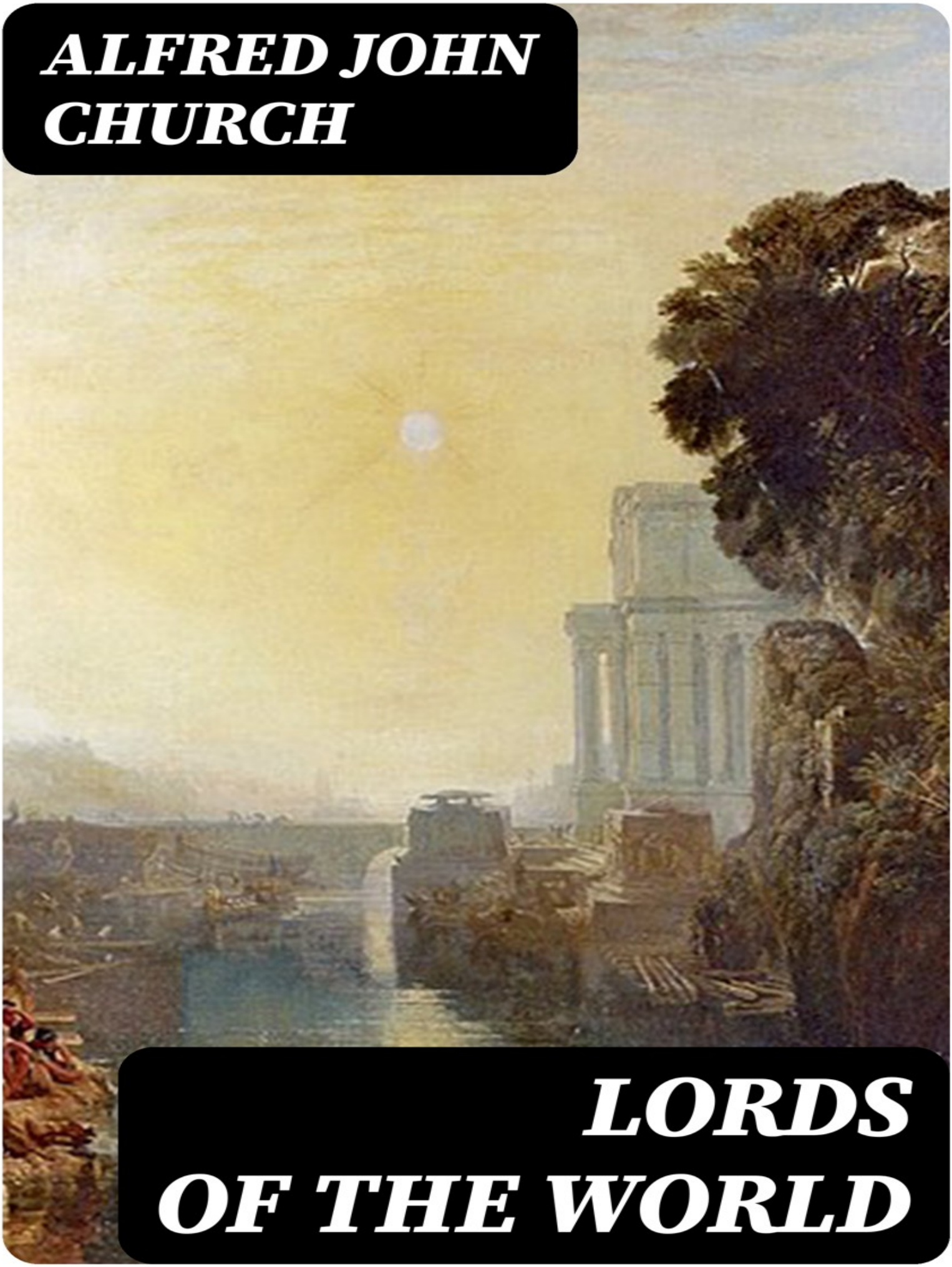
ALFRED JOHN CHURCH



LORDS OF THE WORLD

Alfred John Church

Lords of the World

A story of the fall of Carthage and Corinth

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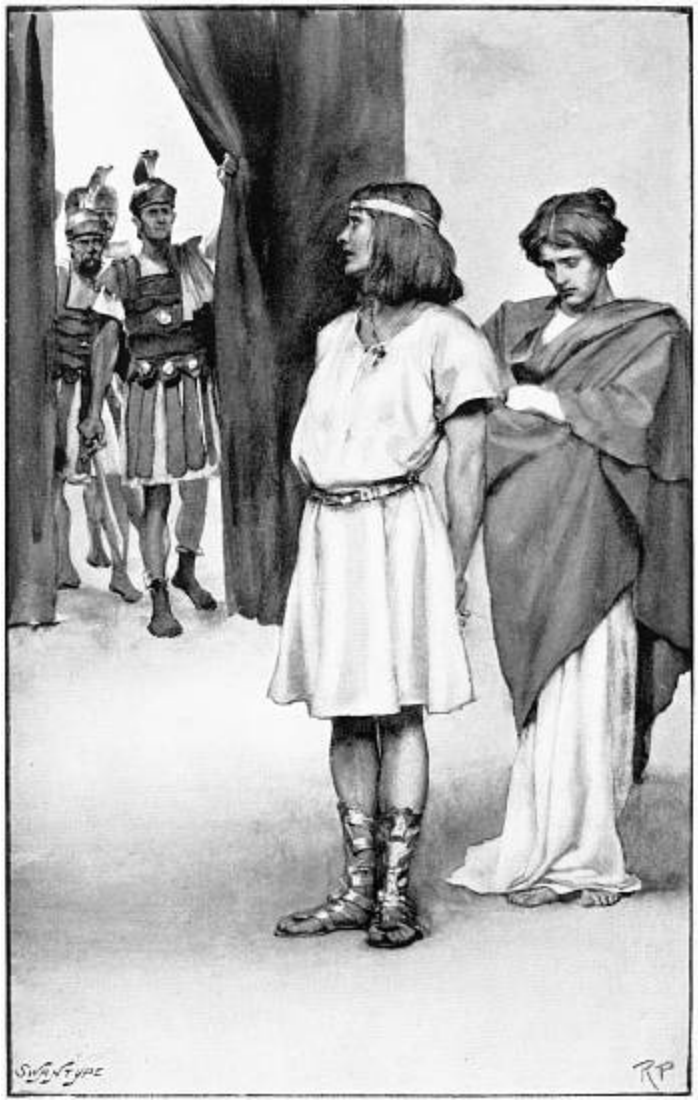

"FASTEN HIS HANDS, AND FIRMLY TOO; THAT YOUTH MIGHT GIVE US TROUBLE."

PREFACE.

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The year 146 B.C. was an *annus mirabilis* in the development of Roman dominion. Of course it had long been a foregone conclusion that Carthage and Corinth must

fall before her, but the actual time of their overthrow was made all the more striking by the fact that both cities perished in the same year, and that both were visited by the same fate. I have attempted in this story to group some picturesque incidents round the person of a young Greek who struggles in vain to resist the destiny of the conquering race. The reader will also find some suggestion of the thought which the Roman historian had in his mind when he wrote: "Carthage, the rival of the Roman Empire, perished root and branch, sea and land everywhere lay open before us, when at last Fortune began to rage against us and throw everything into confusion". The day when Rome rid herself of her rivals seemed to some of her more thoughtful sons to be the first of her corruption and decline.

A. J. C.

ASHLEY

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

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LORDS OF THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I.
THE FATE OF THE *MELCART*.

