugs and spices. And without the further wards, and set beside gardens fer-
tile with citron and saffron, under the shade of fig-trees able to afford rest unto a goodly flock, there is a well with three fountains. And when we were watering our camels at that well there would appear unto us an old man naked and crook-backed. And the old man would cry with a voice like unto a howl, and wave about him a staff bearing skins of vipers. And then the herdsmen would flee, and the old man would sink beneath the she-camels' bellies, and suck their teats, until, as he was departing, he staggered to and fro with excess and satiety. And at length, one eventide when our master had threatened us with tormentings, we did collect ourselves for an assault, and fall upon the old man, and fling upon him stones and fragments. And when that a piece of rock had broken his knee-bones he so called aloud in his hurt that many others came running from the outskirts, and all stoned him to their pleasure with cries of: 'He is a vampire, a vampire, wrought of women's flux!' And the old man proclaimed with a loud voice: 'Drought shall dry up your entrails, and render them yet heavier than the stones which ye have cast, in that ye have slain the god of your water!' And many then became afraid, but the chief shepherd cried: 'Make an end of him! Make an end of him, so that he may be cleft utterly apart, and bleed from all his body! What though he be a god, make an end of one whom ere now we might have had within our power!' And so much did the cry of the chief shepherd and the smell of the blood strengthen our arms that we plucked fresh stones from the well itself, and heaped them upon the god as upon a scorpion. But later there came a drought, and the three fountains of the well dried up. And inasmuch as the city blamed us for that, and sought out, and recovered the stones of malediction, that it might build in a grove an altar for our sacrificing in atonement unto the crook-backed man, we did escape thence, and pass through many towns of delight
*Figures of the Passion of Our Lord*

where, by stern magic, soothsayers could change men into beasts, and high-born women kept mules and other creatures in flower-decked stalls. And the same magicians could possess men's wills from afar, and thrust into women's hearts invisible needles so heated with passion that those women abhorred thereafter the good, and clave unto the foul. And the same magicians could take a piece of raiment saturated with the savour and blood-issue of a woman stricken with love, and fashion from the fragment charms not to be resisted. Yea, and they could mould images of wax potent for joy or sorrow, and such that whatsoever was wrought upon them was wrought also upon the person whom the images represented. And this people's Goddess of Magic was called Thoth; and she was both a harsh divinity and a favourable, in that she both demanded offerings of gifts and had demanded of her sorcery and devices of healing. Also, in those parts there were creatures called demons. And those demons had much power: some of them being able to show themselves as winged beetles, and to move on the wind, or to settle in the dust, or to swarm amid vapour of swamps, or to seek lodgment where vines grew richly, or to hover above moisture of meadows, and others being spirits of fever or madness, and others the elves and fairies which bring misfortune upon wives and young girls, and others the creatures which are known as ghouls, and have clammy, voracious eyes, and sate themselves upon the corruption of sepulchres, and cleave unto the skin of wayfarers, and suck sustenance from their veins and bones before leaving them drained of blood, and going to whirl about at cross-roads like unto withered leaves. And thence we came unto a land worshipping a goddess who was naked, and sucked her own breasts, and had priests who never might know women, and priestesses who died of a surfeit of love. And after passing through yet more peoples we came and found shelter amongst the sheep-folds of Leba-
Simon of Cyrene

non, whence we could behold all the breadth of the sea like unto a plain of blue, and territories lying in quietude, and cities seeming as small and peaceful as cots of weaning lambs. And whenever I sang to myself a certain melody of the death of Adonis which I had learned from my mother I would think once more of the torment of the old man of Cyrene, and inquire: 'Think ye that he was in very truth a god?' For, though folk derided my earnestness and compassion, I say unto thee that I desired him to have been a god in that in such case my compassion for him would have been less than if he had been a man."

. . . . . . . . . . .

By the time that father and son had reached the rocks and middens of Bezetha the sun had risen like a blood-red shield, and was touching Jerusalem's cupolas and pinacles and heights and towers to flame, and pigeons which had their nests on the gables and capitals of the city's palaces were flying to and fro, and seeming, as the heavens' flush caught them, to be slashed with wounds, and the flock's fleeces glowing to a deeper ruddiness of hue, and beasts and men casting long, blue, slanting shadows over the slopes by the wayside.

From one of the ramparts of the Citadel a Prætorian could be seen discharging his bow at two vultures which had flown towards the escarpment, and the birds wheeling about to seek the sheep-pens near to where the Kidron, was flowing swollen with scum-coated, blood-stained water from the Temple's sewers.

And when the wayfarers struck the road from Damascus they plunged between hedges diffusing a freshness of seignorial gardens in which pomegranate-trees and laurels were casting petals abroad, and bending earthward beneath embraces of jasmine and honeysuckle, and rendering the track intimate and shady, and causing it to re-echo with water-
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wheels and a flowing of conduits. For here arose the bays and magnolias and billowy rose-bushes of Joseph of Arimathea, and from acacia-trees in flower there was coming a constant plaint of nightingales, and upon passion-shrubs which the flock eyed eagerly zephyrs of spring were playing as upon psalteries. And then these delicious enclosures came to an end, and the earth seemed absolutely to crackle with the heat of the sun, and the road from Jaffa and Damascus began to trend through cactus-studded, vacant ground, and to skirt the foot of a barren height where thistles stood twisted with drought, and as though cast in chalk, and a disused cistern gaping with crumbling jaws, and a rock as smooth and polished as bone stood dinted like the temples of a human brow, and rose in curves like the forehead of a huge cranium. For that polished height was the hill of Golgotha, a bare, ancient ridge which, cutting in twain the youth and the fertility of the seignorial pleasure-grounds, shelved to the flats lining the Jaffa Road after passage of the Gate of Ephraim or Gennath, the Gate of Gardens.

At length Simon and his son halted in the shade of the city walls, and the flock fell to browsing upon the herbage of the moats. And everywhere, under olive-trees and on vacant spaces, there were congregating companies of caravans.

And whilst Simon, standing outlined against the blue sky, was waiting for the sheep-traders there came back to his memory incidents in his past life.

For on many other Passover mornings had he halted in that same spot to sell his master’s sheep. He had done so as early as the time when the remembrance of his Carthaginian gods was but just beginning to fade from his mind, and to merge with prayers offered to Allah and Elohim, and to seek to grasp the spirit of etymographical subtleties.
Simon of Cyrene

And as he stretched himself upon the ground, and lay resting upon his elbow, he said to Alexander:

"It was thy mother who weaned me from all else unto Israel. One day we did come hither after that I had followed her through all the city to behold her. And when she had gone into the temple I too had gone thither. And when she leaned upon a pillar in the Cloisters I had approached and touched the stones as though I had been caressing a lamb just born. And as she returned unto the home which now is our dwelling, still I followed behind her, and gazed upon her. But in those days I was poor, and lacked the wherewithal for the mohar which her father demanded for her betrothal: wherefore at length I did enter into service in his fields, and through the sweat of my brow earn the price of our union. And blessed be the woman who brought me such fortune and hath borne me lusty sons! And during her last pangs, when already her hand was growing cold within the folds of my bosom, she did smile upon me. And as she smiled I could see once more the pillar in the Temple's Cloisters upon which she had leaned as a young girl. And I wept and kissed her. And even as I was kissing her, even as I was kissing her, she sank back upon my bosom dead. At that moment thou and thy brother were sporting with a kid that yet was drawing nourishment from its mother."

When the sheep-traders arrived with garments smelling like the pelt of a he-goat they produced rounds of maize bread, and roasted beans, and a jar of Median wine, and gave of these to Simon and his son, and set themselves to relate their losses and mishaps.

But Simon and Alexander listened with distrust, for the men declared father and son to be their brethren and their good friends, and one, a man withered with years and avarice, a man with features as sharp and viscous as those of a
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sewer rat, blinked his eyes, and murmured to Alexander:

“There is not a woman would pass thee by—were she a
stranger, or were she a Believer—but would look upon thee.
For there is nought of comeliness good and fair which she
would not find in thee. My friends, have ye need of this
gift which I have brought with me?”

And he groped within his hairy bosom, and produced
an amulet of stinking mandrake root.

And Alexander gazed upon the root in eagerness to learn
its use: whereupon the dealer said with a laugh of lechery:

“A herb it is which can impart strength and desire equal
to those of a ram. Greatly did Rachel hunger after this
root. But, that it may profit thee, it must be dug when the
moon is new, and by a dog, and in such manner that there
may be heard the plaint of the little man who dwelleth in
the bowels of the earth, and hath imprinted upon the root
his human likeness. Peradventure thou knowest already
that in Paradise elephants feed upon the mandrake?”

And the dealer, believing that he had now cleared the
minds of the young man and his father of distrust, named
his price for the sheep.

But Simon emptied his mouth of a morsel of food, shook
the fragments and crumbs from the folds of his tunic, and
replied with disdain to the offer of the man of unsatiable
eyes.

And the traders cast down their looks, and continued to
consume food as before, whilst one whined through his nose:

“Dost thou think to double thy profit in the markets of
the Temple?”

And another added:

“Not long since came there thither the prophet Jeshua.
He came like unto a whirlwind from the desert, and over-
threw the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of
them who sold merchandise.”

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The Cyrenian insisted upon his valuation, but the trader, laughing coldly, continued:

"Also, he struck us upon the shoulders with a piece of rope threaded with the nettles taken from a wall, and cried: 'My house is a house of prayer rather than a den of thieves.'"

But the truculent old trader raised hands like mouldering roots, and exclaimed:

"Nevertheless, a curse is come upon Jeshua's reviling, and upon his boldness. 'The Lord doth pity all them who suffer wrong: He is my helper, and will not suffer what men shall do unto me.' For the Rabbi hath been taken. Even when we were setting forth thither was he being led away, bound, unto the Praetorium. One morning I myself did see him reject the words of a priest with mockery and reproaches."

Simon and his son drew nearer to the traders.

"Yea, on a morning when I was praying in the Temple the Rabbi Jeshua came thither with his Disciples, and, taking occasion of the solitude, went into the Court of the Altar itself. And though I gazed upon them with fear, and even called aloud, Jeshua hearkened not, but with a proud bearing advanced even unto the Most Holy Steps. And there Jehovah sent unto him a priest. And unto mine eyes that priest seemed as terrible as a unicorn, for, sending his voice through all the Sanctuary, he said: 'How dare ye venture thus far? How dare ye tread these stones without first having washed your bodies, seeing that we ourselves pass them not save that first we have washed ourselves, and changed our vesture?' But the Rabbi was in nowise afraid, and replied in great anger: 'Peradventure thou thyself art clean?' And when the priest replied: 'Aye, that I am, in that I have washed in the fount of David, and gone down into the waters by one step-way, and returned by the
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other, lest I gather again the dirt which my sandals have left. Behold thou mine hands and my feet. Behold thou my spotless raiment,'—when the priest thus replied, Jesus said, shaking his head in scorn: 'Woe unto them who have eyes, yet see not! Thou hast washed, but in water come from sewers whereinto might be cast the dead bodies of swine and dogs; thou hast washed and purified thy skin, but only as dancing-girls and whores do wash and anoint themselves for the awakening of men's desires. Inwardly thou art alive with scorpions and every manner of evil. I and my people wash not so. We do wash and purify ourselves in the waters of eternal life.'"

Here the sheep-trader paused, raised a hand, and pointed it in the direction of the city.

For there was coming thence, and overspreading all the countryside, a terrible clamour.

And the traders, cursing, struck foreheads with fists, tore at their clothing and beards, crouching in the dust, and raised imploring arms to Jehovah with a cry of:

"No end is there to our calamities! All Jerusalem is groaning in tumult through the evil works of the Rabbi Jeshua!"

And Simon, similarly fearful lest disturbances should militate against the day's trading, consented then to accept the price which formerly he had rejected with scorn.

And his son thereupon led away the ewes to the soft verdure of a hollow, and Simon proceeded onward towards the city, and counted his gains as he went. And even though those gains were small, at least he felt relieved of care, and could, with such gains in hand, subsist until he should sell his barley and oats. Moreover, he was in a position now to buy his meal and fruit for the Passover, whilst as soon as the Days of Unleavened Bread should be ended he would be able also to repair the walls of his homestead, which were gaping apart, and permitted ser-
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pents to enter by night, and seek warmth amongst the embers on the kiraim, and in the mangers.

Suddenly his attention was caught by two negro slaves who, chattering their barbarian dialect, and attended by a Prætorian Guard, were ascending the track-way to Golgotha.

The Cyrenian halted to observe them.

Presently the slaves reappeared on the summit of the ridge, and, with the black, naked flesh of their heavily rising and falling arms looking like graven basalt, began to hew the surface of the rock, with the Prætorian soldier leaning indolently upon his spear, and showing in motionless silhouette against the crude azure of the heavens.

Simon continued upon his way, and passed through the Gate Gennath.

And there he found the whole slope of Arca and its low-lying streets quivering with cloaks and turbans and scarves, and its every fore-court and step-way and midden fluttering with rags of pickers and vagabonds wallowing in the refuse around the heels of asses which their owners had remounted for a better view of the coming spectacle.

And down the steep roadway which became narrower in places where the rugged rampart curved inward, or an archway shut out the daylight and shut in the odours, there was echoing a delirious shouting, with an orange-coloured, vertical sun throwing a blinding light upon the chalk until the very air seemed to be splitting. For it was the sixth hour, high noon, in that lowest-lying of Jerusalem’s quarters, and every balcony and dining-chamber was a human beehive, and every morsel of stonework buried under a human mass. From latticed window to latticed window leapt bursts of chatter and laughter from matrons and young girls and slave-women, whilst occasionally a veiled head, unable to bear the excitement longer, would thrust itself forth, utter an exclamation, and cause the crowd below to raise heads
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and ribaldry to meet it. And Egyptian youths with lascivious, painted faces, and indigo-dyed eyebrows and hair were proffering basketfuls of osier-twigs and sweet lemons and green almonds and palm pitch and Bithynian cheese, whilst an herculean Arab with the thighs of a bear, a blue beurnoise, and a red crescent with the points turned upward fastened to his brow, was carrying about a red-tinted jar, and selling mesek or “wine of mercy,” a liquor mixed with grains of myrrh for stupefying criminals, and whence, in return for an obolus, every reveller could savour for himself the last relish that would linger upon the tongue of a crucifixus.

