

Who Knows.

Who knows where pins and needles go, where all the buttons stray? Who knows where all the pennies go, that sometimes get away? Who knows how all the chains break, that never touch at all? Who knows how black a brain breaks, and never had a fall? Who knows whom all the fashions come, and where they disappear? Who knows how the moon makes a light of what was "such a dear"? Who knows how little bills can swell, and teach prodigious size? Who knows indeed, what's going on beneath his very eyes? Who knows just where her husband goes, when "business" keeps him out? Who knows what when to wear a smile, and when to frown a frowny frown? Who knows the time to face the fact, that she's no longer young? Who knows how best to speak her mind, and how to hold her tongue? Who knows the most convenient day, to bring a friend to dine? Who knows the best way to spend on clubs, cigars and wine? Who knows one cannot cancel a woman all her life? Who knows that woman is the same, when sweetest turns to wife? Who knows why all the pretty girls are often last of the fair? How all the ugly women win, who never had a beau? Who knows how many wives so large, and large men fancy small? Who knows in fact, how half the world was ever made? Who knows how far to trust a friend, how far to speak a kindly yes, and when to say "I never"? Who knows?—the grim old Greek sage says gravely, "I never!" The wisest man in the world is he who knows himself.

BEN HUR; OR, THE DAYS OF THE MESSIAH.

BOOK THIRD.

CHAPTER III.—CONTINUED.

The change that came upon Ben Hur was wonderful to see, it was so instant and extreme. The voice sharpened; the hands arose tight-clenched; every fibre thrilled; his eyes flamed. "You have heard of the God of my fathers," he said, "of the faithful Jehovah. By His truth and almighty power, and by the love with which He hath followed Israel from the beginning, I swear I am innocent!" The tribune was much moved. "O noble Roman!" continued Ben Hur, "give me a little faith, and, into my darkness, deeper darkness every day, send a light!" Arrius turned away, and walked the deck. "Didst thou not have a trial?" he asked, stopping suddenly. "No!" "The Roman raised his head, surprised. "No trial—witness! Who passed judgment upon thee?" "Romans, it should be remembered, were at no time such lovers of the law and its forms as in the ages of their decay. "They bound me with cords, and dragged me to a vault in the Tower. I saw no one. No one spoke to me. Next have been a trial and a verdict. "What couldst thou have proven?" "I was a boy, too young to be a conspirator. Gratus was a stranger to me. If I had meant to kill him, that was not the time or the place. He was riding in the midst of a legion, and it was broad day. I could not have escaped. I was of good name, friendly to Rome. My father had been distinguished for his services to the emperor. Ruin was certain to myself, my mother, my sister. I had no cause for malice, while every consideration—property, family, life, conscience, the law—to a son of Israel as the breath of his nostrils, would have stayed my hand, though the foulest had been ever so strong. I was not mad. Death was preferable to shame; and, believe me, I pray, it is so yet."

CHAPTER IV.

A GLEAM OF HOPE.

In the Bay of Antennae, east of Cythera the island, the hundred galleys assembled. The tribune gave one day to inspection. He called men to Naxos, the largest of the Cyclades, midway the coasts of Greece and Asia, like a great stone planted in the centre of a highway, from which he could challenge everything that passed; at the same time, he would be in position to go after the pirates instantly, whether they were in the Aegean or out on the Mediterranean. As the fleet, in order, rowed its way towards the mountain shores of the island, a galley was decided coming from the north. Arrius went to meet it. She proved to be a transport boat from Byzantium, and from her commander he learned the particulars of which he had most need. The pirates were from all the farther shores of the Bosphorus, the Hellespont, the mouth of the river which was supposed to feed Pausanias, was represented among them. Their preparations had been made with the greatest secrecy. The first known of them was their appearance off the entrance to the Thracian Bosphorus, followed by the destruction of the fleet in station here. Thence to the outlet of the Hellespont, everything silent had fallen their prey. There were sixty-six galleys in the squadron, all well manned and supplied. A few were birmes, the rest stout triremes. A Greek was in command, and the pilots, said to be familiar with all the Eastern seas, were Greek. The planter had been inconsiderable. The panic, consequently, was not on the sea; it was on the coast, with the people of the coast. Where were the pirates now? To this question, of most interest to Arrius, he received answer. After sacking Hephthalia, on the island of Lemnos, the enemy had coasted across to the Thracian group, and, by last account, disappeared in the gulfs between Euboea and Hellas. Such were the tidings. Then the people of the island, drawn to the hill-tops by the rare spectacle of a hundred ships careering in united squadron, beheld the advance division suddenly turn to the north, and the others follow, wheeling upon the same point like cavalry in a column. News of the piratical descent had reached them, and now,

down all moved him to mercy. His faith was gone. Yet, he said to himself, there was a hope—perhaps, there was hope to Cythera; the best tower could not then be spared; he would wait; he would learn more; he would at least be sure this was the prince Ben Hur, and that he was of a right disposition. O, dearly, slaves were liars.