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THE *Melcart*, the sacred ship of Carthage, was on its homeward voyage from Tyre, and had accomplished the greater part of its journey in safety; in fact, it was only a score or so of miles away from its destination. It had carried the mission sent, year by year, to the famous shrine of the god whose name it bore, the great temple which the Greeks called by the title of the Tyrian Hercules. This was too solemn and important a function to be dropped on any pretext whatsoever. Never, even in the time of her deepest distress, had Carthage failed to pay this dutiful tribute to the patron deity of her mother-city; and, indeed, she had never been in sorer straits than now. Rome, in the early days her ally, then her rival, and now her oppressor, was resolved to destroy her, forcing her into war by demanding impossible terms of submission. Her old command of the sea had long since departed. It was only by stealth and subtlety that one of her ships could hope to traverse unharmed the five hundred leagues of sea that lay between her harbour and the old capital of Phœnicia. The *Melcart* had hitherto been fortunate.

She was a first-rate sailer, equally at home with the light breeze to which she could spread all her canvas and the gale which reduced her to a single sprit-sail. She had a picked crew, with not a slave on the rowing benches, for there were always freeborn Carthaginians ready to pull an oar in the *Melcart*. Hanno, her captain, namesake and descendant of the great discoverer who had sailed as far down the African coast as Sierra Leone itself, was famous for his seamanship from the Pillars of Hercules to the harbours of Syria.