On a damsel bedight in a riot of colours beckoning to the Arab, there came from a neighbouring window the warning:

“It is a snare, it is a snare. A pound of myrrh costeth more than two score denarii.”

But the Arab exclaimed:

“Without swooning thou couldst not drink more of it than that which thou couldst hold in the hollows of thy two hands.”

Whereupon he was caught between the eyes with a clot of filth and a cry of:

“Rake! What thou usest for the embittering of thy wine is but the dung-water of asses.”

Suddenly the horn of a crier blared close at hand, and the tumult redoubled, and all the earth thundered with a clash of Roman might. And as the alley-ways giving upon the main street discharged jets of people who had viewed the passing of the criminals once already, and made a circuit to view it again, there came with the new arrivals belles-dames of the sort who, in their love for pictures of death, went creeping under the arms of the crowd, with their bony
frames being crushed and bruised in the process, and their flying skirts torn by dogs, until once more they had reached the condemned's immediate vicinity, and once more could walk beside them, and gloat over their anguish, and hear their crimes proclaimed, and seek to gratify their executioners with a show of terror. And though the soldiers kept thrusting back these belles into the crust of populace, the women could at least boast that they had been looked upon by one or another of the condemned, and, perhaps, touched his skin, and found it to be raw, and as quick to twitch as the skin of a mule when bitten by a gadfly upon a harness-gall.

Breathless, Simon sought to retrace his steps down the slope, and to look for his son, and regain the seclusion of his homestead: but this he could not do, for everywhere he found himself shut in, with rude voices resounding in his ears, and his elbows pinned to his sides. Then the horse of a centurion loomed before him, and a crier raised a spear-point bearing the inscriptions that were to surmount the crosses. And on Simon seeking to read the inscriptions, a thrust from a shield, sparkling in the sunlight, sent him staggering backward.

Then amongst the legionaries there came into view a criminal with thick-set frame, broad features, a shorn head, a rusty ring thrust through his nose, nostrils full of coagulated blood, and a cross which had had its transverse bars connected with a rope, and was resting upon his neck like a yoke.

A leathern strap lashed this criminal to the iron collar of a second man who, dirty, and lean, and bearded with a beard like the down of trembling-grass, was dragging along a cross which had its bars planted against one of his shoulders like a fork.
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In each case were gadflies probing matter which had oozed into the wretches' rags from weals left by the process of flagellation.

And next came the Syrian slaves of the cohort, and then some Sanhedrites seated upon silver-bedizened mules, and, lastly, and showing above all else, the rough-hewn ends of the branches of Jesus' Cross.

But suddenly those ends oscillated, and sank forward. And as they did so a groan was heard.

And one of the beldames yelled:

"The weight hath made him stumble, for now our 'Messiah' is become as an ailing cony!"

The centurion came riding back—a towering white figure in a purple sash or balteus from whose golden brooch the streak of a sword hung scintillating. And as the horse plunged through the whirlpool of human flesh the rider flourished the tip of his baton of vine-wood, and rapped the nearest heads of it.

Presently a legionary came from Jesus' neighbourhood, and, approaching Simon, said:

"Thou are like unto a lusty tree! Come, that we may prove what metal there is in thee."

And he thrust him in the officer's direction.

And the officer spoke to the legionary—bending forward, for the purpose, over the hogged mane of his charger. Then he straightened himself with the words:

"So be it! Lay it upon him."

And the soldier took hold of the Cyrenian's tunic. And when the countryman sought to repel him the air vibrated with laughter, and the legionary shouted in a harsh, alien voice:

"Come! Take up this man's burden, or we will nail thee to a wall as thou hadst been a bat!"

Whereupon Simon tremulously approached, and took up the Lord's Cross.

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And so they proceeded.
On the way the man of Cyrene felt Jesus' gaze to be passing over him, and turned his head to look at Him. And though one of Jesus' eyelids was torn, and His brows sunken, and, in clearing the stiffened blood from His eye sockets, His wounded hand left fresh blood there, and His lips were parted for lack of breath, those lips received Simon with a smile.

That night, as Rufus and Alexander were examining and washing their father's neck, the shepherd-son said:
"Thus to trouble thee must the fragment of wood be as great as a camel-thorn. Certain am I that it is no little one."

And long was it before they could wrench it forth. Yet when they did so it proved to be no greater than the spike on a grain of bearded wheat. And they gave it to Simon. And he looked upon it, and wept.
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“And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.” St. Luke xxiii, 27.

“And he, bearing his cross, went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side, and Jesus in the midst.” St. John xix, 17, 18.

FrUItFUL of virtue and of good works was the hearth of the prudent Hebrew woman of old.

Her daughters fashioned garments and girdles; her slave-women, fluttering about the sunlit court, bleached cloth, spun and wound yarn, ground meal, kneaded dough, and tended the oven; and such as had had an ear pierced, as slave-women who had renounced their right of freedom on the befalling of a Sabbatical Year, sold products of the household to the non-Israelite, and kept the jewel-cases containing their mistress’s armlets and pearl thorim and finger-rings and ear-rings and ankle-chains of amber-and-gold-mounted walnuts, almonds, and lotus fruit which tinkled musically against the feet. And the mistress of the household susperintended the sewing, and renewed the perfume in the alabaster phials worn in their bosoms by her daughters, and the ivory needles of those daughters’ stibia for artificially pricking and enlarging their eyelashes and eyebrows, and plied the spindle, and dispensed the linen, and tended the lamp which “burneth throughout the night,” and studied such of the Lord’s precepts as might “open her mouth unto wisdom,” and kept the chests containing her husband’s and sons’ clothing, and laid out their freshly-washed changes of mantle and tunic and stout outer-girdle

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and soft inner-girdle (for wear next to the skin) and shoulder-scarf and ablutions-napkin and oversleeves and breeches and night-robe and turban and koufieh and straw sun-cowl. Also, she repaired the clothes of the women-folk—the plain white tunic, the fringed and embroidered tunic, the under-shift, the veil, the hood, and the cloak capable of containing six measures of meal. In short, she lived "clad in righteousness and orderliness," and followed, overlooked, the routine of her establishment, and opened her hand to the needy, and earned praises even in those city gateways which, in the East of that period, constituted a hot-bed and breeding-ground of slander, and the hub of that tendency to ribaldry and discord and backbiting which was all too little forbidden in Israel, and a sink for the scraps and waste of every hearth and roof-tree, and a rendezvous whither the slave repaired with his mistress's chamber secrets, and the client with criticisms of his patron's meanness, and the parasite with calculations of his regalings, and the Rabbin with plans for stamping the mark of his own school upon dialectical triumphs achieved by another; a place where fraud was mooted, and adultery, and the tears of the barren woman, and there assembled the fuller, and the soldier, and the gold-beater, and the water-carrier, and the out-at-elbows Levite deprived of a share in the offerings and tithes, and the vicious scion of a noble house, and the whore, and the journeyman prepared to doze until some steward should hire his services; a place where the Phœnician set up his stall, and the cripple advertised his disability, and the portitor or tax-gatherer lurked behind his desk, though he was an object of such general detestation that even the leper who lifted ragged sackcloth to give warning of his ulcers refused charity of such a hand, and the traveller seeking a lodging contrived special lies for his benefit, and applauded his own cunning if he should succeed in passing off upon him a slave for a son, or in swearing that the
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contents of his purse stood exempt from toll, as destined exclusively for the Holy Treasury, even though within an hour they might be spent upon gambling, or squandered amongst whores. Yes, the gateways of the East were the square, the deck, the sample-room, and the exchange of every walk in life. And in particular they were the lounge and assembly-room of venerable wiseacres and prominent citizens who came thither during the sunny hours of a winter's day, or during the cool of a summer's evening, to defame their neighbours, or to gloat over indecencies, or to extol the attractions of a bride discovered without her veil, or to exchange comments and opinions upon divorce—the followers of the Shammaite doctrine looking upon divorce as sanctionable only when the wife had actually committed adultery, or when the husband desired to seek progeny from a more fruitful spouse, whereas the Hillelite school considered divorce to be justifiable even on a ground so little serious as that the wife had served her husband with an unpalatable dish. Hence he who heard the mother of his children praised in a city gateway was the more entitled to say with the sage of old that "the loss of her would be more bitter even than the downfall of Jerusalem."

But one day all, both old and young, both tolerant and intolerant, found themselves suddenly united in general protestations against a Rabbi who had pardoned a woman taken in adultery.

For it was the pardoning of the sin, rather than the sin itself, that had scandalised these persons.

And with one voice Priests and Scribes and Pharisees "of the sort who do make long speeches in widows' houses, that they may devour their goods," fell to raining curses upon the man who had dared to contemn one of the Commandments of the Chosen Race.

But certain women left their household tasks to listen,
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and inquired in bath-chamber and prayer-house concerning
the man, and concerning his word of love wherein lay a
sword and a searchlight able to pierce to the very heart.
And they learnt that, though at first his following had
comprised only twelve disciples from the land of Gen-
nesaret, it had since spread through Decapolis and Sa-
maria, and reached the confines of a Judea that was
still exclusive and averse to the smallest relaxation of
Israel's frontiers, until, finally, the prophet had sent out
seventy missionaries—a number equal to the number
of Israel's families—and gained adherents in the City of
the Lord herself, and in the villages round about her.

Hence it came about that, though execrated in every
synagogue, the name of Jeshua of Nazareth was mentioned
on every hearth. And even the slave-women guarding the
house-door's entrance-screen would be able to tell of his
movements, and say: "I did see him come through the
strait-ways where hangeth the smoke of the forges, and
thence cross the place where thunder the mills of the fullers,
and ascend into the ward of the grinders and its savour
of wood and of meal, and depart unto Zion."

Particularly did certain women of Israel evade husband
or father to approach latticed window and gaze upon the
prophet who, so worn and melancholy of bearing, yet also
so keen and comprehensive of glance, would stretch forth
his hands above children's heads, and above the wheeled
litters of cripples being taken to await the Stirring of the
Pool, and bless them in a voice warm and charged with emo-
tion.

And then the women would return to their household
duties with a new sense of pleasure and ecstasy, and a zest at
once painful and sweet.

For every word uttered by the Rabbi breathed a charm
able to lull a weary heart to sleep. And, in direct opposi-
tion to men arid, harsh, and encased in egotism, this man,
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whilst declaring himself to be the Son of God, could show
sympathy for women, and forgive even the most abject! Not that Rabbi Jeshua did not rebuke the very thought of
sin: it was rather that he heaped scorn upon the injustice of
accusers who themselves were lecherous, yet so presumptu-
ous as to cast the first stone. Hitherto there had always
stood between the Hebrew woman and her God a spouse,
or a parent, or a master, or the shadow of some Doctor of
the Law of the sort who “laid burdens upon others which
he himself would not touch with so much as a finger”: but
now the Rabbi, whilst in no way seeking to detach the He-
brew woman from her duties, placed her beside the man,
that upon both might stream the radiance and the protection
of “our Father which abideth in Heaven,” and opposed to
the utterances of a rancorous, withered, Pharisaical oratory,
to the utterances of a facile, ostentatious piety, that prayer
of the Patriarchal Age which had maintained between the
Creator and the created the loving, intimate bond of a for-
giving parent with a child needing bread.

Yet, whenever any such Jewess expressed confidence in the
promises of Jeshua’s doctrine, at once the gloomy voice of
husband or father thrust her back upon such jealous aridities
as that the Rabbi was trampling upon the Law, and omitting
its rites, and perverting its truth, and eating the bread of
strangers and Gentiles.

At the same time, it was rumoured that no less a man than
Nicodemus-ben-Gorion, a Master of Israel, and a Pharisee
of the strictest and purest views, had sought the prophet’s
counsel, and that Joseph of Arimathea, a Sanhedrite of the
most punctilious erudition, had entertained the Rabbi, and
listened respectfully to his discourse.

And the soul of those women of Israel wavered between
hope and fear.

Then there came a spring morning of such joyousness
that the very gateways and arches of the city seemed to be
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lifted up, and all Jerusalem to become as a burgeoning field, or a verdant mountain, in the sunshine.

And "Hosanna!" again and again cried a band of countrymen who left everywhere behind them a fresh fragrance of olive and palm boughs. And "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they cried again.

And this joy of Nisan penetrated even to close-locked hearths, now that the Rabbi from Galilee was riding in triumph through the hitherto hostile city, and weeping with the anguish of his love as he listened to the people's benedictions and the songs of jubilation which entwined themselves around the walls of the Temple like mist.

Yet that evening, when returning homeward, some of the Rabbi's late glorifiers could be seen walking in weary silence, and trailing in the mire the same olive and palm boughs which recently had been flashing above the Rabbi's head.

And Jesus Himself returned to Bethany with the Twelve Disciples.

And again the women of Jerusalem saw their happiness overcast.

Then came another day of exultation when Hosannas to the Rabbi were heard floating down from the Sanctuary's porticoes, with canticles sung by the pure and tender tongues of children dedicated to the Lord. Yet even as the childish hymns were arising like perfumed vapour they gave place to a roar like the roar of a red, ruthless conflagration, and men were seen to be fleeing from a crashing of broken jars and tables, overturned desks and coin, bird-cages whence the captives had escaped, and animal bellowings and bleatings. For now Jesus' voice was ringing through the Cloisters like a thunderbolt.

