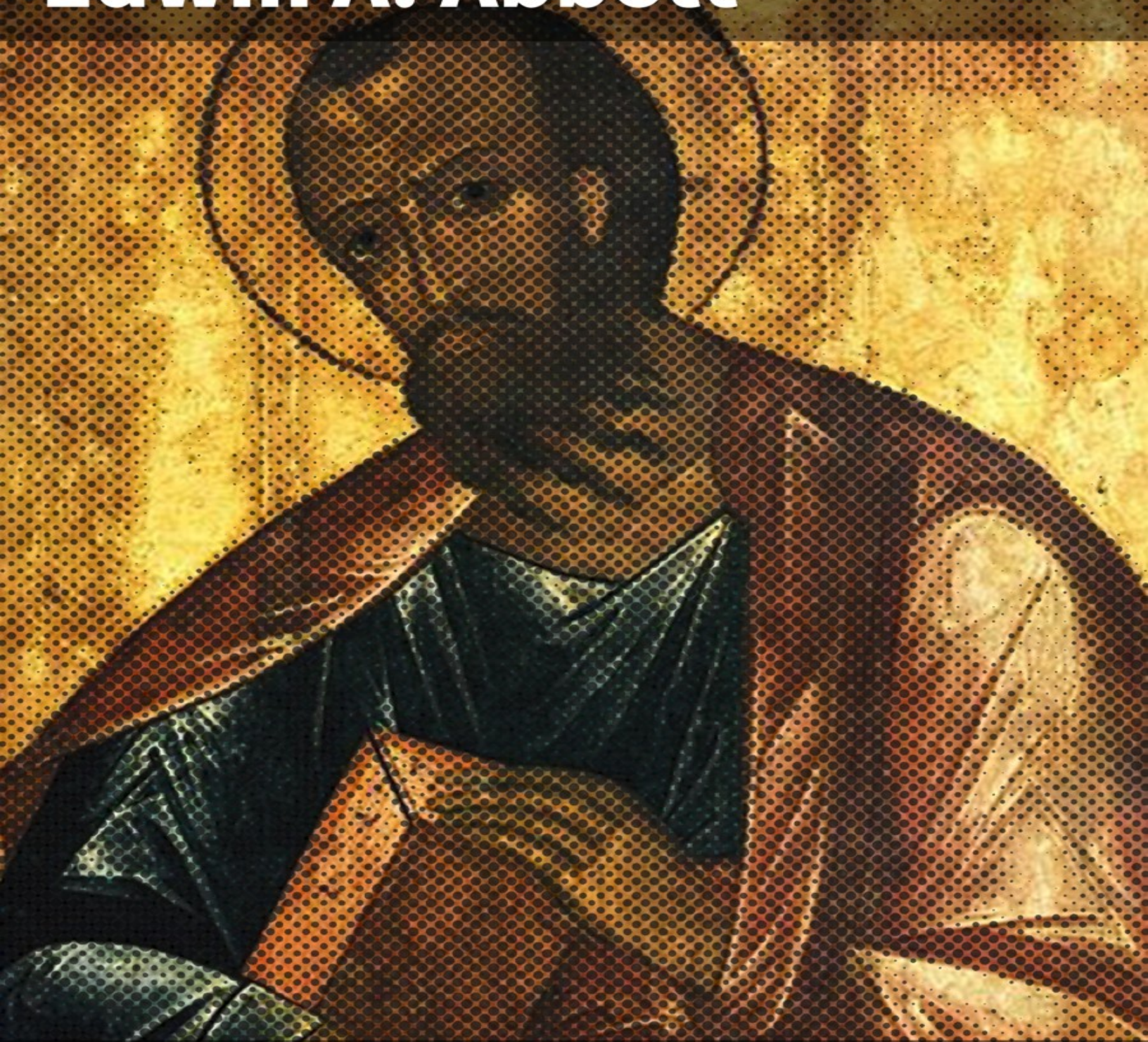


Edwin A. Abbott



*Onesimus - Memoirs
of a Disciple
of St. Paul*

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THE FIRST BOOK

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§ 1. OF MY CHILDHOOD

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In the last year of the Emperor Tiberius I and my twin-brother Chrestus were found lying in one cradle, exposed with a great number of other babes upon the steps of the temple of Asclepius, in Pergamus, a city of Bithynia. Sign or token of our parents, whether they were free-born or slave, there was none; but only a little silver seal hung round my neck, and on the seal these words in Greek characters, I LOVE THEE, and on my brother Chrestus another of the same fashion, bearing the inscription, TRUST ME. Many a time during the days of my wandering have I spoken reproachfully in my heart, saying that our parents gave us small cause for trust, and that it was poor love to send out into the rough world two innocent babes with no other equipment against evil than these slight toys. But the hand of the Lord was in it, to turn this evil into good in the end.

Ammiane the wife of Menneas was the name of our new mother. Her own son Ammias was but lately dead; and that which drew her kind heart to us more than to any other among so large a multitude of poor babes there pitifully lying on the temple steps, was that in my brother Chrestus she seemed to discern a likeness to her lost one.

Menneas took us, together with Ammiane, to his house in Lystra, a city of Lycaonia, where was the better part of his

estate; and soon afterwards he died. But his widow, the good Ammiane, to whom old Menneas had left all his possessions, treated us as if we had been her own children, and taught us to call her mother; and we had no thought but she was our mother indeed. Yet as there had been no formal adoption of us according to law, we were still in the eyes of the law not free, but slaves; for so runs the law, that whosoever is exposed as a child and saved and reared, becomes the slave of them that rear him. For our enfranchisement had been first delayed, and then forgotten in the sickness and death of Menneas; and by that time we were so established in the household that none questioned but we had been enfranchised, and all thought of it was laid aside. Therefore according to the law we were still Ammiane's slaves, and not her sons, and in danger to be sold whenever our dear foster- mother might die. But of all this neither I nor my brother Chrestus knew anything; but we rejoiced in the love of her whom we called mother; and all the household loved us for her sake, and some for our own. And so the days rolled on in happiness till I had come to my tenth year.