The old man—it was sixty years since he had made his first voyage—was watching intently a dark speck which had been visible for some time in the light of early dawn upon the north-western horizon. "Mago," he said at last, turning to his nephew and lieutenant, "does it seem to you to become bigger? your eyes are better than mine."

"Not that I can see," answered the young man.

"She hardly would gain upon us if she has no more wind than we have. Well, I shall go below, and have a bite and a sup."

He wetted his finger and held it up. "It strikes me," he went on, "that the wind, if you can call it a wind, has shifted half a point. Tell the helmsman to put her head a trifle to the north. Perhaps I may have a short nap. But if anything happens, call me at once."

Something did happen before ten minutes had passed. When Mago had given his instructions to the helmsman, and had superintended a slight shifting of the canvas, he looked again at the distant ship. It had become sensibly larger. The

wind had freshened out at sea, and was rapidly bringing the stranger nearer. Mago hurried below to rouse his uncle. The old man was soon up on deck.

"I wish we were ten miles nearer home," he muttered, after taking a long look into the distance. "Get the oars out. If she is an enemy, and wants to cut us off, half a mile may make all the difference."

The order was promptly obeyed, and the rowers bent to their work with a will. But all the will in the world could not make the *Melcart* move very fast through the water. She was stoutly built, as became a ship that had to carry a precious burden through all weather, and she was foul with the long sea-voyage. The goal of the race between her and the stranger, which could now be seen to be a Roman ship-of-war, was a headland behind which, as Hanno knew, was the harbour of Chelys. Let her reach that and she was safe. But it seemed as if this was not to be. The Roman ship had what wind there was right aft, and, notwithstanding all the efforts of the *Melcart's* crew, moved more rapidly through the water. She would manifestly cut off the *Melcart* before the headland was reached. But Hanno was not yet at the end of his resources.

"Call Mutines," he said to his lieutenant.

Mutines was a half-caste Carthaginian, whose thick lips, flat nose, and woolly hair indicated a negro strain in his blood. "Mutines," said the old man, "you used to have as good an aim with the catapult as any man in Carthage. If your hand has not lost its cunning, now is the time to show your skill. Knock that rascal's steering-gear to pieces, and there is a quarter-talent for you."

"I will do my best, sir," said Mutines; "but I am out of practice, and the machine, I take it, is somewhat stiff."

The catapult, which was of unusual size and power, had been built, so to speak, into the ship's forecastle. It could throw a bolt weighing about 75 lbs., and its range was 300 yards. While Mutines was preparing the engine, word was passed to the rowers that they were to give six strokes and no more. That, as Mutines reckoned, would be enough to bring him well within range of the enemy. The calculation was sufficiently exact. When the rowers stopped, the two ships, having just rounded the headland, were divided by about 350 yards. The impetus of the *Melcart* carried her over about 100 more. When she was almost stationary Mutines let fly the bolt. He had never made a happier shot. The huge bullet carried away both the tillers by which the steering-paddles were worked. The ship fell away immediately, and the *Melcart*, for whose rowers the fugleman set the liveliest tune in his repertory, shot by, well out of range of the shower of arrows which the Roman archers discharged at her. In the course of a few minutes she had reached the harbour of Chelys.

But her adventures were not over. The captain of the Roman ship was greatly enraged at the escape of his prey. To capture so famous a prize would mean certain promotion, and he was not prepared to resign his hopes without an effort to realize them. As soon as the steering-gear had been temporarily repaired, he called his sailing-master, and announced his intention of following the Carthaginian into the harbour.

The man ventured on a remonstrance. "It's not safe, sir," he said; "I don't know the place, but I have heard that the water is shallow everywhere except in the channel of the stream."

"You have heard my orders," returned the captain, who was a Claudius, and had all the haughtiness and obstinacy of that famous house. The sailing-master had no choice but to obey.

Chelys, so called from the fancied resemblance of its site to the shape of a tortoise, was a small Greek settlement which lay within the region dominated by Carthage. It was a place of considerable antiquity—older, its inhabitants were fond of asserting, than Carthage itself. For some years it had maintained its independence, but as time went by this position became more and more impossible. Had Chelys possessed any neighbours of the same race, a league might have given her at least a chance of preserving her freedom. But she stood absolutely alone, surrounded by Phœnician settlements, and she had no alternative but to make her submission to her powerful neighbour. She obtained very favourable terms. She was free from tribute, no slight privilege, in view of the enormous sums which the ruling city was accustomed to exact from her dependencies.1 She was allowed to elect her own magistrates, and generally to manage her own affairs. To contribute a small contingent to the army and navy of the suzerain state was all that was demanded of her. It was natural, therefore, that Chelys should be loyal to Carthage—far more loyal, in fact, than most of that city's dependencies. Rome, which had more

than once exacted a heavy sum as the price of the little town's immunity from ravage, she had no reason to like.