Yet still, whenever one or another Jewish woman referred to the bold Nazarene, there intervened a husband or a father to confound her faith by saying that such a display
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of vainglorious austerity would ruin humble traders, and
that in his haste the Nazarene had uttered an abominable
blasphemy against the Temple.

The objectors added that this time not even his own
disciples would venture to defend him.

Upon that followed the excitement of the Paschal Festi-
val, when a tumult of multitudes ensued, and the splen-
dour of Antipas' Court, and the puissance and the grace
of the Procuratorial train, were to be seen.

And every family got out its festival robes, and set forth
board and lodging in readiness for guests, in that the Scrip-
tures had commanded that "the Lord your God loveth the
wayfarer, and therefore do ye also love him and receive
him, in that even as he were you yourselves in Egypt."

The result was that there set in a fading of the emo-
tional impression recently created by Jesus; and some even
ventured glibly to depreciate His demonstrations and con-
troversies in the Temple, until the Rabbi's triumph came
to seem a thing remote, a mere obscure, rustic episode.

And then came the news of his taking, effected in an olive-
garden after that all His Disciples had fled. Whence at
dawn on the following day the Prophet who had fluttered
so many cloistered feminine hearts was walking a being
even more abject and forlorn than some of those who
had recently fallen at His feet, and implored His com-
passion.

Nevertheless, certain women of Jerusalem sent their
slave-girls to wait in the neighbourhood of the Prætorium,
and themselves sat at home in torment because of the
slowness of the legal process, and disposed to chide their
dependents, and to start at the mere click of a wicket.
And at length, when there came from the Lithostratos a
blasts of trumpets and a tempest of shouting, the women's
hearts leapt within them, and, for all the sorrow caused by
the news of the death sentence, felt almost relieved through
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the fact no longer the tortures of fancy would have to be borne, but that the anxiety and the emotion which had been lurking in their breasts, and racking their every thought, were ended. For at least the women’s accumulated pain now could join with despairing resignation, and with a frenzy of compassion at the Rabbi’s downfall, in the relief of sweetly charitable tears, and of remembrances that He had such a mother as themselves, and of speculations as to where that mother might be, and as to whether she was fair of face, and as to whether she would be present at her son’s execution, and as to what might be her feelings. And with that the women embraced their children with sobs, and once more betook themselves to the tasks of establishments blessed by the Lord God of Israel with eminence, fortune, and plenty.

But the women who found the sorrow the least easy to bear were the women who dwelt upon the actual line of route. In that route were included three streets: a street long and wide which in places was covered over with archways and buttresses, and lined with the awnings of eating-houses and booths; a street running to the Tyropeon, and having its lintels hung with, in addition to the usual mezzu-zaahs or little cases of the Commandments, the oil and drug-jars and festooned-herbs of herbalists and perfumers, of a community of men with elderly, withered features, and wheedling tongues, and woman-like hands, and hidden stores of wealth; and, lastly, a street steep and chalky which ascended to the Gate of Gennath, and ran between landowners’ villas of burnt brick beside whose walls rose staircases of limestone, or of pinewood planking with palm-wood up-rights.

And that day there was not a portico or gallery or dining-chamber that was not alive with guests come to view the passage of the condemned. Only within those houses were certain women sitting listening to beating hearts in little
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rooms the atmosphere of which hung heavy and oppressive with its musky smell of garments, with its smoke from braziers, with its “herbs of virtue,” with its cedar-wood of bedsteads and cupboards, and with its fragrance of fruit-baskets. And whenever an utterance or a laugh came from the crowd those women would run to the streak of light which the jealous lattice admitted, in a conviction that danger threatened. And then they would sigh, and once more kiss one another, and resume a fretting evidence by a flashing of almond eyes amid the darkness, and a swaying to and fro of jewelled forms. And if some bold hand or forehead happened to thrust itself against the bulrushes of the window-fringe, anger and fear would break forth again, and also a yet keener desire to know what was passing. And only after a while would the women resume their comments upon the gauds and the cosmetics of the courtesans able to flaunt themselves openly along the line of route, and upon the effrontery of the young men from the Greek colonies, and upon the acuteness of the lithe Phœnicians who bawled wares from every country—cinnamon-coloured apes from Central Asia, ruddy amber from the Baltic, and embroidered fabrics from Ionia—and upon the diffidence of Libyan shepherds who, tall, clad in white, and tattoo-marked in blue, had melancholy, handsome features, hair divided into two queues and braided above the eyebrows, and the back of the neck clipped close, and foreheads bound with ostrich plumes.

But at length an end was put to the tremors of the obscurity by the sound of approaching footsteps of husbands. And all started from their divans. And approaching also was the blast of a bucina, a sound which brought back to the women’s minds an image which smote them with consciousness, and reddened their cheeks, and made them remember the haste with which the disciples had fled, and led them to ask one another, without actually opening their
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lips, which of their number were to be chosen for proffering the "wine of myrrh."

For, ordinarily, the women selected for holding that draught to the lips of the criminals included some of Jerusalem's leading matrons. And subsequently those matrons were supposed to go and condole with the hearths left desolate and impoverished by the crime, and assist the widows or the children or the parents to leave the land which had witnessed their kinsman's stripping and agony.

The wine in question—the "wine of charity" of the Book of Proverbs, and the vinum languardum, or "wine of heaviness," sanctioned by the Greater Sanhedrin—was a brew made of grape-must into which a few grains of the gum of balsamodendron myrrha had been cast. And its purpose was sufficiently to stupefy, to cause sopor, or lethargy, in, men dying slowly on the cross to make them lose consciousness sooner than otherwise they would have done.

Only if the crime had contained elements of special horror or ill-omen would no Hebrew woman, no matter what her rank might be, minister to the given criminal, so that he had to be handed the "bitter draught" by an executioner.

Yet, though, ordinarily, the draught was proffered by leading matrons, on the present occasion it befell that the Sanhedrites felt equally unwilling to run the risk of denying the criminals this relief and to see it provided from their own homes: wherefore they forbade their wives to attend the ceremony, and only the just Elishama, the father of the young Elipheleth who, loving the Prophet, had nevertheless fled from before His gaze and the terrors of Gethsemane, proved sufficiently strong and sufficiently pious to consent to his wife being present at the Paschal executions.

Wherefore, avoiding her son's eyes, the patrician lady left her mansion on Mount Olivet, repaired to Jerusalem, and there joined certain wives of small land-holders and petty traders.

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And together all set forth through alley-ways and by-ways with the solitude rendering them all too conscious of the beating of their hearts and pulses, and their lips uttering never a word rather than let their voices go echoing through the stillness which their feet were cleaving.

Once an old camel turned round with a grunt from a doorway, and for a moment the little band scattered in dismay, and in an agony to increase their speed, yet also in a consciousness that for a failure to do so they must blame the shortening of their stride with the ankle-chains. But on the present occasion no jewel or other garniture adorned their clothing—their figures lay swathed beneath plain, stout grey or mulberry-coloured cloaks which effectually concealed all grace of outline, with, pulled over their brows, hoods, and, falling from their temples, the stiff, close-fitting veil.

Never hitherto had the wife of Elishama, through exclusiveness, and the other women, through humbleness of origin, been chosen to fulfil the lugubrious office. Yet now they knew that soon they would be surrounded with soldiery, and forced to receive upon their faces the direct gaze of the condemned, and feeling themselves beside quivering bodies which still were treading the earth as they bore onward the trees to be planted for those bodies' reception. And these thoughts caused the women to press yet closer around the mother of Elipheleth, and that mother's fingers to tremble more and more convulsively upon the foot of the iron cup which shortly she was to hold to the lips of him who had blasted her son's youth.

A slave laughed at them from a roof where he was curing jackal-skins, and the women darted forward like a flock of sheep, descended a flight of steps, and issued into an alley-way ruddy with sunlight, and flanked with ancient walls and caper-trees of the sort whose seeds the Jew of the period was accustomed to pickle and consume.

And though at length a gust of shouting dissipated the
The Women of Jerusalem

women’s terror of the solitudes, it replaced it but with a terror born of the populace, and of the knowledge that their task was imminent.

And even when the clamour died down for a moment the women found themselves shuddering at the sound of horrible footsteps overtaking them. The footsteps were those of an old beggar and a girl as lean and dirty and dishevelled as a starving dog, with the two linked together with a cord, and plastered over with befoulments. And amid the silence the old man’s fists could be heard descending upon the girl’s frail shoulders whenever she stopped to pick up, and to gnaw, some fragment or strip of fruit-peel or stalk, and in one instance to clutch at a bitten-into bean-pod. The man, tall and crooked, had a turban like a strand of yellow rope, features studded with blotches and pimples, a body clad in a coarse, rough tunic, with a wisp of bass serving for a girdle, bare legs like the shanks of a sheep, and huge sandals of palm-fibre and leather. And whenever he shouted at the girl he dribbled upon her bare neck from a long, hooked nose thrust almost into her ear.

Before him the women shrank back. And as he passed them he left upon them a horrible impression of sockets mutilated and rendered vacant with the branding-iron of a barbarous justice.

Just as the couple plunged into the human mass beyond, and the old man’s turban began to nod and zigzag a way through it with a sort of dull, frenzied pertinacity, before disappearing, the women also reached the clamorous street.

And, arrived, they wavered—they felt as though caught in the eddies of a turbid river. But when the wife of the patrician raised aloft the vessel of mesek they were recognised, since they had fallen amongst retainers of the Prätorium.

And, near-by, a gate opened, and a cry arose, for there came forth from the gate an old woman who, keen and blue

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of eye, with hands as dead white as ivory, unfolded a napkin, and wiped the face of one of the criminals.

And the crowd, seething to and fro, gave vent to applause of or derision of the compassionate act according as mood dictated. But when a street-trader bawled: “She is of the Rabbi’s company,” and all sought the more to look at her, the centurion, the exactor mortis, came riding back to give her protection, since she was known, and her name was Berenice—she was a stranger come to Jerusalem to see her son, a mercenary in the Tetrarch’s bodyguard.

And so the little band of women reached the broad, tumultuous space which the Gate of Gennath shaded, and there passed through the masses of humanity with arms raised to shield their eyes, and hands clutching at, and clinging to, the smooth stones, and lips uttering smothered cries. Until finally the human wedge in the Gateway shot them forth into the outer precincts.

And there were sun-bathed gardens, and blue, distant vistas, and tents and outstretched garments and campfires and camels of nomads, and waves of attendants thrusting back people as they issued from turnings and byways, and spears of mounted men, and splendour of arms, and crooks upraised to guard flocks, and standards, and bleatings, and flute playings of minstrels, and shoutings of persons disputing with, or calling to, one another.

For the paved roads from Jaffa and Damascus were congested with humanity packed between detachments of the cohort. And every garden fence had upon it a seething mass of male and female field-workers, and everywhere there was a note of jubilation.

The cavalry, Golgotha reached, made for the hill’s northern slopes, and allowed the other shelving, clay undulations to become thronged with a rabble which waved its arms, laughed, threw stones about, pelted folk with thistle-heads and fragments, and stripped from itself the rags and ordure.

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of squalid sewers and latrines of that Acra where hordes of vagabonds huddled together in ditches, and dogs roamed by night to burrow in the refuse draining into two great cesspools from a declivity which, as bare as a carcase, lay ever blurred with steam of burial vapour and swarms of gadflies.

Persons unable to overcome their repugnance to the spectacle remained on the outskirts of the crowd, but the sunken track-way to Golgotha’s summit—an eminence of no great height, and converging to a platform of bare and barren rock—soon became scintillant with legionaries and tiaras and ceremonial robes. Leaping his horse over thistles and rubbish, the centurion disappeared for a moment behind a bend of the path, to reappear as a figure red and gleaming in its chlamys, with a flashing elbow projected against the sky, and a hand resting gracefully upon a belt whence the suspended sword-sheath looked like a torch. Last of all, like the antennæ of a gigantic caterpillar burrowing its way into the mass of smocks and cloaks and tunics, came the grim, tragic branches of the crosses.

And so all came to a solemn halt.

The women bearing the “wine of mercy” had ascended the ridge by a different path—a path which issued at the extreme end of the rising; and now the centurion motioned them towards the centre with his baton, and there they stood feeling surrounded with the legionaries’ looks and laughter and comments. Suddenly a criminal passed them, glistening with sweat, stumbling, and being pushed forward by slaves upon whose heads his cross kept throwing its horrible shadow. And to him succeeded another of the condemned, a man rounded of outline, with a mien like that of a tired mule.

And next came the figure of the Cyrenian shepherd, oaken-hard, robust with toil, and clattering his iron-shod sandals as he scraped the foot of Jesus’ Tree across the rock.
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At its upper end the main path debouched upon a glacis of shingle which completed the distance to the summit; and up this glacis the Sanhedrites pressed their mules, and were followed by a heavily-cloaked group with, at its head, a man with pale features, beard of youthful down, and hairless underlip. And as this man twisted his fingers into his turban, with his auburn locks fluttering upon the wind, and making him look like a young eagle, he kept sobbing, “O Rabbi! O Rabbi!” And even when flecked with foam from the bit of the centurion’s horse he still continued his way through the turmoil of the throng.

Only when the members of his group had drawn clear, and were standing with cloaks ungirdled and unclasped, could it be seen that their breasts were heaving, their eyes strained, their mouths sublime with anguish, and their hands clasped to the same heavens as still were looking down upon burgeoning gardens and smiling hills and all the track-ways of the Promised Land.

Amongst the group facing the multitude was Jesus’ Mother—a figure silent and motionless and pale. On beholding her, the mother of Elipheleth sank back, half-swooning, amongst her friends.