"It is enough," he said aloud. "Go back to thy place." Ben Hur bowed; looked once more into the master's face, but saw nothing for hope. He turned away slowly, looked back and said: "If thou dost think of me again, O tribune, let it not be lost in thy mind that I prayed thee only for word of my people—mother, sister."

Arrius followed him with admiring eyes. "Papa!" he thought. "With teaching, what a man for the arena! What a runner! Ye gods! what an arm for the sword or the cestus!—Stay!" he said aloud.

Ben Hur stopped, and the tribune went to him. "If thou wert free, what wouldst thou do?" "The noble Arrius mocks me!" Jaedah said with trembling lips. "No; by the gods, no!"

"Then I will answer gladly. I would give myself to duty, the duty of life. I would know no other. I would know no rest until my mother and Tirzah were restored to home. I would give every day and hour to their happiness. I would wait upon them; never slave more faithful. They have lost much, but, by the God of my fathers, I would find them more!"

The answer was unexpected by the Roman. For a moment he lost his purpose. "I spoke to thy ambition," he said, recovering. "If thy mother and sister were dead, or not to be found, what wouldst thou do?"

A distinct pallor overspread Ben Hur's face, and he looked over the sea. There was a struggle with some strong feeling; when it was conquered, he turned to the tribune. "What pursuit would I follow?" he asked.

"Yes." "Tribune, I will tell thee the truth. Only the night before the dreadful day of which I have spoken, I obtained permission to be a soldier. I am of the same mind yet, and in all the earth there is but one school of war, thither I would go."

"The palastra!" exclaimed Arrius. "No; a Roman camp." "But thou must first acquaint thyself with the use of arms."

Now a master may never safely advise a slave. Arrius saw his indiscretion, and, in a breath, chilled his voice and manner. "Go now," he said, "and do not build upon what has passed between us. Perhaps I do but play with thee. Or,—he looked away musingly—"or, if thou dost think of it with any hope, choose between the arms of a gladiator and the service of a soldier. The former may come in the favour of the emperor; there is no reward for thee in the latter. Thou art not a Roman. Go!"

A short while after Ben-Hur was upon his feet again. A man's sign is always light if his heart is light. Handling the oar did not seem so toiling to Jaedah. A hope had come to him, like a singing bird. He could hardly see the visitor or hear his song; that it was there, though, he knew; his feelings told him so. The caution of the tribune—"Perhaps I do but play with thee"—was dismissed often as it recurred to his mind. That he had been called by the great man, which he felt his hungry spirit Surely something good would come of it. The light about his bench was clear and bright with promises, and he prayed: "O God! I am a true son of the Israel. Thou hast so loved! Help me, I pray Thee!"

CHAPTER V.

THE SEA-FIGHT.

Every soul aboard, even the ship-awake. Officers went to their quarters. The marines took arms, and were led out looking in all respect like legionaries. Sheaves of arrows and armfuls of javelins were carried on deck. By the central stairs the oil-tanks and fire-balls were set ready to use. Additional lanterns were lighted. Buckets were filled with water, and the rowers in relief assembled under guard in front of the chief. As Providence would have it, Ben-Aur was the muffled noise of the final preparations—the of sailors furling sail, spreading the nettings, unslung the machines, and hanging the armour of bull-hide over the sides. Presently quiet settled about the galley again; quiet, full of vague dread and expectation, which, interpreted, means ready. At a signal passed down from the deck, and communicated to the hortar by a petty officer stationed on the stairs, all at once the oars stopped. What did it mean? Of the hundred and twenty slaves

bound to the benches, not one but asked himself the question. They were without incentive. Patriotism, love of honour, sense of duty, brought them no inspiration. They felt the thrill common to men rushed helpless and blind into danger. It may be supposed the dullest of them, posing his oar, thought of all that might happen, yet could promise himself nothing for victory.

Of the situation without they might not ask. And who were the enemy? And what if they were friends, brethren, countrymen? The reader, carrying the suggestion forward, will see the necessity which governed the Roman when, in such emergency, he looked the hapless wretches to their seats.

There was little time, however, for such thought with them. A sound like the rowing of galleys astera attracted Ben-Hur and the *Astrea* rocked as if in the midst of encountering waves. The idea of a set at hand broke upon him—a fleet of men on wave-forming, probably for attack. His blood started with the fancy. Another signal came down from the deck. The oars dipped, and the galley started imperceptibly. No sound from without, none from within, yet each man in the cabin instinctively poised himself for a shock, the very ship seemed to catch the sense, and hold its breath, and go crouched tiger-like.