The incident described above had taken place within full view of the piers and quays of Chelys. The excited population which crowded them had hailed with an exulting shout the fortunate shot that had crippled the Roman vessel, and had warmly welcomed the *Melcart* as she glided into the shelter of the harbour. Their delight was turned into rage when it became evident that the enemy was intending to pursue her. The insolent audacity of the proceeding excited the spectators beyond all bounds. Stones and missiles of all kinds were showered upon the intruders. As the ship was within easy range of the quays on both sides of the harbour, which was indeed of very small area, the crew suffered heavily.

Claudius perceived that he had made a mistake, and gave orders to the rowers to back, there not being space enough to turn. It was too late, and when a huge pebble, aimed with a fatal accuracy, struck down the steersman from his place, the doom of the *Melicerta*—for this was the name of the Roman ship—was sealed. A few moments afterwards she grounded.

This was, of course, the signal for a determined attack. Hundreds of men waded through the shallow water and climbed over the bulwarks. The crew made a brave resistance, but they were hopelessly outnumbered and were cut down where they stood. The magistrates of the city happened to be in consultation in the town-hall. Disturbed in the midst of their deliberations by the sudden uproar they hurried down to the water-side, but were too late to save

any but a very few lives. Claudius had stabbed himself when he saw how fatal a mistake he had made.

Chelys was, of course, in a tumult of delight at its brilliant success in destroying a Roman ship-of-war. Its responsible rulers, however, were very far from sharing this feeling. A defenceless city, and Chelys was practically such, for its walls, never very formidable, had been suffered to fall into decay, must take no part in the hostilities of a campaign. So long as it observes this neutrality it is really better off than a fortified town, but to depart from this policy is sheer madness.

The magistrates did all they could. They sent back the few prisoners whom they had been able to rescue from the hands of the populace, to the commander of the squadron to which the *Melicerta* had belonged. They offered to pay an indemnity. They went so far as to promise that the ringleaders of the riot should be handed over for trial. The Roman admiral, a Flamininus2, and so belonging to a family that had more than once made itself notorious for unusual brutality, would not hear of making any conditions. He determined upon a vengeance which was not the less pleasing because it would be as lucrative as it was cruel. Chelys was to be visited with the severest penalty known in warfare—all the male inhabitants of the military age and over were to be put to death, the women and children were to be sold as slaves. The slaves from Chelys, as Flamininus, a shrewd and unscrupulous man of business, well knew, would fetch a high price. They were Greeks, if not of the purest blood, and while barbarians in any number could be

easily obtained, Greek slaves were a rare article in the market.

His resolve once taken, Flamininus took every precaution that its execution should be as complete as possible. The magistrates, who had come to intercede for their countrymen, were detained; no hint of what was intended was allowed to reach the doomed city. Landing the half legion of marines which the squadron carried he occupied in irresistible force Chelys and all the roads by which it could be approached or left. His next step was to make what may be called an inventory of the prey which had fallen into his hands. The census roll of citizens was seized, and information about their families was purchased from some prisoners who were willing thus to redeem their lives. A few wealthy men and women were allowed to ransom themselves at the highest prices that could be extorted from their fears; and then, when a few days had been allowed for the assembling of the slave-dealers, who, with other animals of prey, human and non-human, followed the armies and fleets of Rome, Flamininus allowed the deputation to return, and proceeded to execute his sentence.

CHAPTER II.
CLEANOR, SON OF LYSIS.

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THE wealthiest, best-born, and generally most influential citizen in Chelys was Lysis, son of Cleanor, father himself of another Cleanor, so named, according to a custom common in Greek families, after his grandfather. He was descended in a direct line from the original founder of the settlement, an Ephesian Greek, and was also distinguished by the possession of the hereditary priesthood of Apollo. The family prided itself on the purity of its descent. The sons sought their brides among four or five of the noblest Ephesian families. The general population of Chelys, though still mainly Hellenic in speech and habits of life, had a large admixture of Phœnician blood, but the house of Lysis could not be reproached with a single barbarian *mésalliance*.