And then came Jesus Himself—His locks fallen over His face, and dripping and clotted like the hair of a drowned man, His neck tense with suffering, and His shoulders hunched owing to the brutal violence with which His arms had been lashed behind His back. And, on seeing Him, the women of Jerusalem broke forth into a lament in which cries of sorrow for the fate of Him whom their thoughts still glorified and reverenced mingled with compassion for the grief of a mother like themselves.

And when certain Rabbins approached them to say that the Sanhedrin had interdicted all mourning for the criminals the women repelled the rebukers, and counter-
rebuked them, and still followed after Jesus—strong and uplifted in their affliction. For into that affliction there lay thrown the whole strength of a life-long seclusion of tender hearts, so that the rush of sobs beat cruelly upon their frail flesh, and had mingled with it both the accumulated terror and fatigue and mental anguish born of the journey through the streets and the ascent of the Hill of Golgotha, and memories of Jeshua’s youth and humiliations and trials, and a maternal tenderness which leapt from the bosom compact of tears. Hence the pain of that lamentation was like a physical pain in the side, and, though hidden, terrible, and not to be relieved save through heaping lament upon lament in protest against the rest of humanity.

And the wife of Elishama, who ever had feared and hated Jeshua on behalf of her son, whilst trusting Him on behalf of her daughters, wept with the rest—wept with all the bitterness of a mother.

And Jesus turned and looked at them. And as He did so they felt (for they could not see His eyes) that already He had probed the hidden wound. And from them His gaze passed onward, over the hillside. And as it did so a groan of longing burst from His lips. For again He saw Himself ascending a hillside so lush with cyclamen and anemone as to dye red the feet of a multitude; a hillside where once two ants had approached His feet, and gently He had lifted them up, and placed them in a flower; a hillside whence larks had sunken into the richness of a plain; a hillside where He had turned back the flap of His turban to receive the full glory of the morning sun upon His brow, and the full savour of a grain-crop; a hillside where He had cried to His father in an agony of supplication; a hillside where He had proclaimed: “Blessed are the poor, like unto yourselves, for unto them shall belong the kingdom of heaven.”

And now, of all that raging, mocking city, none had a
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tear of compassion to shed for His plight save only this poor handful of women!

And He turned to those women, and, shaking His head to clear His eyes of the hair that was blinding Him, forced His twisted lips to the hoarse cry:

"Weep not for me, but for yourselves!"

And the women answered with a passionate outburst of emotion.

And the dragging voice went on:

"Weep likewise for your children, for the day is at hand when ye shall say: Happy is the barren womb!"

And the voice (broken with thirst and exhaustion) spread over the slopes of Golgotha, and concluded with the words of Hosea:

"Ye shall cry unto the mountains, cover us, and unto the hills, fall upon us!"

Around His form, picked out against the blue sky above the summit of the ridge, there were the Syrian slaves of the cohort, a few soldiers, and the Sanhedrites, with the hooves and trappings of the latter's mules jingling, and their riders' stern brows exuding sweat.

On the summit also could be seen, prominent amongst the legionaries guarding the site of execution, the blind mendicant's yellow turban.

Suddenly such of the multitude as had gained the top opened out to allow of two posts arising in its midst. The posts wavered for a moment, and then stood fixed, and stark and massive. And as the mob surged around them again the centurion moved his horse in the congenial task of digging his iron-shod toes into the rabble's sides. Then he rode to, and halted at, the edge of the rock which resembled a skull, with the hooves of his charger throwing up the stones, and the rider puckering his eyes to peer into the depths before straightening himself in his saddle to look also at the city beyond.
The Women of Jerusalem

A slave approached him with the basket containing the hooks for sealing the mouths of malefactors who should blaspheme against the Imperial justice. But the Roman shrugged his well-set shoulders under their mail, and said:

"They can do no hurt to Rome. Let them blaspheme if they list."

Then he approached the women bearing the narcotic, and, bending down, bade them approach nearer, and himself escorted them to the place of punishment.

As yet the slaves had not completed the task of hollowing out the socket for Jesus’ Cross, and in their vicinity the blind old mendicant was moaning with a sort of endearing note, and peering with empty eye-spaces in the direction of the leaner of the two malefactors. A gasp of anguish burst from the criminal’s throat, and led the ragged girl to turn her attention to his swollen, tremulous hands, to the abrasions on his feet where they were exuding matter upon the rock, and to the feverish, convulsive writhings of his form.

At length a soldier approached, and divested the man of his sackcloth smock—tearing open, in the act, the weals left by the flagellation. And, thus stripped, Gesias looked as frail and fragile as a piece of basket-work, as hugging his pointed elbows, he stood lifting alternate feet, and swaying his body to and fro. And the old man moaned blindly in his direction with a half-demented mien, and the ragged girl eyed derisively the old man’s hands as they twitched in the sunlight.

The women with the “wine of mercy” reached Jesus’ side just as the soldiers were unfastening His girdle, and He Himself was removing His one remaining sandal. But, on savouring the odour of the bitter draught, He put it from Him, and gazed into the eyes of the patrician woman.

And a tear fell from those eyes into the cup as though it had been another grain of myrrh, and then she tendered
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

the vessel to the more withered of the two malefactors, who reached forward with such bestial eagerness to swallow that his teeth closed and clattered upon the rim.

In the meantime the wrists of the other malefactor had been lashed to the bars of his cross—the object of such lashing being to prevent jerks of agony from subsequently impeding the transfixing of the palms: yet, when offered the "cup of mercy," he dashed it roughly from him with the rusty ring thrust through his nostrils, and upset its contents.

"Ye shall see," he cried, "that I will yet have courage to sing on the cross even whilst ye yourselves are comforting and warming your hearts with wine of the Passover."

And his hoarse laughter and fetid breath drove the women away.

Then, dexterous and debonair, an executioner, approached the man, and opened his right hand. And a dull blow resounded.

At the second stroke the nail could be heard penetrating the wood, whilst the loins of the condemned cracked as though twisted, and his pupils dilated into a hard, glassy stare, and from his features (still set in the expression which had accompanied the jest) there issued a yell.

And when the blind mendicant heard that yell he turned about, and, plucking hairs from his scabby beard, struck his fists against his dead-white forehead, clasped his fingers over his ears, and rushed away down the slope.

And even when the ragged girl shrieked after him: "It is not he, thou old fool! It is not our Genas! It is another that they are nailing!" he continued his flight amid shower of thistle-heads and stones and clots of dung, with the ducts of his eyeless sockets exuding tears, and the folds of his throat swollen with sobbings until they looked like the gills of a dead fish.

Then soldiers posted on ladders, and hauling upon ropes, raised the cross-bars which had had the quivering hands of
The Women of Jerusalem

Gesias nailed to them: and then they lifted the man's thighs, set them astride of the sedile or rest which projected from halfway up the upright, and was designed to afford sufficient support to prevent the flesh from tearing away at the points of transfixion, and, lastly, doubled back the legs until the soles of them lay prised against the wood.

Then the mallet struck home again, and the man's toenails could be heard rasping together as the toes twitched under streams of blood trickling down upon them from the shredded tissues.

Next, the wisp-like Genas was hoisted aloft by two slaves. At first he hung as in a syncope, with his transparent lips parted in a smile. But presently the lips opened wider, and vented a gulp like a sob, whilst the mouth pursed itself like the mouth of a child sucking at its mother's breast. And when the soldiers drew nearer, in jesting expectation that he would awake and relate to them dreams of his childhood, they had to step back hastily, for the crucified began to send ordure spattering down the trunk of the cross.

Barabbas also was there. He had come thither with the idea of beholding in the execution of the two malefactors merely their own, but in the death of the Rabbi his own.

And presently the soldiers raised Jesus ready nailed, and crossed and recrossed a rope about His body.

Thus three crosses stood turned towards the path of the westering sun. And, of them, the one in the middle was higher than the other two, and bore upon its branches Our Lord.

And gently a warm air, redolent of gardens, came blowing over the hill, and stirred the hair upon the faces temporarily blurred through pain and loss of blood.

But soon the nails checked the outflow from the ruptured veins. And then consciousness began to return, and moans could be heard, and sides be seen expanding, and ribs gaping and jerking. For returning consciousness meant con-
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sciousness at once of torture and of absolute inability to move under it.

And as a white, glorious, fleecy cloud passed over the sun it dulled coldly, for a moment, the flesh of the figures on the crosses. Then the sun returned again, and the flesh leapt back into relief.

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The pious women returned to the city, for there were evening meals to be prepared, and guests to be entertained.

And if they met husband, or father, or brother near the gaiety of the city walls they gave them no more than the hasty greeting of the Jewish woman of the period. For in those days she had all eyes fixed upon her, and, if she were seen lingering with men, murmurings speedily arose.
Mary Cleophas

"Now, there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." St. John xix, 25.

Mary was plying her spinning-wheel beneath the shade of the domestic vine, and Cleophas, seated on the doorstep beside her, with toil-worn hands hanging over his knees, was watching his sons, Simon and Joseph, plough the fallow soil with bodies bent to the olive-wood handles, whilst their bullocks' red, shaggy, sluggish frames showed up in relief against the Lake's sunlit blue as they turned and returned over the field.

Mary, slight and graceful, was clad in a loose tunic of the colour of ripe wheat, and sheep-skin sandals of her husband’s make. For, though come to old age, Cleophas still could show a line of sinewy flesh between his homespun smock and his patriarchal beard.

And whether silent or conversing, whether sad or merry, Mary's mouth always was as pure and fresh and smiling as though it had been squeezing forth honey of grapes, or drinking of the well with walls as white as a lamb's fleece. Likewise, in her eyes, velvety black like her hair, radiance lightened their prevailing thoughtfulness.

And her husband would sigh as he looked at them.

Pigeons, fluttering down from the house roof, joined others come from the newly-turned furrows in pecking gently around their mistress's feet.

And she took into her lap a female as spotless and soft and round as her distaff's skein, and caressed its almond-coloured head for a while before surrendering it to Cleophas.
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

And he murmured as he kissed it:

"Its odour of the fields is like unto the odour of thy hair. And its feathers are like unto the hair on thy temples."

And he opened his horny hands, and let the bird go.

And the whole flock arose with a joyous clatter, and made the vine glorious with flutterings and cooings.

"And I know that thou too wouldst gladly arise and fly. Jesus, my brother's son, hath said: 'Whoso leaveth parents or wife or children or dwelling-place, and followeth me, shall be repaid an hundredfold, and attain the life which never perisheth.'"

To conceal her emotion, Mary increased the pace of her spinning-wheel.

And Cleophas continued:

"What a wanderer is our son Judas! Never doth he start upon a journey but with gladness. Yet not so our son James, who is consuming his soul like unto a torch, and already hath knees become so old with prayer that, though once as tender as thine own breasts, they have upon them skin like unto the horn upon a camel's foot."

Guardedly his wife replied:

"The Lord hath chosen him and his brother for His work."

And then, rising, she kissed her husband's wrinkled brow as though she had been a young girl, and mounted the staircase to the roof.

And, when they beheld her there, Simon and Joseph waved salutations from the tillage, and even the bullocks turned their heads to look at her, with bold horns fore-shortened against the vista of the Lake which Jesus so greatly loved, the Lake frequented by tame water-fowl, and by solitary, rapacious birds, and bordered with crags of rock, and with sloping pastures, and girdled with the towns of Chorazin, rich cultivator of grain; of Bethsaida,
Mary Cleophas

"habitation of fish," all a-flutter with masts and sails, and resonant with the wheels of factories for moulding pickling-jars, and overspread with nets drying upon bricks, and studded with oars up-ended against mud-built walls of orchards; of Capernaum, large and sun-baked, with an ancient synagogue nestling amongst flowering elder-bushes; of Magdala, weaver of girdles and tunics, and clamorous with cooings of doves on her fortress, and sweet with the purling waters which once cleansed the sister of Moses of leprosy, and full of women gentle and indolent of glance and gait, but avid of pleasure; of Tiberias, looking like a white, naked goddess amongst embowered cypresses and myrtles; and, beyond the Lake, of Gamala, a dromedary beside an oasis, in the region where once a herd possessed by a "legion of the unclean" rushed violently down a steep place.

And here and there, as Mary’s eyes scanned the landscape, she could see curdled dust-clouds of caravans on a road trailing endlessly into the distance.

And if a bird cleft the blue it left behind it a silence greater even than before its coming.

Also, Mary could see a footpath running athwart the hazy country-side. And once more she trod that path in her remembrance. For by that path had come her bridal procession in the month of Ab when maidens in white, flowing robes were wont to seek the goren or village green, or the gaiety of a vintage field, and to sing, as they danced before the "sons of the Hebrews":

"Let not only grace allure thee!
All too oft it may deceive!"

Aye, twenty-five years had fled since the day when Joseph, Jesus’ father, had come with his brother Cleophas to the homestead where Mary had been living as an orphan. As she had been watering her rose-garden her foster
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

parents had come to her, and said: “Behold, there is a man come to seek thee to wife. We do consent unto the same. Wilt thou not enter and behold him?” And she had entered, and, through knowing Joseph already as one whom she had seen in the house of prayer, had fixed her attention the more upon the other. And, remembering how once an aged steward of Abraham’s household had come to seek Rebekah on Isaac’s behalf, she had reflected: “It is he that wisheth me to wife.” And Joseph had taken her by the hand, and kissed her between the eyes, and said: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel who hath brought us into thy presence, for joy, and for posterity from my brother’s house! Mayest thou receive of him both the love of a husband and the tenderness and the care of a father!” And the orphan girl had smiled through her tears, and virgins of Israel had danced upon the carpet of vine-shoots, and “sons of Israel” had gazed gallantly upon those virgins, and Cleophas’ head had gleamed white under its chaplet of flowers, and Joseph, as “harbinger of felicity,” had scattered sugared walnuts and barley-grain to the young people, as symbols of fecundity, and Jesus’ mother had hung the vine trail upon the bride’s brow, and bound her tresses, and covered her face with the veil which made the eyes shine more youthfully and more softly than ever, and virgins, ten in number, and provided with wands of poplar with lanterns attached, had sung the bridal song running:

“Her eyelids she hath not stained with blue,
Nor her cheeks with scarlet dyed,
Nor her hair attired with subtlety.
She is full of nought but grace.”

