

"No, if I must die I will avoid the fatigue of running and the exertion of striking blows. I will die placidly in the sweet indolence which ever embellished my life."

Slowly, deliberately, he walked over to the fire, covered his face with his patched and mended mantle, and laid himself in the flames as calmly as he used to drop down on the porticos of the Forum in the old days of peace.

On the steps of the temple the Elders were stabbing themselves in their breasts with a dagger. Before breathing his last, each passed the weapon on to his nearest companion, and they died trying to maintain themselves erect in their chairs of state. Groups of women caught up torches lighted at the great fire, and scattered like furious bacchantes throughout Saguntum, setting fire to doors, and flinging burning brands upon the wooden roofs.

Suddenly from the direction of the citadel where the attacks of the besiegers had been concentrated, arose an appalling commotion, as if half a mountain had toppled over. The walls had been abandoned by the defenders who had gathered in the Forum, and a tower which the Carthaginians had undermined some days before had fallen. A cohort of Hannibal's army, seeing the city destitute of the usual outposts and guards, rushed through the breach, and made a signal for Hannibal to enter with his hosts.

"Come on! come on!" shouted Sonnica with a hoarse voice. "This is our last night! I will not die in the fire! I choose to die fighting! I want blood!"

She flew from the Forum like a Fury, followed by Actæon who ran beside her calling her name, trying