Lysis had been the leader and spokesman of the deputation which had vainly approached the Roman commander. His house, in common with all the principal dwellings in the town, had been occupied by the Roman marines. But a *douceur*, judiciously administered to the sub-officer in command, had procured for him the privilege of a brief period of privacy. He found that his wife and children were still in ignorance of the Roman admiral's decision. They did not, indeed, expect any very lenient terms—they looked for a fine, that would seriously cripple their means; but they were not prepared for the brutal reality. Lysis tasted for the

first time the full bitterness of death when he had to dash to the ground the hope to which they had clung.

"Yes," he said in answer to a question from his wife, unable or unwilling to believe her ears; "yes, it is too true—death or slavery."

Dioné—this was the wife's name—grew pale for a moment, but she summoned to her aid the courage of her house—she claimed to be descended from the great Ion himself, the legendary head of the Ionic race—and recovered her calmness. Stepping forward, she threw her arms round her husband's neck. Her first thought was for him; her second, scarcely a moment later, for her children.

"And these?" she said.

Recovering himself with a stupendous effort of self-control, Lysis spoke.

"Listen; the time is short, and there are grave matters to be settled. It was hinted to me, and more than hinted, that I might purchase your life, Dioné, and my own. These Romans are almost as greedy for money as for blood. What say you?"

"And these?" said the woman, pointing to her children, while her cheek flushed and her eyes brightened with the glow of reviving hope. "Can they also be ransomed?"

"That is impossible," said Lysis.

"Then we will die."

"That is what I knew you would say, and I gave the fellow—it was the admiral's freedman who spoke to me about the matter—the answer, 'No', without waiting to ask you. Our way is clear enough. My father learnt from the great Hannibal the secret of his poison-ring,3 and he handed it on

to me. You and I can easily escape from these greedy butchers, but our children—"

He struggled in vain to keep his self-command. Throwing himself on a couch hard by, he covered his face with his cloak.

The children were twins, very much alike, as indeed twins very commonly are, and yet curiously different. Apart, they might easily have been mistaken for each other, supposing, of course, that they were dressed alike; seen together, any one would have said that such a mistake would hardly be possible, so great was the difference in colour and complexion—a difference that impresses the eye much more than it impresses the memory. But whatever dissimilarity there was was accidental rather than natural. Cleanor had been seized at a critical period of his growth with a serious illness, the result of exposure in a hunting expedition. This had checked, or more probably, postponed his development. His frame had less of the vigour, his cheek less of the glow of health than could be seen in his sister's, of whom, indeed, he was a somewhat paler and feebler image.

"We will die with you," said the twins in one breath. They often spoke, as, indeed, they often thought, with a single impulse.

"Impossible again!" said Lysis. "The priesthood which, as you know, I inherited from my fathers, I am bound, under curses which I dare not incur, to hand on to my son. If the gods had made me childless—and, for the first time in my life, I wish that they had—I must have adopted a successor. This, indeed, I have done, to provide for the chances of

human life; but you, Cleanor, must not abdicate your functions if it is in any way possible for you to perform them. And then there is vengeance; that is a second duty scarcely less sacred. If you can live, you must, and I see a way in which you can."

"And I see it too," cried the girl, with sparkling eyes. "Cleanor, you and I must change places. You have sometimes told me that I ought to have been the boy; now I am going to be."

"Cleoné!" cried the lad, looking with wide eyes of astonishment at his sister; "I do not know what you mean."

"Briefly," replied the girl, "what I mean is this. You masquerade as a girl, and are sold; I masquerade as a man, and am killed."

"Impossible!" cried the lad; "I cannot let you die for me."

"Die for you, indeed!" and there was a touch of scorn in her voice. "Which is better—to die, or be a slave? Which is better for a man? You do not doubt; no one of our blood could. Which is better for a woman? It does not want one of our blood to know that. The meanest free woman knows it. By Castor! Cleanor, this is the one thing you can do for me. Die for you, indeed! You will be doing more, ten thousand times more, than dying for me!"

"She is right, my son," cried Lysis. "This was my very thought. Phœbus, the inspirer, must have put it into her heart. Cleanor, it must be so. This is your father's last command to you. The gods, if gods there are—and this day's work might make me doubt it—will reward you for it. But the time is short. Hasten, and make such change as you need."

The twins left the chamber. When they returned, no one could have known what had been done, so complete was the disguise which Cleoné's skilful fingers had effected. The girl's flowing locks, which had reached far below her waist, now fell over her shoulders, just at the length at which it was the fashion of the Greek youth to wear them, till he had crossed the threshold of manhood. His were rolled up, maiden-fashion, in a knot upon his head. She had dulled her brilliant complexion by some pigment skilfully applied. His face, pale with misery, needed no counterfeit of art.