By this time night was closing in upon the homestead, and Mary, descended from the roof, rekindled the hearth,
Mary Cleophas

turned to her labourer-sons with a sigh of resignation, and said:

“We shall not see your brethren and the Lord this night.”

Cleophas, now grown old, could go forth beyond the farm no longer. Wherefore, before departing upon a journey, his wife and sons would halt upon the homestead’s borders, doff their head-coverings, and wave them aloft for the old man to see.

And when they had departed Cleophas would seat himself upon the threshold, and clasp his gnarled hands about his knees.

And lowings of kine would come from the byres, and Cleophas would answer to them:

“Only for a season they have departed, that they may greet our sons and the Lord when they be passing through Bethsaida. Remember ye not James and Judas whom once ye were wont to push with the horn when they gave you not of your meal and fodder?”

Then pigeons would flutter down, and entering through the doorway, strut about the arrested spinning-wheel and Cleophas’ feet, and look up at him as though to ask where their mistress was.

And he would take on to his knees a female, the whitest in the cote, and kiss it often, and sigh, and say to the rest:

“Forbear ye! Touch not the wool which our Mary hath fulled, nor go hence, since all have departed, and ye must bear me company until they return.”

And later the kine would be turned out to graze in the meadows beside the Lake, and go walking through the herbage with green-stained muzzles raised to sniff scents of the distances. And as they returned homeward they would nibble at wayside shrubs before being watered at the
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord
troughs of the well, and couching themselves under the shadow of the vine, to lie gazing at Cleophas with eyes wherein lay calmly, softly reflected the old man's solitude.

And against the Lake's sublime blue there would be standing out the plough's motionless handles.

One morning all the pigeons took to flight down the road to Bethsaida: and upon that Cleophas arose, steadied himself against the vine-trunk (for his shoulders were bowed, and his eyes dimmed, with feebleness of age, though even yet he could enjoy the sense of ownership of fields and kiln and threshing-floor and byres), and, staff in hand, set forth to meet his spouse. And when he met her he saw that she had with her a stranger.

And husband and wife embraced one another, and rendered thanks unto the Lord. And then Mary said with a sigh, on seeing that Cleophas still was looking about him for his sons:

"Not this day wilt thou behold them, for, inasmuch as the vineyard is large, and the labourers but few, the Rabbi hath sent seventy of His Disciples to sow the Word, and our Simon and Joseph with them. Wherefore they will not return unto us awhile, but leave thy fields to be tilled by this man and myself."

Whereupon her husband kissed her again, and greeted the stranger, and declared a blessing upon the Lord.

But that night, whilst the old man was sleeping, his spouse lay thinking over the journey from which she had just returned.

For recently she had seen Jesus standing pale and worn through the prayers and troubles and acclamations of a delirious multitude, with His voice failing Him, and His
Mary Cleophas
temples covered with sweat, yet His eyes and brows and lips longing, endeavouring to look upon all who might be in affliction.

And standing transfixed with His looks and words had been the redeemed woman of Magdala, and Susanna the woman wedded at Cana, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, and Salome the mother of James and John. But, instead of resting content with the sense of being sharers in and dispensers of His anointed grace, they had yearned for Him to be theirs alone, and resented that others should participate in their glorification of the Beloved, and received even Mary coldly. And on perceiving her timidity, and the grudging spirit of the other women, Jesus had called her to His side, sheltered her beside His breast, and encouraged her to murmur:

"O Lord, Thou didst say: 'Whoso leaveth brethren or parents or wife or children or goods for my name's sake shall inherit everlasting life.' And two of my sons are with Thee already, and two more I will bring, and I myself will watch Thee from my home, and keep my heart ever hanging upon Thine. But I cannot leave Cleophas. Old is he now, and weak, with none but me to care for him. Look Thou with favour upon my soul!"

And Jesus had accepted her sons Simon and Joseph to be messengers of His Kingdom, and smiled upon her. But just as He had been about to add further words of heartening unto the sacrifice Salome had approached, pale and jaundiced with jealousy, and said with an obeisance:

"O Lord, forget not, I pray Thee, that also Thou hast promised that one of my sons shall sit upon Thy right hand, and the other upon Thy left!"

And so all had departed from Bethsaida, and Mary had returned to the humble quietude of her home.
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Her husband still was lying plunged in slumber, and the lantern crackling, and throwing clear-cut shadows upon the lime-washed wall.

A husbandman of Chorazin sold them his camel, and then Cleophas, Mary, and Simon (the latter having come specially from Jerusalem to fetch them) joined the last Paschal caravan to set forth from Galilee.

The call for them had come from Jesus’ Mother.

For though, of late, Jesus had been steadfastly sowing His Word in the stony places of the Lord’s City, and performing miracles, and triumphantly foretelling the coming of His Kingdom, His soul had suddenly failed Him and He had veiled His Face, and withdrawn from all men. And His Mother had followed Him, and come upon Him weeping. But still His followers had continued to be trustful, and allowed no silences of bitterness, no warnings, no outbursts of popular exaltation, to have the result of making them tremble on the Rabbi’s account. For they had thought that the Son of God could never suffer hurt from the hands of men, and, free of forebodings, had forgotten that, though Son of God, He was also the son of a human mother’s womb, and of her pain, and that just because of that pain she loved Him the more, and that just because of that love she had the more fear of every man. And she had felt always alone. Her Son had had others, many others, around Him, but she had considered that only she could watch over and tend Him aright, since only she had had fears for His safety. Whence she had grown fearful even of His own Disciples, and most of all of Himself: until finally she had decided that there should come to Him persons who, though fearing for His sake, could do so without also losing belief in His mission.
Mary Cleophas

And she had confided this to her son Simon on an evening when he and she had been waiting for Jesus on the crest of the hill-track to Bethany.

Before them Jerusalem had been standing huge, and black, and menacing under the glow of the sunset, like ironwork fencing the furnace of a forge.

She had gasped to Simon apprehensively:

"Go thou, and bring thy parents, and swiftly! Tell them, yea, many and many a time, that a fear is upon me—a fear both of the rejoicings of them who do love Him, and of the harsh and swarthy features of Judas, that man of Kerioth, and of every footprint which cometh unto mine ears. Behold that city yonder—still unbelieving in Him, still stubborn! And behold those shadows as they go creeping to and fro therein like unto jackals amongst olive-trees! So far away our Galilee seemeth! Each night doth it seem to become further removed, as though we should never again return to our life of aforetime!"

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Never once during the caravan journey did Mary Cleophas close her eyes. And even when the other pilgrims were chanting prayers and psalms of travel she would be plying her son for further news of his brethren and of the Lord.

But in her husband the sight of every homestead which they passed revived his sorrow at having had to leave his home. He kept thinking of his vine, just beginning to sprout, and of the rough-hewn trough whither the pigeons would come to bathe, and of all the happy quietude of an old age spent on its own threshold. And he sighed with Job: "Now are my days few, and as I walk behold before me a road whence I shall return not."

And each time his wife extended her hand towards the
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rough, calcined territories of Judea, and smiled, and said encouragingly:

"Remember that ever we are drawing nearer unto the Lord, and unto our sons."

Whereafter, leaning forward over the saddle-bow, she would inquire yet again:

"Simon, how much of the journey now remaineth?"

And, on Bethany coming into sight, she thrilled with tenderness and anxiety, and, unable longer to restrain her impatience, resigned the shabby camel-saddle to her husband, took the halter into her own hands, and turned aside the beast from the caravan.

And her son led her to the house of Lazarus—only to find the house barred.

With his mother he ascended the steps, whence they could discern a tunic hanging in the dining-chamber like a dead body, and a fallen lantern guttering its oil upon the floor, and everything as in the confusion of a late sudden flight. Yet about the place was also an odour as of recent human presence, as though it had been the odour of the last sleep slept there by the Apostolic Band.

And from the verandah they went into the garden, where there were only a twittering of birds nesting in the foliage, and a humming of bees, and a lizard watching the intruders from a hole in the wall.

Mary called aloud, but her voice lost itself in the silence.

And a similar silence was resting upon the village: white, gracious Bethany was lying plunged in slumber beneath trees set amongst garden walls contrasting against the blue sky.

Meanwhile Cleophas and the camel, waiting solitary and motionless, stood listening to the hymns of the retreating caravan.

Then anxiety came upon Mary, even though her son, reminding her that the day was the Day of Preparation,

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and the hour noon, pointed out that probably Lazarus
and his people and most of the villagers had gone to the
city for the festivities.

Just as they themselves were about to depart thither
they saw a cripple regarding them from beside a latticed
doorway. And he said as they approached him:

“One from the olive-garden of Gethsemane hath been
here. And he told us that overnight the Rabbi Jeshua
was taken in the garden, and removed thence.”

Simon pressed closer to his mother, and eyed her in
astonishment, whilst Cleophas clasped his hands to his
head, and sent a cry sweeping over the village like the cry
of the wind.

But Mary, tearless, cried with upraised, tragical arms:

“Nought can those men do against the Lord!”

And, girding her cloak about her, and calling upon her
son to guide her to Gethsemane, she ran with him ahead
of the camel, to discover the straightest path down the
slope.

Before them, glowing in the noontide glare, was Jeru-
usalem—blindingly white and triumphant.

And as Mary gazed at the city she hated it.

And at every step, as she trod the solitary track with,
about her, mud walls and furze-bushes and olive-clumps,
she envied every foot which had compassed its passage
already, and kept looking about her for some wayfarer to
give her news of Jesus, and reassuring her husband with
“Nought can those men do against the Lord,” and sobbing
to her son: “Gethsemane, Gethsemane! Seest thou yet
Gethsemane?”

And each time Simon pointed with his staff towards the
foot of the hill, and replied:

“Gethsemane hath an ancient enclosure, and tall cy-
presses beside a water-wheel.”

Smoke-wreaths were arising from homesteads, and chi-
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dren with faces tanned to the colour of brick running
hither and thither with armfuls of herbs, and a yoke of
oxen moving to and fro over a patch of stubble.

And still the solitary track trended downward until
Simon cried "Gethsemane!" and pointed his staff towards
the walls of an oil-press standing out, vividly white, against
some ancient timber.

And Mary gazed at the spot, and breathed it in as
though it had been a perfume, and started to run thither
with her face breaking into a sweet, quiet smile. For
Gethsemane was good: Gethsemane so simple and so
familiar in its repose.

Approaching the mud walls of a cottage, she tapped upon
the enclosure.

And amongst the bushes there raised himself a little
a man with his cheeks swathed in a bandage, and smeared
with honey and oil.

And still the camel could be heard padding stiffly, wear-
ily in the rear, with the old man's clothing bellied out upon
the breeze that was blowing from off the Mount.

And Mary implored the man, saying:
"Tell us, I pray thee, where is the Rabbi Jesus!"

And the man, putting aside the bandage, and revealing
a scar, said:
"Last night a torch of men who came with Judas of
Kerioth did burn my flesh. The Rabbi Jesus of whom
thou speakest was wont to halt even where now thou art
standing, and to say unto me: 'I am a friend. Peace
rest upon this house!' And then He would go and rest
Himself beneath the olive-trees of the garden, or seat Him-
self upon my bench, and bid Judas, His steward, give unto
me alms. Yet he who now hath sold his Master for money
may like enough have cheated me of my succour!"

But Mary persisted:

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Mary Cleophas

"The Lord? The Lord? Tell us of the Lord! It is His mother that hath called us hither. Where are the Lord and my three sons?"

The man with the scorched face replied at first: "Nought know I of thy three sons," and then, realising that the strangers were of Jesus' followers, added:

"When I was in Bethany, telling of the Rabbi's taking, suddenly all who were lodging in the house of Lazarus departed unto the city. Only John, coming from a ravine, bowed himself before Mary, and said: 'I will not hide myself: I will not abandon my Master's Mother.' And Salome cried unto Mary: 'See how this son of mine hath merited the promised reward!' and turned herself about to look for her other son also. But I did say: 'Last night, when all of you did flee, lest ye should suffer hurt for the love of Jesus, I did have my flesh seared with a torch belonging unto one of His enemies.'"

"The Lord? What of the Lord?"

"What of the Lord? He hath been brought before the High Priest, and Pontius Pilate hath condemned Him to death, and even now He is being haled unto a cross on Golgotha. I say unto you that——"

Mary, pale and trembling, yet sublime, was able at least to force a smile for her husband, and to commit him to the charge of her son, and to stand watching the two depart towards Bethphage.

But Cleophas looked back at Mary as he went and sobbed.

And the worker of Gethsemane, not to be denied, concluded his words with:

"I say unto thee that, though He is being carried unto Golgotha, not a leaf stirreth upon the trees without the will of His Father."
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Mary, moving as in a frenzy, scaled the hillside with hands clutching frantically at the stones.

Bantering words met her from the ring of executioners, who were using a reddened sponge to cleanse their arms and knees of dried blood: whilst the centurion, who had called for the pitcher of posca, of the liquor which Roman soldiers used for assuagement of the fatigue of military journeys, ceased drinking for a moment to look at her.

Beside him a legionary was raising and shaking a helmet containing dice.

And from the crosses there was coming a ceaseless, hollow moaning.

John, erect, but with his mantle slipping from his form, was following Jesus’ agony. By this time the writhing of the Lord’s figure on the sedile was such as to cause the very wedges at the foot of the Cross to creak.

A guard approached Him, touched His knees, and said jestingly to his companions as he wiped his fingers upon his hair:

“The cool of the fever hath set in.”