§ 2. HOW I FIRST SAW THE HOLY APOSTLE PAULUS

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It was in the spring, as I remember, of the fifth year of the emperor Claudius that I first saw the Holy Apostle, whom I saw not again till many years had passed away; and though I was at that time but a child of ten years or thereabouts, yet every circumstance of it is imprinted upon my memory. It was the cool of the evening, and I was without the wall, hard by the Iconian gate, on one of the smaller hills that look down upon the town, a little to the north of the Iconian road. Hermas, our herdsman, was playing upon his pipe some song to the god Pan, and the goats were gambolling around him. But I—being wholly taken up with teaching a little kid to dance to the sound of the music—paid no heed to the chidings of our nurse Trophime, who would have had me go back with her to the city because it was now near sun-down. So lifting up her eyes and seeing some dromedaries and a dust on the Iconian road, "Look, dear child," said she, "yonder come merchants from Iconium; if therefore thou wilt go with me without delay, thou wilt see their stores of pretty things, and perchance Ammiane will buy thee somewhat."

Hearing this, I willingly ran down with her to the city gate; and arriving thither before the travellers, I waited till they should enter. But when they were now nigh, I perceived that they were no merchants, and I would have turned away. Yet I did not, for somewhat in the face of one of the travellers held me fast, I know not how, so that I fixed my

gaze on him perforce, even as a bird fascinated by a serpent; and indeed I thought myself to be bewitched and spat thrice; but yet I stood still gazing upon him. At that time he was not yet bald, he had a clear complexion, a nose hooked and somewhat large; he was short of stature, and as he walked he bent his head a little forward, as if not able to discern things clearly; his eyebrows were shaggy and met together; but what most moved me was the glance of his eyes which were of a penetrating brightness, as though they would pierce through the outside of things even to the innermost substance.

