

me in the garden. Yes, this very night, I say farewell to Rome, to my native land, farewell to home, farewell to Virginia.

*Vir.*—O Regulus, no, no, no!

*Reg.*—I am compelled to go. My conquerors sent me as an ambassador to Rome to sue for terms of peace. I swore that if not successful in obtaining their request I would return.

*Vir.*—And did you not succeed?

*Reg.*—No. To-day I stood before the people, patricians and plebeians, and advised them to pursue with exterminating vengeance Carthage and the Carthaginians!

*Vir.*—Though you knew that meant you must return, though you knew that meant death to you.

*Reg.*—Though I knew that meant death to me.

*Vir.*—Then why did you do it, my husband?

*Reg.*—For the honour of Rome.

*Vir.*—O Regulus, break your plighted oath and remain with me. Do not the Carthaginians see what a hard decision you are forced to make?

*Reg.*—Yes, they do. It was that made them hope I would advise my country to consent to terms of peace.

*Vir.*—Then do they not pity you, when by returning you will be so utterly at their mercy?

*Reg.*—Pity me!

*Vir.*—Why not?

*Reg.*—Virginia, you are a woman and have never seen the face of a foe contorted with the greed of blood and fierce revenge. Pity me? Yes—as a cat pities the mouse bleeding beneath its paws. Pity me? Yes—as a serpent pities the bird trembling beneath its fangs. Pity me? Yes—as an eagle pities the squirrel struggling beneath its talons. Pity me? Yes—as a tiger pities the human babe torn and dying beneath its claws. Pity me? Yes—as a demon pities the mortal writhing beneath the heel upon his neck. Pity me? Oh, how they do pity me! Ask for justice—they would answer me with the lash. Ask for mercy—they would answer me with a spear thrust.

*Vir.*—Then, Regulus, again I entreat of you, I implore you, break your plighted oath and remain at home.

*Reg.*—Virginia, but a few hours ago all the assembled senators of Rome, grave and reverend men, proffered the same request.