Mary sank forward beneath one of the Lord’s outstretched arms. And as she did so she felt a drop of warm liquid fall upon her neck, and thrilled with adoration. And a similar drop splashed down upon a worm which had crawled forth on to the glaring rock. And, beholding the drop, Mary longed to become as that worm, and drew nearer yet to the Cross, until all her eyes and lips and temples and cheeks showed dyed with Jesus’ blood.

Then His breathing took on a hard, wooden sound, and His tongue rasped again His palate, and sucked at His gums. Until with tensely compressed lips He gasped:

“I thirst!”

An ewe bleated from a homestead, and there came the purling sound of the filling of a trough.
The Sanhedrites Who Were Jesus' Friends

"And behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man and a just.
"This man went in to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus."
"And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight." St. John xix, 39.

The Man of Arimathea walked along a path through freshly-irrigated plots of maize, amid verdure of tender green beneath a sky of brilliant blue, until he reached wall-enclosed nurseries where beds of young rye and sesame and carthamus were interlaced with conduits lapping water about stake-supported beans, and swirling around bare stems of kale and cabbage, and free-growing, vigorous, fecund stocks of mastich.

And then came fruit-gardens where blossom was dancing gaily in the wind's embrace, and peach-trees stood beside bergamot and plum and cherry and every sort of Samarian apple, from the tart, woolly species to the species with flesh as clear as honey-filled alabaster.

And at the top of the garden, upon stands in a sunny, draughtless spot, were beehives, showing like patches of gold against the blue, and diffusing fragrance of comb, and a humming of zealous workers.

And Joseph, contemplating those workers' zeal, smiled. For, though free from anxiety, the zeal embraced the whole tiny body, even to the antennae and the glossy down and the wings. How the Creator's fingers must have twinkled as they had fashioned the first bee! Yet, Joseph reflected, after subjecting all other beings to the pangs of creation until it had perfected man, the Divine hand had left to all
other beings the power exclusively to seek their own good, and made man’s good the same as theirs (namely, life without tribulation), yet denied man the discretion necessary for its exclusive pursuit.

And again he smiled as he contemplated his own weak hands.

Then came water-wheels, turned by the more aged of the camels, with bucket-rings discharging sun-shot jets into the conduits with a sound which itself suggested fertility. Yet it was with a smile of a certain sadness that the old man murmured:

“All things hath man had given unto his service but that he may become the more distrustful of his abundance."

And he turned to look at the marvellous joy of the young morning, with fields and verdure sprouting as at the beginning of the world, and distant hills showing with the soft tonality of moist, newly-moulded flesh. And once more, amid this vigorous, palpitating life, he realised his own decrepitude. Probably, he reflected, the age itself was drawing to decrepitude, now that the Prophecies had been fulfilled, and all things would, as ever, begin anew for mankind.

Then, after traversing some more open plots, Joseph reached a portion that was retired and shady, where light fell pale and old and worn, as though filtered through a screen upon humanity’s brow. And there chiefly it was that Joseph’s own brow experienced the assaults and buffetings of his human apprehension of tribulation. For the spot had in it a grave stillness which especially tended to lay life bare to the vision: in its rows of bays and willows and cypresses and myrtles and acacias there was a peculiar silence, as though of a listening and watching and waiting: in its gloom and odours, the odours peculiar to all ancient, walled-in enclosures, there was a special intimacy. Wherefore even its trills of blackbirds and nightingales seemed
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to be plaintive utterances of birds which, though loving the
trees of their predilection, knew that those trees must one
day be abandoned, and could feel their own weakness
amongst the might and the magnificence of all that was not
themselves. In particular did the spot contain a huge mag-
nolia with luxuriant branches. And for long the old
Councillor stood looking at that magnolia. No sound
was issuing from it, but by eventide it would have become
a-flutter with birds which had been seeking food in the
city, and returned to the garden for sleep. And again
Joseph smiled at his reflections. And then there reached
him from a mass of foliage the cool fragrance of his tomb,
where the entrance stone, a stone circular of shape like
the grindstone of a mill, was standing turned back upon its
hinges, and balanced upon its bronze periphery. And in
the centre of the tomb’s outer chamber was, he could see,
the jasper bier whereon, stretched in his mittah or shell,
and swathed in spice-filled wrappings, he would one day
receive the kiss of ceremony, the last kiss, a kiss which in
some instances would be given him by persons who had
never kissed him in life, but would do so now to the sound
of hired lamentations and wailing flutes, after that an Elder
had pronounced upon him a formal eulogy. Joseph entered
further. Looming through the darkness of the inner
chamber he could descry the black orifice of the recess exca-
vated for his final resting-place. And as he fingered its
walls he derived from their touch of newness of hewing a
sense of perpetuity. For, above all things, the Semite
dreads the idea of annihilation. He looks upon earth
burial as precarious, and upon disposal by exposure or
cremation as methods to be regarded with horror and
despair.

And as he left the tomb Joseph touched the entrance-
stone. What hand would roll home that stone upon his
slumbers? For a moment he pictured himself left to the
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mercy of his field-hands, of his huge, barelegged *fellaths* in brown waist-cloths, with noses pierced with *nezems* or large rings dangling over artificially distorted upper lips. True, those *fellaths* were much like himself in aspect, and in mode of life; and, for the purpose of tending a stiffened corpse, one man was as good as another: yet, as regards blood and sentiment and personality, how different they were!

Then Joseph came in sight of his villa, a building lying classical and serene amongst orange-trees and laurels.

And as the aged Councillor’s robe caught upon a rose bush of pale pink blossoms which had around it also rose-bushes with blooms flesh-coloured, yellow, jasper, and red-purple he stooped his finely-shaped head to sniff their fragrance. For those roses had come from a woman who, having sinned, had been pardoned by a Man who was without sin.

Joseph had received her from the Rabbi Jesus, for shelter until she could be sent back to her own home in Perea. And from that home she had sent Joseph these rose-stocks with the words: “They are the choicest in my garden. Thirteen kinds and thirteen perfumes I have chosen, in that thirteen are the perfumes of the Most Holy Thurible. May they flourish in thy soil, and their fragrance draw thee unto the Rabbi, and remind thee, during all thy days, of my thankfulness!”

Suddenly Joseph turned about, for to his ear there had come footsteps upon the gravel path. Towards him there was rushing a tall withered figure with mantle flying open, and features concealed under a grey hood.

And from afar the figure cried:

“Word hath come unto me that Jeshua hath been condemned! And, inasmuch as they did suspect me, they sent men after me—spies in Caiaphas’ service. But I did fling the men shekels, and they did suffer me to depart.
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Verily would the High Priest himself have wallowed upon the road to pick up the money!"

And the figure raised clenched fists towards the pure blue of the heavens, with its black, pointed, curly, anointed beard quivering with the virulence of its outburst.

Replied the Councillor:

"Yea: or Caiaphas would have stopped to dispute thine alms with the very spies in his own service! Yet no need had the High Priest to fear the Rabbi. Rather needeth he to fear Annas, who would rule our poor people from his villa."

Then, supporting himself upon his friend's shoulder, he led him to the study-chamber, and with his own hands set forth cushions, and brought him vessels of honey-water, and napkins.

Nicodemus, or Bonai-ben-Gorion, was a man upright of stature, angular, nervous, and accustomed to throw into his every word and look and attitude the whole candour and ardour and innocence of a soul as honourable as it was outspoken, and vehement. On which occasions his temples would glow like two fine, sunlit agates. And such was his material wealth that even his bounteous alms-givings and social essays and displays never impaired it. In the synagogue he would have two attendants to walk before him, and deck his seat of prayer with tapestries which subsequently he devoted to the benefit of the devout poor: and, whilst surrounding himself always, and everywhere, with a pomp which even the most weighty of the Sadducees envied, he spoke of his wealth, on every occasion, with ingenuous vanity.

Joseph, however, deprecated his friend's noble acts of audacity, and never ceased to adjure him not to let his weakness in that regard expose him to the attacks of his enemies.

And now, though once more Joseph invited him to rest
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himself, Nicodemus would accept of his host neither divan
nor napkin nor refreshment, but fell to tearing about the
chamber with a fury which tore loose floor-coverings, and
upset oil from censers, and, finally, sent him rushing out-
of-doors again. Only when exhausted did he halt, strip
off his mantle, hurl it upon the floor, trample upon it, and,
wringing his hands, and setting his features to the furious
mien of one who is about to do great deeds, shout:

"Certain am I that they have a mind to slay him. And
though he was sold unto them by one of his own disciples,
and I did see that disciple, and hear him render his offer,
I yet did not smite the villain upon the mouth!"

Joseph raised eyebrows pale and fretted with many a
vigil, and coldly, calmly replied:

"Peradventure I could send messengers to prevent this,
and thereafter we could hide the Rabbi in this my house,
which lieth before thee as fair and peaceful as a sheep-
cote."

Cried Nicodemus enthusiastically as he struck his side
with his fist:

"Yea, and I will suborn thirty or more of the Roman
cohorts, and purchase all Galilee, so that henceforward he
may live according unto his own doctrine, and come unto
my house in Jericho, and dwell in its sumptuousness, and
preach from the very hall of Bethgadia where aforetime
Hillel had his school, and have all Jerusalem to come and
hear his word, and see our glory! I understand him not,
yet I would do all that, and more. I understand him not,
yet I love him, and do believe in him as a son loveth, and
believeth in, a father."

And he glanced away over the landscape, and dashed
from his eyes two tears as though he had been plucking
thence two thorns.

Joseph laid a cheek upon a marble-white hand, and
muttered:
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“Which of us can embrace the air? Which of us can gather the waters unto him as a garment?”

Nicodemus brandished his fist towards the city, and continued:

“Even yet I will wrest him from thee, O Jerusalem! What though that man of Kerioth hath betrayed him, I will accomplish more than all thy base rulers may do! For I can purchase thee, O Jerusalem!”

And, a warm wave of scent coming to his delicate nostrils from the rose-bushes, those nostrils quivered sensuously.

And he turned to Joseph, and asked:

“Wherefore do they abhor him so, when even thy roses do breathe upon us his gracious purity of spirit? Wherefore do they abhor him so?”

Replied the older man with a mournful smile:

“In that he can pardon. To do good works through manifestation of singleness of heart is overmuch to hold the light of the lantern to the vilenesses of others.”

Nicodemus rose with flushed features and eyes burning like hot coals, seized his mantle, and cried:

“None would consent unto thy words save those who, like unto Gamaliel, say: ‘Woe is me for that man!’ Yet I will be strong. I will yet save him for whom thou, and such as thyself and Gamaliel, have pity alone. Yea, I will be strong.”

Joseph’s mien, however, remained as dispassionate as ever. And Nicodemus set forth in the direction of the Gate of Ephraim.

His brow, as he walked, had projecting upon it a livid vein, and his eyes smouldering in them a ferocious enthusiasm. Already he could see himself heading squadrons of cavalry, and troops of priests, and bands of slaves, and proceeding to Caiaphas’ hall, and pouring forth his treasures there, and then flooding all Jerusalem’s streets
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

with gold. And thereafter he would see a surging populace singing hymns of farewell to the Rabbi, when the Rabbi had embarked upon a splendid vessel brought thither to convey him to a country purchased for his land of residence with the proceeds of all the properties owned by the house of Bonai-ben-Gorion.

And with each of these flights of imagination Nicodemus felt more and more strengthened to cry: "I will save him yet! I will save him yet!"

And as he drew nearer to the city he seemed already to see merchants and hucksters and landholders and priests and scribes falling down before him with salutations, and encircling him with smiles and blessings and requests for counsel, and travellers leaving their pack-trains to kiss his token-bordered mantle, and the guards of the Sanhedrin rendering him obeisance, and officiants of the Temple clearing him a way with proclamations of his dignity as Keeper of the Sacred Waters, and stewards of palaces crying his name behind their entrance-screens, and, floating over all, the sweet, blue, scented fragrance of a morning in Nisan.

So that more than once Nicodemus had to check his exuberance, and moderate his pace as smilingly he reflected:

"I will save him yet!"

Leaning upon a staff of cedar-wood, Joseph was listening to the words of a tall, old man with a long, white, flowing beard as the pair paced slowly to and fro between luxuriant maize-plots.

Suddenly there came to them from the road in the direction of the water-wheels a cry like the cry of a great wounded bird.
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And Nicodemus was seen advancing with his lips parted in breathlessness, and mantle displayed against the peace of the heavens.

And, saluting Joseph with tears, he stripped himself of his jewelled girdle, of the cincture which looked as though studded with glow-worms, cursed himself many times, and groaned:

"I have been a greater villain than all! A greater villain I have been than the man of Kerioth himself, or than Caiaphas! For know ye that even now the Rabbi Jeshua is hanging upon a cross! . . . Joseph! . . . Joseph!"

The old man murmured gently, coldly:

"Behold, here is the Goodman in whose guest-chamber Jeshua did eat, last night, the Passover. He is about to take us to see the place where Jeshua sat. And with him he hath the cup whence Jeshua drank."

But Nicodemus groaned:

"I spat not upon the High Priest's brows! I strangled not the disciple by whom the Rabbi had been sold! I who was to have bought all Jerusalem! . . . And the Rabbi is hanging upon a cross!"

He checked himself in a paroxysm of remorse, and waited for Joseph to speak again.

Amid the joyous rural morning Joseph's bald head gleamed impassively white. Yet though his body was withered, spare, and bowed, and his features bloodless save for a pale tinge upon the lips, and his eyes faded and languid of regard, there yet gleamed through his decrepitude a light at once strong and subtle, a light which shone as glows mysteriously a torch shining through a transparency.

Suddenly an echo of the shouting around Golgotha reached them.
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And as it did so Nicodemus and the Goodman shrank back as from their very selves.