When the travellers were entered into the city, I stood still in wonder, as one who had seen a dream betwixt sleeping and waking. But soon, coming to myself again, I chid my nurse that she had drawn me away from the flocks by stratagem and I persuaded her to return for some short space, that I might continue my sport. But my heart was no longer in it, and presently, it being now sunset, I came down with Trophime to go into the town. Scarce were we come within the gates when we perceived a great concourse of the people near to the market; and running thither we entered with the rest into a courtyard and there found a great multitude assembled, and the travellers, in the gallery above, discoursing to them. What touched me (as being a child) more than all the words that were spoken, was the marvellous stillness of the multitude, who all listened as if the speech were about matters of life or death, so that herdsmen and ploughmen and litter-bearers and water-carriers and others of the lowest and meanest sort, coming into the courtyard with shouts and scoffings, no sooner

passed into the circle of the hearers than they were at once subdued and tamed like the rest; among whom, most earnestly listening, as I noted, was a poor creature, part demented and part buffoon, whom, having been lame for thirty years and more, we were wont to call "lame Xanthias." This man, when the traveller had made an end of his discourse, said some words that I could not clearly understand; whereupon he that had been speaking came straightway down from the gallery and drew nigh to the lame man, and fixing his eyes upon him he took him by the hand. If there had been a silence before, there was a tenfold silence now, even such a silence as one seemed to feel in one's flesh. But the stranger first lifted up his eyes to heaven and then gazing fixedly on the lame man he cried in a loud voice, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk;" and behold, Xanthias,—this man who had been thirty years lame,—rose and walked and leaped, and wept aloud praising and magnifying God. Then there was a great shouting, and all rushed forth into the market place, some crying "a miracle," "a miracle," others holding up Xanthias in their arms to show him unto the people, others magnifying the new god whom the strangers had revealed to us, others crying out that the strangers themselves were gods, namely Zeus and Hermes, come down from heaven as they had come down in the old days; and saying these things, some sped away to the priest wishing to offer sacrifice to the strangers. But suddenly there was a deep silence again, and we perceived that the traveller, he I mean who had healed Xanthias, was once more speaking to the people. What he said I could not clearly understand,

being more busy with noting his countenance than the meaning of his words; but I gathered so much, that he said that he and his companion were not gods but men, and that indeed there was One God above (not many gods) who gave all good gifts to mankind and who now called all men to come unto him. When he had made an end of speaking, the women pressed close to him with their babes and children that he might touch them; and so it was that Trophime pushed me forward with the rest. Then he laid his hands on me and looking kindly on me asked Trophime whether I was a native of these parts and who was my father. What Trophime replied I did not hear, except that my father was now dead; but the stranger looked on me more lovingly than before and said, "The Lord be unto thee as a Father, little one"; and laying his hands on me a second time he blessed me.



§ 3. OF THE STRANGER, AND OF DIOSDOTUS THE PRIEST OF ZEUS

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When we were come home to Ammiane, I spoke freely to her as I was wont, concerning all that I had heard and seen; and I asked her which of the two she judged to be the wiser and the mightier, the hook-nosed prophet—for so I called the stranger—or Diosdotus. Now Diosdotus was the priest of the city, a man of noble birth and very wealthy, having rebuilt the baths at his own expense after the earthquake, as also his father before him had rebuilt the amphitheatre. He was also tall of stature and of a gracious and commanding carriage. Yet now I could not help making comparison between him and the stranger of mean presence and short stature; bethinking myself that Diosdotus had lived for thirty years in the same city as poor lame Xanthias and yet had suffered him to be still lame, whereas the strange prophet had healed him on the very day of his first coming in. However Ammiane laughed and chid me for my question, saying that I did ill to compare an obscure vagrant soothsayer with the high priest of Zeus; for that there were many travelling priests of Cybele and Sabazius and jugglers and necromancers that would work signs and wonders in the eyes of the common people, and all for a drachma or two; but Diosdotus was none of these, nor to be mentioned along with them. Nevertheless, when the report came in from all sides that the lame man was wholly cured, she said she would send for Xanthias, as soon as might be, that she might see him and learn the truth of