Lysis and his wife had gone. By a supreme effort of self-sacrifice they had denied themselves the last miserable solace of a farewell, and were lying side by side, safe for ever from the conqueror's brutality. While Cleanor and his sister waited in the expectation of seeing them, a party of marines entered the room.

"Fasten his hands, Caius," said the sub-officer to one of his men, "and firmly too, for he looks as if he might give us trouble. By Jupiter! a handsome youth! What a gladiator he would make! Why do they kill him in this useless fashion? The girl is your business, Sextus. Be gentle with her, but still be on your guard, for they will sometimes turn. But she looks a poor, spiritless creature."

CHAPTER III.
THE LAST OF A VETERAN.

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THE fate of Chelys caused wide-spread indignation and disgust even among the enemies of Carthage. No one was more indignant than Mastanabal, King Masinissa's second son. The prince had tastes and habits very uncommon in the nation of hunters and fighters to which he belonged. He was a lover of books, and disposed to be a patron of learning, if he could only find learning to patronize. The Greek population of Chelys had always preserved some traces of culture, and the Numidian prince was on terms of friendship with the settlement. He was an occasional visitor at its festivals, had received the compliment of a crown of honour, voted to him in a public assembly, and had shown his appreciation of the distinction by building for the community a new town-hall.

His intercession had been implored by the magistrates when they found themselves repulsed by the Roman commander. Unfortunately he was absent from home when their messenger arrived. Immediately on his return he hurried to the spot. Too late, even if it had in any case been possible, to hinder the brutal vengeance of Flamininus, he was yet able to mitigate the lot of the survivors. By pledging his credit to the slave-dealers, themselves disposed to accommodate so powerful a personage, he was able to secure the freedom of all the captives.

He made special inquiries about the family of Lysis, whose hospitality he had always enjoyed during his visits to

the town, and learnt enough to induce him to make a personal inspection of the captives. As the melancholy procession passed before him, his keen eyes discovered Cleanor under his disguise. He had, of course, too much delicacy and good taste to inflict upon him the pain of a public recognition. The young man was transported in a closed litter to a hunting-lodge that belonged to the prince. Here he found himself an honoured guest. His personal wants were amply supplied; a library of some extent was at his disposal; and the chief huntsman waited upon him every morning to learn his pleasure in case he should be disposed for an expedition.

In the course of a few days a letter from the prince was put into his hands. Beginning with a tactful and sympathetic reference to his misfortunes, it went on thus:

> Use my home as if it were your own for as long as you will. You cannot please me better than by pleasing yourself. But if you are minded to find solace for your sorrows in action—and to this I would myself advise you—proceed to Cirta, and deliver the letter which I inclose herewith to the king, my father. My steward will provide you with a guide and an escort, and will also furnish such matters of dress and other equipment as you may need. Farewell!

Cleanor's resolution was taken at once. In the course of a few hours he was in the saddle. Two days of easy travel brought him to Cirta, and he lost no time in presenting himself at the palace of King Masinissa. His letter of introduction, bearing as it did the seal of Prince Mastanabal,

procured for him instant admission. The major-domo of the palace conducted him to a guest-chamber, and shortly afterwards one of the king's body-guard brought him a message that Masinissa desired to see him as soon as he had refreshed himself after his journey.

The chamber into which the young Greek was ushered was curiously bare to be the audience-room of a powerful king. The walls were of mud roughly washed with yellow; it was lighted by two large openings in the walls, unglazed, but furnished with lattices which could be closed at will by cords suspended from them; the pavement was of stone, not too carefully smoothed; for furniture it had a sideboard, with some cups, flagons, and lamps upon it, a table, two or three chairs for the use of visitors who were accustomed to these comfortless refinements, and a divan piled up with bright-coloured mats and blankets. Near the divan was a brazier in which logs were smouldering.

Masinissa, king of Numidia4, was a man whose intellect and physical powers were alike remarkable. He had consolidated the wandering tribes of Northern Africa into a kingdom, which he had kept together and aggrandized with a politic firmness which never blundered or wavered. His stature, though now somewhat bowed with years, was exceptional. His face, seamed with a thousand wrinkles, and burnt to a dark red by unnumbered suns, the snowy whiteness of hair and beard, and the absolute emaciation of his form, on which not a trace of flesh seemed to be left, spoke of extreme old age. And indeed he had more than completed his ninetieth year, an age not phenomenally rare among us, where the climate and the habits of life are less

exhausting, but almost unheard of in a race whose fervid temperament seems to match their burning sky.