Only Joseph received with calmness the throb of voices which had come to them upon the breeze. Yet, even so, he said:

"Nay. Now that that hath smitten upon our ears we will not go unto the guest-chamber where he sat last night, but unto the hill where he is hanging this day."

"What? I? To see him die?" cried Nicodemus with a sob, and with such a wringing of his hands as made their bones crack like broken faggots.

"Yea. Thou and I. But first I myself will go unto Pilate, and beg of him the body of Jeshua, that at least I may guard him dead whom I could not save when living. And do thou, Nicodemus, thou who couldst have purchased, and didst desire to purchase, all Jerusalem, go and purchase the spices for his body. For not perfumes of thy house, nor of mine, must those spices be—spices culled of our ease, of our abundance, but perfumes needing to be sought with an effort, and with a measure of will-power, albeit the will-power but of a moment, not to be gainsaid, and spieces such as other men could purchase not save through the making of sacrifice."

Nicodemus then was for taking the sunken road from Damascus, in the hope that even yet he might escape the spectacle of Golgotha: but Joseph checked him in a voice as cold as the iron will-power which inspired it.

"Nay," he said. "Let us seek Jerusalem by the road which he himself hath trodden. Let us go to gaze upon him, and take that gazing for our promise that ere long we will bear him company."

And upon that Nicodemus kissed Joseph's withered hand.

As they drew nearer to the yellow, stony hill the crosses loomed ever larger, and the forms of the condemned more distinct.
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And when they reached the city Nicodemus cried a way through the multitude, and Joseph parted it with his raised staff. And so, the Gate of Ephraim passed, the Goodman and the aged Councillor departed towards the Prætorium's battlements, and their companion plunged into the narrow streets about the Tyropeon, where his lordly vestments swept foul pavements, and caught upon posts and corners, until the quiet, reeking solitude of the perfumers' quarter was reached. There every store had its blinds drawn down, for the beginning of the Days of Unleavened Bread was at hand; but Nicodemus sought the latched bulrush lattice before a certain door, unfastened it, and knocked: whereupon the lattice parted, and a wicket-gate was opened, and timorously there appeared the head of a man with squalid skin, features coated, from the curved jaw-bone upwards, with sparse, red, unctuous bristles, and swift, shifty, stealthy eyes. Piously crossing hands, the man murmured with a low obeisance:

"Verily the humility of Elkanah doth rejoice on beholding the splendour of my lord Bonai-ben-Gorion! Be the Lord our God for ever exalted!"

But Nicodemus checked him, and stepped within the obscurity.

Then the merchant brought a lantern of horn, and displayed his store, and opened up its brilliant eyes of pots and urns and boxes of alabaster. A place was it replete with nitches and brackets, and charged with an odour as of an ancient well.

Sighed the reed-like, obsequious Elkanah:

"Eminent art thou both amongst the Councillors of the great Sanhedrin and amongst the Ministers of the Sanctuary. Yet once the Priesthood did exalt one Abtinas, though but a seller of drugs, and call one of the Sacred Courts of the Temple by his name."

Nicodemus answered with a cry of:

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"Give unto me myrrh and gall."

"Already all here doth belong unto thee who art the crown of the Blood of Israel. Peradventure thou wilt find in this poor dwelling of mine things which thou couldst not have found in the house of Abtinas' posterity."

And, raising his lantern, the merchant threw its light upon pans of galbanum and bead-ointment and cassia-juice and civet and milk-vetch and tragacanth and saffron and gum of cistus and gum of aloes (the gall-nut or aquilaria agallocha of Arabia Felix) and granulated and cubed storax. Also did the quick, agile, cat-like Elkanah raise his lantern to a stone ledge bearing jars of ointment of Nabathean rush and megallium and Syrian malobathrum and opobalsam from Jericho and shellfish from Telos and Persian nard and red balsam and sweet balsam, and glass phials containing red orobia and white orobia and peri-winkle of the Red Sea.

"Already," he repeated, "all here doth belong unto the master who this day hath exalted his servant over Abtinas."

"I have come but to seek spices for the Rabbi," Nicodemus replied, conscious of lethargy as the strong, subtle odours of the place pressed upon his heated temples, and raised a bitter-sweet mist before his eyes.

"Abtinas," the merchant continued, "did seek to conceal the secrets of his mixtures; but I have looked for myself into the roots and textures of herbs, and pondered the words of men of many nations, and travelled throughout our land to make trial of substances, and compounded substances whereof Abtinas' descendants wot not. Known only unto me is a herb of Jordan which can cause the Lord's Perfumes to arise continually, and free from blemish or stay. And only I can cleanse the onyx-stone of its defilements of origin. Nevertheless all things herein do belong only unto my lord, the chief of all the Houses of Israel."

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Gradually, as he discoursed, Elkanah's murmurings began to help the warm, stagnant atmosphere, and the lantern light gleaming from the tremulous haze, and the quietude of the place—a quietude broken only by chirpings of sparrows from the neighbouring roofs and walls—to dull the patrician's senses.

But suddenly a note of surprise crept into the trader's words and gestures. For he had perceived Joseph also to be waiting on the threshold. Once more Nicodemus cried:

"Do thou sell me spices for the Rabbi! Sell them unto me before that I do utterly despise myself!"

And upon that Elkanah said with an obeisance:

"Like thyself, I do reverence the just man who now is fallen into adversity."

And he took his scales, and hung them up.

Nicodemus ordered what he needed merely by pointing to a chest of myrrh and an urn of gum and wood of aloes.

"And send them," he added, "unto the garden belonging unto Joseph of Arimathea."

Replied Elkanah:

"But, my lord, there is within those two vessels over an hundred pound weight!"

Nicodemus opened his girdle, and flung the whole of its contents down before the trader.

Then the trader said:

"Suffer thou that I add mine own offering unto the same."

And, bringing the lantern nearer, he measured out an additional pound of spices.

But no sooner had Joseph and Nicodemus turned to depart than slim fingers abstracted two pinches from the scales-plate, and returned them to the alabaster jar.

Walking about between the crosses were a Rabbin from
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the school at Jabneel and the two Scribes who had acted as recorders at Jesus' trial. Never did they fail to halt before the Lord's Cross, that they might strain upwards to observe His expression, and listen to His moaning. And after that for a while the gasping of a new torture had whetted their curiosity, and been succeeded by a relapse, they would move onward to another cross. Once Gesias spat forth upon them a gout of blood which had trickled down his jaw-bone, and, with the effort of ejecting the blood and the saliva, caused his livid face to turn black: yet, for all that, with head thrown back as though to seek for his neck the support of the wooden stay which his cross lacked (for his cross was a crux commissa—that is to say, a cross without a headpiece, shaped like the letter T), he cried with his tongue lolling forth, and caked, and caught between his foam-flecked lips:

"O Rabbi"—here a gasp checked his utterance—"O Rabbi, thy father hath not come to deliver thee, nor so much as to help thee with a soothing of thy head!"

And the rabble applauded him.

Joseph and Nicodemus entered into conversation with a group of their sect.

And there joined them Lazarus, come thither with a group which included his own brethren. Said he to Joseph:

"My house was ever His shield, but He left it to go and shelter Himself in Gethsemane. Wherefore alike were my prayers and thy counsels vain."

But here he ceased, for His voice had reached the group. Jesus' Mother strove to go to Him, but was surrounded and restrained.

Nevertheless a guard reached for the sponge used by the executioners for washing themselves, soaked it in some of the posca, pierced it with a dried hyssop-stem to which still were attached some scarlet threads of the sort em-
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ployed in the purification of lepers, and applied it to Jesus’ lips.

At the same moment there arose from beside the Cross the figure of Mary Cleophas.

And Salome muttered:

"Yet we others were constrained to withdraw from His side! His gaze did beseech us to do so."

And, turning to Nicodemus, she added:

"That man yonder is John, my son. He alone will not leave the Lord, but continueth to abide amongst the railings of the people."

And Mary of Magdala sobbed upon Joseph’s shoulder:

"May the Lord not endure like unto the other twain! Already mark thou the swelling of His side. And in the beginning He spake more than did they, when He was giving His Mother into the charge of the Disciple. And later He did cry in an agony: ‘My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?’"

And the woman of Magdala gazed heavenward with tears.

Salome murmured:

"And He would not drink of the wine of mercy brought unto Him by the wife of Elishama."

On hearing which, Nicodemus went and halted before the patrician matron. Bowing low, he said:

"Greater valour hadst thou than all of us. Be thy children exalted for ever!"

Whereupon Salome interrupted with:

"Forget not that it was my son, my son, that went and covered the Master’s nakedness with a fragment rent by His Mother from her vesture."

And then they saw that, kneeling upon the rock, the Mother was gazing with blind eyes at the Cross, as though she had been beholding there her very self.

And even Salome fell silent. And to the group there
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came the purist from Jabneel and the two Scribes, who, as
they passed by Joseph and Nicodemus, smiled, and saluted.
Beside himself with grief, Nicodemus jostled them from
him, darted towards the Cross, and cried:
"Rabbi Jeshua, I at least will not forsake thee!"
But, even with the words, the voice of his generous,
ae impulse died away before the awe and compassion
excited in him as he realised the ferocious cruelty of the
punishment.
For by this time the Rabbi Jeshua was no longer the
Rabbi Jeshua. His body, of the colour, now, of glutinous
clay, was marked with blue patches wherever the circula-
tion of blood had become broken, and had clots of scab
falling from the weals first left by the scourging, and
thereafter scoured against the bars of the Cross. And
around His armpits and thighs and groin lay a thick coa-
ing of sweat, whilst horrible tremors were agitating a neck
now grown shorter, and become so swollen as to seem one
with the livid, flaccid, inflated cheeks. Also His temples
were fallen in, His eyebrows indistinguishable from His
eye-sockets, the upper portion of His forehead congested
with red, the sharp, moist line of His nose swollen, purulent
with a yellow, mealy discharge, His lips bloodless, relaxed,
heavily marked with vein-tracings, and twisted back against
the clotted gums, and the gaze of the eyes, under their
empurpled lids, dim, curdled with tears.
For such was the Agony of Our Lord: the Agony of
Him who was crucified that thereby He might endure
the anguish of all who die. It was an agony of pressure
of tainted blood upon kidneys and heart and heart-valves,
and of choked and congested lungs and arteries designed
normally to soothe life's processes, but now twisted and con-
stricted and displaced as a delirious fever plunged its fangs
of thirst into the body until all that body became a gigantic
tongue for the suffering of such thirst. Thus a man sub-
Sanhedrites Who Were Jesus' Friends

jected to crucifixion had to endure not only the torture of
dull, recurring asphyxia, but also the torture of burning,
intermittent headache, of cramp of the muscles, of dis-
placement of the bowels, of abrasion of the fork, of semi-
dislocation of the vertebrae, of strained muscles, and of
lacerated nerves; whilst, suspended above all, in the view
of all, and deprived of the smallest power to move, yet in
no way of the capacity to feel, he had, wedged upon the
sedile, upon the projection which galled his loins to the
point to gangrene, to watch, like a corpse observing its
own disintegration, death come forth from his ruptured and
displaced internal organs.

And the point had arrived when this lay before Jesus'
eyes.

Then John called aloud to the Mother, and, all, abasing
themselves, drew nearer to the Cross, where the Mother
alone remained standing erect in tense, commanding rigid-
ity, with Joseph of Arimathea by her side, and her eyes
fixed upon her Son.

And upon that Jesus' closing pangs ensued. His head
began to jerk with an agony of suffocation, and His painful
breathing to set His form quivering from waist to throat,
with His lungs emitting a crackling sound as of card-
board, and His sides heaving, and growing flacculent and
swollen, and His breath alternately issuing with a sharp
hiss and collapsing, and allowing a cloud of flies to settle
once more upon the rents made by the nails, and upon eyes
and ears and nostrils. Then the suffocation would begin
again, and the jerkings of asphyxia, whilst the hair of the
head, flung to and fro, alternately fell over the face and
was thrown back over the scalp, until Jesus' breathing
became yet deeper, still more laboured, with a swift intensi-
fication of the agony. And a moan issued from His lips.
For a moment He raised His glassy pupils heavenward with
an imploring expression—then bent them earthward again.
Figures of the Passion of Our Lord

For He had realised Himself to be alone. His Father stood withdrawn elsewhere, and alone He must pass through those solitudes of human death where not even the power of human love can soothe the pangs of our beloved ones.

Yes, the Saviour was alone. The passage from God to man had been a phase but of resignation and piety: but the passage from man to God was a blind, desolate journey which ran wide both of earth and heaven.

All Calvary seemed to be conscious of Jesus' anguish: its throes seemed to dominate even the roar of the multitude and the groans of Genas and Gesias.

And, lastly, came a cry as though Jesus' whole life were being rent away. And to it succeeded the silence of a breast now lying motionless, hard, distorted, inflated, and metallic-looking, beneath a head hanging earthward, whilst the Cross remained shaking with the shock communicated to it through the fact that the corpse had slipped from the sedile as though it would tear clear of the nailings. Yet still the Mother stood gazing at that corpse, as though even yet she hoped to see its sides flutter.

A guard wound a rope around the body, and re-secured it to the upright.

Then Joseph approached the centurion, and showed him the tablet bearing Pilate's authorisation for delivery unto the bearer of the remains of the Rabbi Jeshua of Nazareth.

And at the same moment yells came from the other crucified as bludgeon blows broke their legs and hip-bones and ribs and elbows. This was the penalty of the crucifragium—a penalty designed at once to hasten death's coming and to dishonour it.

And as a breath of air brought a wave of fragrant spring perfume sweeping over the hill from the sands in its vicinity the foliage in the gardens stirred, and the multitude sullenly departed.
Sanhedrites Who Were Jesus’ Friends

Joseph and Nicodemus were contemplating the night from the roof of Joseph’s house. The scene was deeply beatific, from the Hill of Execution, nesting amongst its boulders in pale, gracious slumber, to the city arising as pure and innocent of guise as a garden of white asphodels, with the lambent roofs and towers of her Sanctuary for a crown, and her every cupola tipped with a speck of moonlight.