the matter, and what charms or herbs the stranger had used. But about the fourth or fifth day afterwards—my foster-mother having in the meanwhile, upon one cause or other, delayed to send for Xanthias, but many rumours coming daily to our ears of the great wonders which the magician was working—word was brought that the stranger had been slain; others said that he had ascended to the sky, others that he had been swallowed up in the earth; but all agreed that he was not now in the city. Then we found that there had been a great conflict in the Jews' quarter; for certain Jews had come over from Lystra to Iconium pursuing after the enchanter (so they called him) and accusing him of many grievous crimes. Now it happened to be a time of drought, and the rain, which had begun to fall on the day that the stranger came to Lystra, ceased on that same day, about the time of his entering in, and fell no more for six or seven days, though all the crops were perishing for want of it. So the Jews said that this plague was fallen upon the city of Lystra because we gave shelter to an accursed necromancer; and having persuaded the people they stoned him. But his body could not be found; wherefore the people were the more persuaded that he was a necromancer, insomuch that all now (except Xanthias and a very few others) believed him to be no prophet but an evil-doer and a deceiver of the people.

But on the very day after these things the sun was darkened, and still no rain fell; and on the third day after the stoning of the stranger, came a great plague of locusts so thick together that they lay two inches deep in the race-course; and not many days after that, came the shock of an

earthquake; and ten houses in the Jews' quarter were wholly thrown down (besides others sorely shaken and shattered), insomuch that some fourscore of the Jews were slain, and their synagogue was utterly destroyed. Upon this the people began to change their minds again, and some made bold to say that the god of the new prophet had sent these evils; and so the city was divided, and part held that the stranger was a deceiver and an enchanter, but part that he was a teacher of the true God and a prophet. At last when the customary sacrifices seemed of no avail, but the drought still endured, and by intervals there came ever and anon shocks of earthquake, it seemed good that there should be a solemn procession of all the city to avert the wrath of the gods, one for Pessinuntian Cybele, the other for Asphalian Poseidon and the third for Zeus Panhemerius. This last far surpassed the other two in splendour, and amidst the whole procession most of all to be admired was Diosdotus the chief priest, himself most like to a god, clad in white linen with a purple border, and a garland on his head, and attended by the inferior priests, and by ministers bearing incense and scattering flowers and perfumes; and after them, the white oxen with their horns gilt for the sacrifice, and then the choir of boys, with laurel branches in their hands, singing, to the accompaniment of the lyre, the hymn which had been chosen by Onomarchus the secretary of the senate. Beholding all this splendour (exceeding anything I had ever before witnessed) I inclined now to prefer Diosdotus to the strange prophet; and all the more because Ammiane was clearly on the side of the former. Moreover on the second day after the procession there fell rain in

abundance. So all the people now turned to magnify Zeus Panhemerius; and the drought and the earthquake were forgotten, and with them the memory of the stranger faded away.

Yet in my dreams sometimes, both then and for many months afterwards, methought I saw the strange prophet who had healed Xanthias, standing over against Diosdotus and contending against him; and I heard his voice again and again in the darkness, saying, "The Lord be unto thee as a father."

§ 4. HOW WE GREW UP AT LYSTRA

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Six or seven years passed smoothly away for me and my brother Chrestus. Our dear mother Ammiane caused us to be taught singing and dancing, as well as riding and the exercises of the gymnasium; and partly because of our beauty and partly because we were regarded as the adopted children of one whom all the citizens loved and honoured (for there are still extant inscriptions in Lystra praising our benefactress and calling her the MOTHER OF THE CITY, on account of her many gifts and benefactions to the people of Lystra) we were chosen among the choir of boys who were to sing songs year by year in honour of Apollo and Ephesian Artemis in accordance with the recent decree of the senate; and in all our riding-lessons and wrestling-lessons we took part with the well-born youth of the city; for all knew that Ammiane intended us to be her heirs after her death. But in my fourteenth year it happened that, while seeking for a goat that had strayed in the mountains, I missed my footing and fell down a steep place, where I was taken up for dead; and Hermas brought me home wounded well-nigh to death with two deep gashes on my forehead and left cheek. In a short space I was recovered of my wounds; but I was grievously disfigured with the scars upon my face, and when I went with my brother, as I was wont, to the choir-master, he plainly told me that I was no longer fit to dance nor sing with the choir, for the god required comely youths to minister to him. Hereat I was sore vexed, and yet more when I perceived (or

