

told you, Hannibal, I have made up my mind never to return to Carthage. It is hateful to me. Her tame submission to the intolerable tyranny of Hanno and his faction, her sufferance of the corruption which reigns in every department, her base ingratitude to you and the army which have done and suffered so much, the lethargy which she betrays when dangers are thickening and her fall and destruction are becoming more and more sure, have sickened me of her. I have resolved, as I have told you, to cast her off, and to live and die among the Gauls—a life rough and simple, but at least free."

"But it seems that the Gauls have again been subjected to Rome," Hannibal said.

"On this side of the Alps," Malchus replied, "but beyond are great tribes who have never as yet heard of Rome. It is to them that Clotilde's mother belongs, and we have settled that we will first try and find her mother and persuade her to go with us, and that if she is dead we will journey alone until we join her tribe in Germany. But before I go I will, if it be possible, try and rouse the Gauls to make another effort for freedom by acting in concert, by driving out the Romans and invading Italy. You will, I trust, Hannibal, not oppose my plans."

"Assuredly not, Malchus; I sympathize with you, and were I younger and without ties and responsibilities would fain do the same. It is a sacrifice, no doubt, to give up civilization and to begin life anew, but it is what our colonists are always doing. At anyrate it is freedom—freedom from the corruption, the intrigue, the sloth, and the littleness of a decaying power like that of Carthage. You will be happy at least in having your wife with you, while the gods only know when I shall see the face of my beloved Imilce.