And the pleausances of Joseph’s garden were sending forth the full odour of their oranges and citrons, and nightingales singing, and sending arpeggios glancing across the Rock of the Sepulchre.

And the old man, feeling overcome with mournful tenderness and a sense of the eternity of things, turned to seek his chamber.

And confronting him he found a woman who, swathed in white linen, stood bathed in moonlight as though it had been an emanation from the love within her body.

And with a sob she said:

"I had thought to come and kiss the Lord’s sandal when my roses had flowered. And now, though they are here within my bosom, it will never be mine to give them unto Him!"

Joseph approached his coffer of olive-wood and amber, opened it, and took thence the cup which had been used at the Last Supper—feeling, as he did so, that his fingers were being guided by the devotion in his trembling heart.

And as the woman prostrated herself with tears the roses fell and scattered themselves over the tapestries of the flooring.

And at the moment when the Man of Arimathea was raising aloft the cup—of agate, glowing like a flower—there appeared before him a man as old and withered as himself, and clad in a fine red mantle over a snow-white tunic.
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And this man Nicodemus embraced with a groan, crying: "Gamaliel! O Gamaliel!"

And Gamaliel, entering within the chamber, turned his face to the open window, and stood looking forth upon the garden, and upon a blue star which had risen, twinkling, above two pointed cypresses over the Rock. And he sighed once more:

"Woe is me for that man!"
The Woman of Samaria

“There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her: Give me to drink.” St. John iv, 7.

Field-hands returning from the plough, and craftsmen toiling in the workshop, and travellers resting in the shade of the caravanserai, with its turmoil of men and beasts, always turned their heads with a smile whenever the woman of Samaria, a fresh, graceful, rhythmical figure against the blue of the sky, set forth with her pitcher to the well.

The road which she followed from the compound of her homestead was the road which ran with twists and turns and undulations through the Valley of Sichem. About that road were ploughed and fallow fields, and brilliant, green orchards of apple and mulberry and quince, and water-troughs fed from the slopes of Mount Gerizim, and masses of terebinth, and ancient gardens, and clumps of olive, and footpaths, and sheep-folds, and sluggish smoke-columns. For it was the region which Abraham had bought for the burial-place of his line, and Jacob afterwards acquired for the price of “an hundred lambs,” and held with sword and bow, and bequeathed to Joseph for a special patrimony. Also was it the region where the “Oak of the Pillar” had stood—a huge, dark, motionless, stately mass beneath whose branches Joshua had consecrated an altar in testimony to a new Covenant between Jehovah and the Chosen People, and the inhabitants of Sichem had anointed Abimelech to be their king, and Zebul deceived Gaal with a lie. And it was the region where, each afternoon, Jacob’s Sepulchre threw its shadow upon a clump of palm-trees bending languidly over Jacob’s Well. Hence
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all the country-side was great in story, and so poignantly charged with the footsteps and deaths of Patriarchs as always to seem to have quivering in its clear silences a cry, a throb, a Psalm.

And whenever the woman set forth with her pitcher to the palpitating, sparkling freshness men greeted her from their habitations, since they had long looked to see her beauty again exchange its marital bed, whilst, with the same thought, rich foreign merchants would fix upon her glistening eyes, and display for her benefit splendid packs of merchandise, and wines of delight, and many other luxuries which, but for her, would never have been seen in such a retired spot.

But always the woman replied:
“Prayer alone is become my meat and my salvation.”

Wherefore the men of Sichem murmured:
“No longer is she our own Fatima. Aforetime she would listen unto our wooings, and smile unto us promises of love, and raise unto us her glorious breasts: but now she doth smile as though wearied, and as though saying in the words of the Book of Ruth: ‘Call me not comely, but bitter.’ Surely she is not bewailing the death of another husband, for five hath she had already, for love of, and for loathing of, their bodies. And she cannot have lost a child, for she is barren. And she cannot be fearing the loss of her possessions, seeing that never did she covet the same, but, after that they had been given to her, did use them but as an addition to the power of her grace.”

So, as the woman trod Samaria’s streets in solitary abstraction from love, she exhaled only a calm savour of chastity, and her eyes no longer flashed: they gleamed, rather, with the radiance of still water in moonlight.

And whenever a Samaritan returned from a journey to foreign parts she would seek him out, and say:
“Hast thou beheld yonder him who can read thoughts
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even the most secret, and, though a Jew, doth eat of the Samaritan’s bread?"

But none had spoken but to Gentiles, or had had any dealings with dwellers in Israel save for usury.

For Deuteronomy had commanded that “thou shalt not lend money unto thine own brother.”

No brotherly feeling for Samaria had the land of Judea. Had not Samaria prostituted herself to barbarous idols, and built herself a temple on Mount Gerizim, and instituted in it a ritual akin to the ritual of Jehovah, and sent unto Antioch, saying: “Come, consecrate my temple unto the Greek Zeus, seeing that my people are Sidonians, and desire not to have ought to do with Israel, who is altogether strange unto them, both in race and in habitude?”

Nor did the True Believer respect either the testaments or the marriage-bond or the charity or the hospitality or the amenities or the waters of the apostatised land. Only for gain of profit would he so much as admit the Samaritan within his boundaries. And even then he did so only under the regulations of a rigid and merciless tariff. Wherefore Samaria’s resentment occasionally overflowed in forms of retaliation, and when Israel lighted beacon-fires upon his hills to proclaim the neomenia or entry of the Paschal season at the beginning of Nisan, Samaria similarly enflamed her heights, and, by passing the word of fire from summit to summit, induced certain devotees in Syria and Babylonia to believe that Jerusalem betimes had summoned them to the Festival of Unleavened Bread, so that eventually the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem had to exchange its signals of fire for proclamations by word of mouth. Similarly a Passover attended by particularly vast numbers, because the past year had been a year of plenty, was marred by men of Samaria penetrating into the Temple of God, desiring its Courts with filth and carrion, impeding the celebration of the holy rites, and turning rejoicing into woe.

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Inasmuch as no returning traveller could give the woman tidings of the Lord, her anxiety increased. And when the Sichemites expressed surprise at this she retorted:

"Yet ye yourselves have both seen Him and heard Him. Surely ye have not forgotten how once He came walking over our hills and valleys like unto the bridegroom of the Psalms, and ye denied His Disciples lodging, and they did beseech the Lord with tears, saying: 'Wilt Thou that fire descend and consume them?' and He did reply: 'Not to destroy as I come, but to save'?

And every evening the woman would descend to the Well of the Patriarch, and seat herself in the shade of its palm-trees, and sink her soul into the silence, that she might listen to every distant sound. For the place where she was waiting for the Lord was one where once His actual presence had rejoiced her, and left for ever unwinding themselves behind it memories of His aspect. It had been one noontide in the month of Sivan, when the valley had been lying ripe and ruddy and fragrant under mid-summer's breath, with cicalas chirping eagerly, and only the hum of a potter's wheel cleaving the heat.

And just beyond the village green she had been met by twelve travellers from whose worn mantles and cracked sandals there could have been shaken the mire of many days' journeying. And poor men they had been, with one who seemed to be a sort of steward to the rest, trudging with the heavy gait of a yoked bullock.

And she had cried to the travellers:

"Enter the hamlet without fear. And if no man shall give you succour, then take from my house whatsoever ye may find therein. It is open, is that house, and the whitest of all, with jasmine upon its walls."

And then she had continued upon her way, in all the gracious joyousness of her youth. And, arrived at the
The Woman of Samaria

dege of the well enclosure, she had halted with the nervous blushing liable to befall any woman, even though a sinner, if she be beautiful.

For behold, there had been leaning upon the kerb of the well, and inhaling the freshness and purity of the water, a Stranger. And in the sunlight, and as reflected against a circular patch of sky in the water, the Stranger’s head had seemed to have around it a halo.

And He had raised His eyes, and looked upon her like a brother awaiting her coming. And then He had said: “Peace be unto thee!” and looked down into the blue mirror again, and added trustfully: “Give me to drink.” And she had looked at Him, and thrilled with the weariness of His youthful face.

Likewise although other men always spoke to her with gallantry, as wooers, and with the sensual deference of those who see in a woman merely feminine charm, this Stranger had looked upon her as though she had been part of the spirit of the hour, and, even after straightening His form to beg of her the innocent draught, and necessarily perceiving her to be beautiful, had asked of her—only water! And the woman had felt a subtle spell from the water come to her, and her heart seemingly share in His drinking, and once more hear the first speech addressed to her youthful beauty, and return to its first virginal condition. And, smiling gently, timidly, she had murmured:

“How comest thou, who art a Jew, to ask water of me who am a Samaritan?”

And the Stranger’s eyes had flashed as with sudden glory, and His form seemed to heighten, to become transfigured from that of a thirsty youth into that of a father strong and mighty, or that of a noble come on a visit to his estate. And He had replied:

“If thou hadst known who hath said unto thee: ‘Give
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me to drink,' thou wouldst have asked of him: 'Give me the water of my thirst, rather than I thee.'"

And upon that the woman had felt re-arise in her her bad tendency to malicious speech. And with the inclination of her gracious head she had retorted to the Stranger's words: "The well is deep. How, therefore couldst thou have drawn water without me?" Whilst also she had pointed to her bright, fresh pitcher of cedar-wood, and to the slender cord around her waist.

And the Man had approached her as though with sorrowful compassion, and uttered the thrilling words:

"Whoso shall drink of the water which thou hast now taken from the earth shall thirst again. But whoso shall drink of the water which I do lighten shall thirst no more, but see the water of my giving remain alway within his breast, and spring to everlasting life."

Whereupon, heeding nor figure nor set of tunic nor tresses strewn upon the herbage, but prostrating herself, the woman cried: "O Lord, give me of Thy living water! I would fain thirst no more!"

And never since then had the water of the love of chastity which had flowed from the grace of the Beloved failed to spring within her bosom, and render her calm and restful after her restlessness as a sinner. Yet still her soul was after a manner athirst, and though the thirst of a year agone had been sated, she still would descend to the Well of Jacob, and search the valley where hill and dale and grove and sky alike lay charged with the Stranger's presence. But He was not there.

One evening when she was looking at her pale, repentant features in the watery mirror, the mirror which had reflected the Lord Himself, she heard behind her, voices and sandals coming along the road from the Judean frontier.

And passing by she saw two strangers with neither scrip nor weapon, but leaning upon staves, and wearing their
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mantles tucked up, wound about their loins, for greater ease in walking.

And she darted forward, and hailed the men. But, though they turned their heads for a moment, they knew not who she was, and continued upon their way. And the woman overtook them, and cried:

"Surely ye are of those who once came hither with the Lord? For the likeness of you is the very likeness of His people. Yet, being of his people, how can ye pass this way without drinking of the water which that day He did ask of me, and in exchange for which He did grant unto me the living water of His grace?"

And when the men said: "Peace be to thee!" she fell down in an ecstasy of sobbing. For she said then:

"Your speech itself bringeth Him back unto my remembrance! Ye must indeed be His messengers! My soul doth bless you! But give me tidings of Him, now that I am pure throughout."

Gently the elder of the strangers, sunburnt, withered, beetling of brow, replied: "We are indeed Disciples and sowers of the word of Christ the Lord."

"Then give me such tidings as ye have! Tell me where He is lodging! Always I have borne Him within me, and keep seeking Him, yet find Him not. I wait for Him, and call upon His name, yet He never returneth. Where is He, I pray you?"

Gravely the elder man replied as he sought to detach himself and his companion:

"The peace of the Lord be upon thee!"

But she clung to their garments still, and cried: "For its peace my heart needeth more than just His name. It needeth also His eyes and His voice and His presence. I pray you bring me unto Him, that I may serve Him and anoint Him!"

A smile of sadness broke from the other Disciple as he
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said: "He is beside thee now, even as He is for ever beside all of us." But the woman failed to understand him, and clung to the twain.

Then there fell from the elder Apostle words which struck her heart as with flame and thunder.

For he said: "The Lord hath been put to death. He hath been put to death of Jerusalem. Yea, His Cross was raised beside her very walls. And go tell Samaria that one day the towers of the bloodthirsty city shall be trampled to the earth with the feet of men unclean."

Horror-stricken, the woman stood gazing at the lips which had loosed the blow upon her. And even when the men moved on again not a sob escaped her—her whole soul seemed, smitten to the earth, to be lying upon that road in speechlessness.

But again, suddenly, she darted forward, and said in hoarse, resolute accents: "I will yet go with you. Ye may drive me away like unto a dog, but I will follow you, and go with you until ye shall have brought me unto the land where lieth the Lord's body, that I may touch and kiss it, and, with that kiss, thrust into it my heart like unto a root seeking water."

But the elder Disciple looked at her coldly, and said:

"Woman, the Lord hath not a sepulchre. Foretold was it that He should rise again. And risen He hath."

"Then, if He be living yet, bring me unto His dwelling-place, that I may heal His wounds, or, if He hath a wife, tend Him as a servant."

"The Lord hath risen again, and ascended into Heaven, and is sitting upon the right hand of His Father. And thence hath He sent upon us the power of His Holy Spirit."

And with calm steadfastness the two Disciples continued upon their way: save that occasionally they halted to raise turbaned heads, and glance hither and thither, even as the Lord had done.

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And the woman of Samaria, standing upon the road with the Tomb of Joseph casting its shadow upon her shoulders, felt in all her soul a chill desolation. And she ran to the kerb of Jacob’s Well, and, kissing its stones, sobbed: “O Rabbi, O Rabbi! Wherefore didst Thou rise again but to ascend into Heaven?”