thought that I perceived) that in the palaestra also and in the riding-school I was no longer so welcome as of old; for some openly jested at my disfigurement, and others, who had before courted my company, now avoided me; at least so I thought, misconstruing perhaps and aggravating little slights, in my discontent. However it was, I became morose and lost my former cheerfulness; for the world seemed changed and turned against me. But the kind Ammiane, discerning what was amiss with me, persuaded me to apply myself to letters; and she bought for us one Zeno, a Greek, to be our tutor. Now Chrestus, being the leader of the choir and the favourite in the palaestra, by reason of these distractions cared less for learning; but I, withdrawing myself from my former pursuits and devoting myself to letters, made good progress in my new studies, so that I soon became skilful at transcribing Greek characters; and I took a great delight in the reading of Euripides and others of the Greek play-writers, but most of all in the poetry of Homer. And in these pursuits I continued till my sixteenth year, finding pleasure in many things but most of all in the love of my beautiful brother Chrestus.

§ 5. HOW AMMIANE DIED AND MY BROTHER AND I WERE SOLD FOR SLAVES

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But now indeed our trouble was at hand. For to ward the end of my sixteenth year, our dear foster-mother died, and whether it was that she had made no will, or that the will had been stolen or lost, certain it was that no will could be found. It was commonly said, in the household, that a will had been made and deposited with one Tertullus, a banker of Iconium, but that he had destroyed the will, being persuaded by Nicander of Tyana the heir-at-law, and the two witnesses being both dead. Diosdotus the high-priest of Zeus affirmed that Ammiane had deposited a will with him fourteen years ago in the presence of two witnesses, immediately after the death of her husband, but that she had received it back in the presence of the same witnesses, two years afterwards, and had deposited no other will in its place. Whatever the truth may have been, when Nicander arrived on the second day from Tyana, there was none to dispute his claim; so, though he was known by all to be hateful to Ammiane and had not set foot on her threshold for fifteen years, he now took upon himself to give orders for the funeral and to dispose all things according to his pleasure. Hereupon arose a great wailing and lamentation among the household, that is to say all that were old enough to know what it was to be a slave. For many of them had looked to be made free by Ammiane's will; and to some

she had in express terms promised freedom: and others, who had not been long with us, knowing the kindness of their mistress, expected that they should not be sold, or that after four or five years of service they should be made free. For so much as this was customary with all the wealthy townspeople of Lystra, those at least that had large possessions in land and many household slaves; and how much more might have been expected from one who had been publicly praised as the "mother of the city"! But now all these hopes were dashed to the ground; and all were at the mercy of a new master, of whom we knew nothing by hearsay except that he hated our dear mistress, and from our own knowledge we had begun to suspect that he was greedy, cruel, violent and tyrannous.

For a few hours Chrestus and I remained weeping bitterly in the room where we were wont to sit with Zeno; but when Nicander entered and, in answer to his question why we wept, we made answer that we were weeping for our mother, he reviled us as beggarly brats, slaves seeking to escape from our condition; and spurning us from the chamber bade us be gone at once to the slaves' apartments. Going thither we found all faces full of sorrow; yet none so sorrowful as not to be able to spare some little further sorrow for our case; all pointing to us and exclaiming at our ill fortune because yesterday we had been free and heirs to great possessions, but now we were slaves and a second time motherless.

I suppose that our cruel master foresaw that some of the friends of Ammiane would, in all likelihood, interfere in our behalf, if not by appeal to the courts of law, at all events by

offering to purchase us from him; for he gave command that on that very day, immediately after the performance of the funeral rites, we should be sent to his estate at Tyana. A miserable procession was that, wherein Chrestus and I walked for the last time together, following our dear Ammiane to the grave! The whole household filled the air with lamentations, for themselves even more than for their mistress, so that there was little need of the hired mourners.

