

"Look yonder, Hypatia," said Synesius, pointing to the beautiful structure; "see that fair tower; it stands there now in the broad daylight, lovely to look upon, but of no use; but at night, when its watch-light gleams from its summit, then its influence is felt for good; far and wide, the mariner blesses it, as he seeks his haven of rest; it becomes a beacon of hope and joy; and like that tower art thou. Hypatia the Platonist, is the Pharos of the day, cold, glittering, stately, beautiful to look upon, but shedding no blessed influence around her. Hypatia, the Christian, would be like that same tower at night, warning, directing, cheering, bending down as it were, from the ambient air of heaven, to bless, and save the tempest-tossed wanderers of this life."

"Thank you, Synesius, for the compliment you give me, for as such I take it. To resemble your tower, either by day or night, would be my highest ambition, for see you not, friend, it pierces the pure ether, and raised above the fogs and vapors of this lower earth, it is ever surrounded by the pure atmosphere of a higher world. So would I have it with myself; all to which my soul adheres, should be incorruptible, immortal, and I would drink in only the influences of the harmonious philosophy of Plato."

"Ah! my daughter, the magic of that man's style has seduced you—but if you will but read this scroll;" and he took from his bosom a roll of papyrus, upon which was written in Coptic characters, "The Gospel of Matthew." Unrolling it, he pointed to the words: "'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' This was written by no philosopher, Hypatia; it can boast no graces of eloquence, no poetical fancies; it was penned by an humble Jewish publican; but he was heaven inspired, and think you, your Plato, your Pythagoras, or your Aristotle, can give you a diviner truth than that?"

"No, holy Synesius, not a diviner truth, but the same, only expressed in different words; but we waste time in useless argument, you would be better employed in tending your flock, and I in my studies; but though we cannot agree in our ethics, we will be none the less friends."

"Pardon me, Hypatia, if my desire to see you all you are capable of being, leads me to trespass upon you. When I listen to your eloquence before the academy, I feel what would be your power, were you pleading the cause of our Saviour, and unfolding his divine truth;—but I must not weary you. Go you to the lecture room to-day?"

"Yes, an hour before sunset, I am to address the governor and magistrates, with what people

choose to listen, in the Hall of Minerva, at the Academy. Will you aid me with your presence, good father?"

"I know thou art ever found preaching the cause of morality and virtue, therefore I go; and yet it is not without a sigh I listen to thee, wanting as thou dost the divine light. But thou must have somewhat to prepare for thy lecture, so farewell. The good God bless thee!"

"May Zeus love thee, and Minerva spread her shield around thee!" said Hypatia; and with this pagan blessing, Synesius, the Christian priest, departed.

Hypatia sat musing quietly, as if meditating upon the subject which had been discussed between her and her late visitor; after some time she roused herself, and clapping her hands, an Ethiopian slave appeared; she made a few signals, which he obeyed by placing before the window a tripod of porphyry, supporting a black marble slab, on which he laid several sheets of prepared papyrus, and a stylus, also a vase of purple glass, (a rare elegance in those times,) in which was one of those lovely lilies of the Nile, pure and queen-like, its snowy petals contrasting beautifully with the rich amethystine hue of the glass; for the Egyptians (as has been proved by the remains found in the pyramids, and the ornaments preserved with the mummies,) possessed the rare art which has lately been revived in Bohemia, of giving their glass the richest and most glowing colors, imitating the sunset glories of the eastern clime, in its brilliant eyes.

The slave retired, and then Hypatia, rising, walked across the room to an alcove, over which hung heavy crimson drapery, looped with golden cords. She drew aside the curtain, and there were ranged massive rolls of parchment and papyrus; each one was closed with a silver clasp, on which was marked the name of the volume, and most of them were the writings of Plato and his school. Hypatia opened one of the rolls; it was the Phædras, and then seating herself at the table near the window, she took up the stylus, and was soon engaged in writing.

To understand why this fair Egyptian maiden was engaged in such a different manner from others of her sex in those far distant times, we must glance at her history, and the influences which had been around her, and which had formed her mind and character. She was the daughter of Theon, one of the most celebrated mathematicians in Alexandria; he had for a long time been at the head of the mathematical school, and had been distinguished for his Commentaries upon Euclid, and other writings of the same character. He