

"My children," said Fabia, gently, "the future lies in the knowledge of the gods; but out of the present we must shape our own future."

"No, delectissima," replied her nephew, "to do that we are all too weak; except it be true, as Aratus the poet has said, 'that we men are also the offspring of gods,' in which case Heaven itself must stoop to give us aid."

But Cornelia's eyes had wandered down into the foam, still gleaming as snow in the failing light.

"Ah!" she said, "the ages are long; if there be gods, their days are our lifetimes, and we but see a little and know not what to think. But to live a noble life will always be the fairest thing, whether death be an unending sleep or the threshold to Pindar's Elysium."

And what more of grave wisdom might have dropped from her lips none may relate, for her husband had shaken off the spell, and laughed aloud in the joy of his strong life and buoyant hopes. Then they all three laughed, and thought no more of sober things. They went down into the cabin just as the last bars of light flickered out in the west, and only the starlight broke the darkness that spread out over the face of the sea.

II

Drusus, as he himself had predicted, never wrote a great treatise on philosophy, and never drew up a cosmology that set at rest all the problems of the universe; nor did Cornelia become a Latin Sappho or Corinna, and her wise lore never went further than to make her friends afraid to affect a sham learning in her presence. But they both did the tasks that fell to them better because they had "tasted the well of Parnassus" and "walked in the grove with the sages." And Drus.