But when all was over, and the funeral line moved back homeward, Chrestus and I for a short space turned quietly aside and betook ourselves to a new-made tomb cut in the side of one of the hills that look down upon the city; and there we sat down and wept and poured forth all our sorrows in one another's arms, beseeching the gods to have mercy upon us. For we began to see that we could expect no pity from Nicander, and that he would not hesitate to sell us and to part us asunder if he could thereby make more profit from us; and our hearts swelled to bursting at the thought that we, who had never been divided, should now perchance be parted, each to live lonely and desolate till our life's end. As we wept, we looked down upon our dear home. The fields beneath us had been the fields of Ammiane; we could call by name the sheep and goats that were leaping and bleating in the valley at our feet; the temples in which we had worshipped, the shining roofs of the houses of many well-known friends—all reminded us of past happy days, happy most of all because we had enjoyed them together. At last we rose up to go down to our new life of slavery. But because our minds misgave us that we should be parted on the morrow, we determined to take our last farewell there

alone, and not in the presence of Nicander nor before the eyes of the household slaves. And Chrestus said that we should interchange some token, whereby we might recognize each other in days to come, if ever the gods should bring us together again. So we took from off our necks the charms which we had always worn from our infancy and I received from Chrestus his seal with the inscription TRUST ME, and he mine with the words I LOVE THEE. Then we bade one another farewell, no longer able to constrain ourselves, but with piercing cries falling each on the other's neck and weeping and calling on Ammiane to help us because the gods helped us not; and then, drying our tears, without another word we went down into Lystra. Here Nicander, rating us for our delay, gave command that we should be at once placed on separate camels and set out for Tyana.

§ 6. OF THE DEATH OF CHRESTUS

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On the third day after we were come to Tyana, being summoned to the presence of Nicander, we found with him certain of Ammiane's household slaves, and by the side of our master a smooth-faced Greek from Delos who seemed to be inspecting and appraising the slaves; who, looking at my scar, laughed and said that he should not need to ask Nicander to name a price for me; but he praised the beauty of Chrestus and caused him to be stripped and to walk up and down the room, and to sing and to go through the steps of two or three dancing- measures; and finally he declared with an oath that he was more beautiful than Nireus and that he would buy him at Nicander's price. When we heard this, we both of us fell down at the feet of Nicander and of the slave-dealer, beseeching them in the name of their parents and their brothers also, if they had any, that at least they would not part us, but that the Greek might buy us both; and at the same time I told the slave-dealer that I could read and write Greek easily and rapidly, so that I might fetch a good price as an amanuensis; and even the rest of the slaves of Ammiane fell on their faces before our master and joined in our petition.

But Nicander angrily spurned us, and the Greek said to Chrestus that he must go to Rome where he would fetch ten times as much as a paltry amanuensis or grammarian because he was as lovely as Ganymede and sure to please some great nobleman or perchance the Emperor himself; but added he, "Your brother is of no worth to me, for I deal

in none but pretty boys; and therefore, any beautiful one, thou must needs make ready to be my companion at once, for I should be by this time well on the road to Tarsus." Hereat Chrestus arose and following the Greek his master he would have gone forth without a word more from the chamber. Nicander, scoffing at his misery, called him back to say farewell to me, "for," said he, "it may be some time before you see your brother again." But Chrestus remained silent; only, as he went out at the door, he turned round to me and held up the little token round his neck. But that silence was better than many words, and the memory of it abides with me unto this day.