The old man's strength was now failing him. Two years before, he had commanded an army in the field, and commanded it with brilliant success, routing the best troops and the most skilled generals that Carthage could send against him. He was not one of the veterans who content themselves with counsel, while they leave action to the young. That day he had remained in the saddle from sunrise to sunset, managing without difficulty a fiery steed, whose saddle was no seat of ease. He had showed that on occasion he could deal as shrewd a blow with the sword, and throw as straight a javelin, as many men of half his age. But at ninety years of age two or three years may make a great difference. Masinissa had fought his last battle. His senses were as keen as ever, the eyes flashed with their old fire, but his breathing was heavy and laboured, and his hands shook with the palsy of age.

"Welcome, Cleanor!" he said with a full resonant voice that years had not touched, "my son commends you to me. Can you be content to wait on an old man for a month or so? I shall hardly trouble you longer. I have never been a whole day within doors save once for a spear wound in the throat, and once when they tried to poison me; and those who have lived in such fashion don't take long about dying."

Cleanor found his task an easy one. The old king suffered little, except from the restlessness which comes with extreme exhaustion. Even over this he maintained a remarkable control. It was not during his waking hours, but in his short periods of fitful slumber, that the uneasy

movements of his limbs might be observed. His intelligence was as keen as ever, and his memory curiously exact, though it was on the far past that it chiefly dwelt. What a story the young Greek could have pieced together out of the old man's recollections! He had seen and known the heroes of the last fierce struggle between Carthage and Rome, had ridden by the side of the great Scipio at Zama, and had been within an ace of capturing the famous Hannibal himself as he fled from that fatal field. The young Greek, surprised to find himself in such a position, was naturally curious to know why the old man preferred the companionship of a stranger to that of his own kindred. When he ventured to hint something of the kind, the king smiled cynically.

"You don't understand," he said, "the amiable ways of such a household as mine. What do you think would have been the result if I had chosen one of my three sons to be with me now? Why, furious jealousy and plots without end on the part of the other two. And if I had had the three of them together? Well, I certainly could not have expected to die in peace. Quarrel they certainly will, but I can't have them quarrelling here. Mind, I don't say that they are worse than other sons; on the contrary, they are better. I do hope they may live in peace when I am gone; at least, I have done my best to secure it."

As the days passed, the king grew weaker and weaker, but his faculties were never clouded, and his cheerfulness was unimpaired.

About ten days after the conversation recorded above, a Greek physician, whose reputation was widely spread in

Northern Africa, arrived at the palace. The three princes had sent him. Masinissa, informed of his coming, made no difficulty about seeing him. "I am not afraid of being poisoned," he said with a smile; "I really do not think that my sons would do such a thing. It would not be worth while, and, anyhow, they could not agree about it. Yes, let him come in. Of course he can't do me any good; but it is one of the penalties that has to be paid for greatness, that one must die according to rule. No one of any repute is allowed to die in these parts without having Timæus to help him off. Yes, I will see him. And mind, Cleanor, when he has examined me have a talk with him, and make him tell you the absolute truth."

That afternoon, soon after the physician had departed, the king summoned the young Greek to his chamber.

"Well, what does he say, Cleanor?" he asked.

The young man hesitated.

"Come," cried the old king, raising his voice, "I command you to speak. As for these physicians, it is quite impossible for a patient to get the truth out of them. It seems to be a point of honour not to tell it. But I suppose he told it to you. Speak out, man; you don't suppose that I am afraid of what I have faced pretty nearly every day for nearly fourscore years."

"He said," answered Cleanor in a low voice, "that your time, sire, was nearly come."

"And how many days, or, I should rather say, hours did he give me?"

"He said that you could hardly live more than two days."

"Well, I am ready. I have had my turn, a full share of the feast of life, and it would be a shameful thing if I was to grudge to go. But there is trouble ahead for those who are to come after me. I have done my best for my kingdom, yet nothing can save it long. You know, I had to choose, when I was about your age, between Rome and Carthage, and my choice was the right one. If I had taken sides with Carthage, Rome would have swallowed up this kingdom fifty years ago; as it is, she will swallow us up fifty years hence. Sooner or later we are bound to go. But it has lasted my time, and will last my sons' time too, if they are wise. And now, as to this matter. I have something to put in your charge. You have heard of Scipio?"