So long as Chrestus was in the chamber I restrained myself for his sake lest I should break his heart with my weeping and passion; but when he was gone forth I again attempted to bend Nicander with prayers and entreaties. But finding all in vain, I leaped up from the ground in fury, and invoked curses upon him threatening that I would slay him if ever I found occasion. At the word he clapped his hands and calling in the slaves of his household, "Take this young rebel," he said, "to the upper quarries, and put him to hard labour with the lowest class, till the brat understand his condition, and learn to be a slave and to submit himself to his betters." So while Chrestus was being carried away to Tarsus, I was dragged to the quarries, which were in a wild place, void for miles round of all human habitation, about twenty miles north of Tyana. In these quarries there laboured a large gang of slaves, with scant food and scanty clothing, forced to work in chains under the burning sun all day, and at night locked up like sheep in a foul den

underground; and if any died, little heed was taken of it, for it was cheaper to buy new slaves than to treat the old slaves well. But I doubt not that Nicander, who had good reasons for wishing to be rid of my brother and me, did what he did wittingly and with forethought, supposing that I should soon have succumbed to the hardships of the place and the life, and that the quarries should have been my grave and his deliverance.

On the morrow I began my labours amid a new sort of companions, creatures to all outward appearance resembling apes and dogs rather than human beings, some stamped and branded on their foreheads with T for "thief," or M for "murderer"; others having their backs discoloured with the weals of the lash or torn and bleeding with the marks of fresh punishment; others with collars round their necks, or clogs and fetters shackling their legs and feet; others labouring beastlike under a kind of fork or yoke; all were chained in some fashion, and all had one side of the head shorn, so that they might be recognized at once if they should break away and escape any distance. Speech was not allowed among us; and as we toiled on from sunrise to sunset amid the heated rocks, the only sounds that could be heard (beside the clinking of the tools upon the stone) were the threats and curses of the overseers and the crack of the whip followed by the scream of some stricken slave. All the more leisure was there for thought of Chrestus, whose fate was infinitely worse than mine, because he was to go to Rome and there to be sold for his beauty; and I knew well the saying of the philosopher that "What is counted impurity in the free-born must be counted a necessity in slaves."

Thinking on these things I felt such an agony that neither the heat nor the parching thirst could be compared with it; and even the first feeling of the slave-whip upon my shoulders, though it maddened me for the moment, could not drive out the thought of Chrestus. But hatred and thirst for revenge and distrust of the Gods began to blend themselves with my love of my brother; and whereas at first I had prayed to Ephesian Artemis to preserve him, now I began to doubt whether prayers availed anything.

I had been scarce a week in the ergastulum when, as we came forth in the morning to be marshalled and numbered, according to our wont, before going to our several places in the quarries, I heard the voice of Hernias behind me giving some message to Syrus our overseer. But when I leaped forward to embrace him, he spoke roughly to me, calling me a fool and a rebel, and saying that he would have no speech with me till I had submitted myself to the worthy Nicander. I shrank back quickly to my place, feeling myself friendless indeed now that Hernias had turned against me. By this time we were on our way from the ergastulum to the quarries, and I with the rest in my place in the rear. But when the crack of Syrus's whip showed that he was at some distance in the front of the long column, I heard my name called in a low voice and Hermas was by my side. He told me in few words that he had accompanied the slave-dealer to Tarsus, but that on the way Chrestus, either slipping or casting himself down in a narrow and precipitous part of the road, had fallen down a high cliff and had been taken up sorely gashed and wounded, and within two or three hours afterwards he had died. In my heart I knew that Hermas

spoke the truth, but I refused to believe his tale, saying that he was in league with Nicander to deceive me; else, why had not he brought some token? But the old man with tears in his eyes, declared that he would have brought me the charm that hung round my brother's neck, but one of the slaves had stolen it; however, in his last moments Chrestus had written some message on his tablets for me; and so saying he produced the tablets which I knew to be indeed my brother's. Now all my hopes fell, and I knew that I was alone in the world; yet could I neither speak nor weep but walked on without a sign; but the old man looking anxiously in my face bade me trust in him, and seeing Syrus approach, he pressed my hand and departed. For almost all that day the overseer—perchance because he suspected something amiss, having caught sight of Hermas stealing away—would not depart from my neighbourhood but kept his eyes so fixed on me that I dared not stop my work for an instant to pluck the tablets from my bosom where I had thrust them; and what I did I knew not, but I could neither think, nor weep, nor do anything but toil on, like some machine. But toward sun-down, a little before we were marshalled that we might go down into the ergastulum, seizing my occasion I plucked out the tablets and upon the first leaf of them I found traced in faint characters, as if by a feeble hand, the words on the token which I had given him, I LOVE THEE; and when I read them, the tears delayed no longer.