Cleanor nodded his assent.

"He came over here some two months ago, when I had had my first warning that my time was short, and that I had best set my affairs in order. No one had any notion but that he came on military business. The Romans had asked me for help, and I didn't choose to give it just then. They hadn't consulted me in what they had done, and it was time, I thought, that they should have a lesson. We did discuss these matters; but what he really came for was a more serious affair. I left it to him to divide my kingdom between my three sons. I had thought of dividing it in the usual way; this and that province to one, and this and that province to another. But he had quite another plan in his head, and it seemed to me wonderfully shrewd. 'Don't divide the kingdom,' he said; 'the three parts would be too weak to stand alone. Divide the offices of the kingdom. Let each prince have the part for which he is best fitted—one war and

outside affairs, another justice, the third one civil affairs.' Well, I took his advice, and had his settlement put in writing. The chief priest of the temple of Zeus in Cirta here has the document in his keeping."

After this the old man was silent for a time. Rousing himself again, for he had been inclined to doze, he said:

"Cleanor, are you here?"

"Yes, sire," replied the Greek.

"Don't leave me till all is over. And now give me a cup of wine."

"But, sire, the physician said—"

"Pooh! what does it matter if I die one hour or two or three hours before sunrise? And I want something that will give me a little strength."

Cleanor filled a cup and handed it to the king. "It hardly tastes as good as usual," said the old man, when he had drained it, "yet that, I can easily believe, is not the wine's fault, but mine. But tell me, do you think that I shall know anything about what is going on here when I am gone? What does Mastanabal say? I haven't had time to think about these things; but he reads, and you are something of a student too. What do the philosophers say?"

"Aristotle thinks, sire, that the dead may very well know something about the fortunes of their descendants—it would be almost inhuman, he says, if they did not—but that it will not be enough to make them either happy or unhappy."

"Well, the less one knows the better, when one comes to think. To see things going wrong and not be able to interfere!... But enough of this.... And now, Cleanor, about yourself. You do not love the Romans, I think?"

The young Greek's face flushed at the question.

"I have no reason to love them, sire."

"Very likely not. Indeed, who does love them? Not I; if I could crush them I would, as readily as I stamp my foot on a viper's head. But that is not the question. Can you make use of them? You shake your head. It does not suit your honour to pretend a friendship which you do not feel. That has not been my rule, as you know, but there is something to be said for it. Well, it is a pity that you can't walk that way. Whether we love them or no, depend upon it, the future belongs to them. And I could have helped you with some of their great men. I have written a letter to Scipio, and two or three others to powerful people in Rome who would help you for my sake. You can deliver them or not as you please. But tell me, what are you going to do if the Romans are out of the question?"

"I thought of going to Carthage," answered the young man in a hesitating voice.

"Carthage!" repeated the king in astonishment. "Why, the place is doomed. It can't hold out more than a year,—or two at the outside. And then the Romans won't leave so much as one stone standing upon another. They won't run the chance of having another Hannibal to deal with. Carthage! You might as well put a noose round your neck at once!"

"I hope not, sire," said the young man. "And in any case I have only Carthage and Rome to choose between."

"Well," replied the old king after a pause, "you must go your own way. But still I can help you, at least with some

provision for the journey. Put your hand under my pillow and you will find a key."

The young man did as he was told.

"Now open that chest in yonder corner, and bring me a casket that you will find wrapped up in a crimson shawl."

Cleanor brought the casket and put it into the king's hands. Masinissa unlocked it and took out a rouleau of gold pieces, which he gave to Cleanor. "That will be useful for the present," he said; "but gold is a clumsy thing, and you can hardly carry about with you what would serve for a single year. This bit of parchment is an order for a thousand ounces of gold—five hundred thousand sesterces in Roman money—on Caius Rabirius, knight, of the Cœlian Hill in Rome, who has kept some money for me for thirty years or more. You can sell the parchment to Bocchar the banker in Cirta here. He will charge you something for his commission, but it will save you trouble. And he will keep the money for you, or whatever part of it you please. It is a very handy way of carrying about money; but there is another that is more handy still."

The old man took out a small leather bag full of precious stones. "These," he said, "you can always hide. It is true that the merchants will cheat you more or less when you want to sell them. Still, you will find these stones very useful."

The jewels were worth at least five times as much as the order on the parchment. "It is too much," murmured the Greek. "I did not expect—"

"It is true that you did not expect. I have seen that all along, and that is one of the reasons why I give it. And as for the 'too much', you must leave me to judge about that. My