§ 7. OF MY LIFE IN THE ERGASTULUM

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If it was a marvel that my body held out against the hardships of the quarries, it was much more marvellous that my soul perished not. Nor do I speak now merely of the words and deeds of darkness wrought by the slavish herd in their underground den, from which the grace of the Lord preserved me; but I speak of the trust in any divine governance of the world which seemed at this time to be in danger to be utterly extinguished, or even to be replaced by a belief in evil. For not only was I becoming day by day more like a brute beast in mind and soul as well as in body, listening with less horror to the obscene jests and tales of my companions and learning to take all evil as matter of course and to expect no good in the world; but also I began to think that, if there were gods indeed, they could not be such as the Epicureans would have us believe, "idle gods that take no thought for mortals," but they must be bad gods to have made, and to endure, so bad a world.

Now I knew that Ammiane had believed in witches and necromancers and the like; yea, and even Zeno our tutor, though he were a philosopher and of the Stoic sect, had freely confessed that he himself would be unwilling to be persecuted with the charms and incantations of witches. As often therefore as my companions turning from their obscenities and filthy tales, began to tell of witchcraft (which they were wont to do more especially after earthquakes, when they were under some influence of fear) and stories about Empousae and blood-sucking monsters,

and the raising of spectres and the drawing out of the hearts of living men, at such times I would give an eager ear to all their sayings; and although Zeno had taught me to believe that these superstitions of the common people were no better than old wives' fables, yet now I began to incline to the opinion that these stories were true. And in my present condition the gods of darkness, such as Hecate and Gorgo and the like, seemed to have more substance and real power than the greater gods Zeus and Poseidon, who were worshipped in processions by noble priests in fine raiment with perfumes and flowers and offerings of fat victims, but did nothing for their worshippers. When therefore I heard how one witch had drawn forth oracles from a little babe whose throat she had cut and enslaved its spirit; and how another had obtained vengeance over her enemies by means of the marrow of a child whom she had buried up to the midst in the ground and then left to starve in sight of abundance of food; and others had caused their enemies to pine away by making waxen images to be pierced with needles or melted at slow fires, and the like; then came the thought of Nicander in my mind, thus caused to waste away and to live without a heart and suddenly to drop down dead, and I prayed that I too might learn these mysteries.

One evening more especially I call to mind, when we had been driven earlier than usual into our dungeon because of a great storm and earthquake, and all the earth seemed in a flux the crags from the hill sides falling on this side and on that, and whole cliffs swaying to right and left as if we were on sea and not on solid earth and nine or ten of my

companions had been already crushed by the rocks or by the falling in of the sides of the quarries. When we were thrust into our dungeon, sitting in darkness, we could still feel the ground moving beneath us and ever and anon such rockings and rumblings as made the more timid cry out that some gulf would open and swallow us up alive, others, that the sides and roof were falling in upon us. But, of a sudden, amidst the din and tumult of so many voices, a few weeping, but the most part shouting and yelling and blaspheming and cursing the gods, we heard one of the slaves speaking out clearly above all the rest and commanding silence. His name was Nannias, a Colchian by birth; and he bade us desist from our fears and take heart, "for," said he, "I myself have brought about this storm and earthquake, and as I hope, we shall soon learn that our master has miserably perished in it."

Then all held their peace and listened to the Colchian who continued thus. "From my earliest years I was instructed by an old witch (who bought me as a babe) in all the arts of magic; and from her I learned how to raise the winds and how to lull them, and how to make away with a man though he be miles distant, in such wise that none may know the causer of the mischief. From my infancy I have ever taken a delight in all evil. For why not? The cross has been the tomb of all my brothers, my father and my grandfather; nor will I degenerate from my ancestors. The world is against us; let us also be against the world." At this all shouted in assent; but the Colchian impatiently continued, "My first master in Laodicea I destroyed by placing bones and blood, and nails from a cross, together