In such a situation time is inappreciable; so that Ben-Hur found no judgment of distance gone. At last there was a sound of trumpets on deck; full clear long board until it rang; the rowers reached forward full length, and, deepening the dip of their oars, pulled suddenly with such united force. The galley, quivering in every timber, answered with a leap. Other trumpets joined in the clamour—all from the rear, none forward—from the latter quarter only a rising sound of voices in tumult heard briefly. There was a mighty blow; the rowers in front of the chief's platform, reeled, some of them fell; the ship bounded back, recovered, and rushed on more irresistibly than before. Shriill and high arose the shrieks of men in terror; over the glare of trumpets, and the grid and crash of the collision, they arose; then under his feet, under the keel, pounding, rumbling, breaking to pieces, drowning, Ben Hur felt something overridden. The men about him looked on with other afraid. A shout of triumph from the deck—the bark of the Roman had won! But who were they whom the sea had taken? Of what tongue, from what land were they? No pause, no stay! Forward rushed the *Astrea*; and, as it went, some sailors ran down, and plugging the cotton balls into the oil tanks, tossed them dripping to comrades at the head of the stairs; fire was to be added to the other horrors of the combat.

Directly the galley keeled over so far that the oarsmen on the uppermost side with difficulty kept their benches. Again it dealt a mighty blow; the rowers in front of the chief's platform, reeled, some of them fell; the ship bounded back, recovered, and rushed on more irresistibly than before. Shriill and high arose the shrieks of men in terror; over the glare of trumpets, and the grid and crash of the collision, they arose; then under his feet, under the keel, pounding, rumbling, breaking to pieces, drowning, Ben Hur felt something overridden. The men about him looked on with other afraid. A shout of triumph from the deck—the bark of the Roman had won! But who were they whom the sea had taken? Of what tongue, from what land were they? No pause, no stay! Forward rushed the *Astrea*; and, as it went, some sailors ran down, and plugging the cotton balls into the oil tanks, tossed them dripping to comrades at the head of the stairs; fire was to be added to the other horrors of the combat.

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About that time he heard ears in quick movement, and beheld a galley coming down upon him. The tall prow seemed doubly tall, and the red light playing upon its gut and carving gave it an appearance of snake-like speed. Its foot the water churned to flying foam.

He struck out, pushing the plank, which was very broad and unmanageable. Seconds were precious—half a second might save or lose him. In the crisis of the effort, up from the sea, within arm's reach, a helmet shot like a gleam of gold. Next came two hands with fingers extended—large hands were they, and strong—then his own feet, might not be loosened. Ben Hur averted from them, appalled. Up rose the helmet and the head it encased—then two arms, which began to beat the water wildly—the head turned back, and gave the face to the light. The month gaping wide; the eyes open, but sightless, and the bloodless pallor of a drowning man—never anything more ghastly! Yet he gave a cry of joy at the sight, and as the face was going under again, he caught the sufferer by the chain which passed from the helmet beneath the chin, and drew him to the plank.

The man was Arrius, the tribune. For a while the water foamed and eddied violently about Ben Hur taxing all his strength to hold to the support and at the same time keep the Roman's head above the surface. The galley had passed, leaving the two barely outside the stroke of its oars. Right through the floating men, over heads helmeted as well as heads bare, she drove, in her wake nothing but the sea sparkling with fire. A muffled crash, succeeded by a great outcry, made the rescuer look again from his charge. A certain savage pleasure touched his heart—the *Astrea* was avenged.

After that the battle moved on. Resistance turned to flight, then to victory; the victors? Ben Hur was sensible how his freedom and the life of the tribune depended upon that event. He pushed the plank under the latter until it floated him, after which all his care was to keep him there. The dawn came slowly. He watched his growing hopefulness, yet sometimes said: "Would it bring the Romans or the pirates? If the pirates, his charge was lost."

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To every bench, as a fixture, there was a chain with heavy anklets. These the hortar proceeded to lock upon the oarsmen, going from number to number, leaving a choice but to obey, and, in event of disaster, no possibility of escape. In the cabin, then, a silence fell, broken, at first, only by the song of the oars turning in the leathern cases. Every man upon the benches felt the shame, Ben Hur more keenly than his companions. He would have put it away at any price. Soon the clanking of the fetters notified him of the progress the chief was making in his round. He would come to him in turn; but would not the tribune interpose for him?

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The thought may be set down to vanity or selfishness, as the reader pleases; it certainly, at that moment, took possession of Ben Hur. He believed the Roman would interpose; anyhow, the circumstance would test the man's feelings. If, in such a situation time is inappreciable; so that Ben-Hur found no judgment of distance gone. At last there was a sound of trumpets on deck; full clear long board until it rang; the rowers reached forward full length, and, deepening the dip of their oars, pulled suddenly with such united force. The galley, quivering in every timber, answered with a leap. Other trumpets joined in the clamour—all from the rear, none forward—from the latter quarter only a rising sound of voices in tumult heard briefly. There was a mighty blow; the rowers in front of the chief's platform, reeled, some of them fell; the ship bounded back, recovered, and rushed on more irresistibly than before. Shriill and high arose the shrieks of men in terror; over the glare of trumpets, and the grid and crash of the collision, they arose; then under his feet, under the keel, pounding, rumbling, breaking to pieces, drowning, Ben Hur felt something overridden. The men about him looked on with other afraid. A shout of triumph from the deck—the bark of the Roman had won! But who were they whom the sea had taken? Of what tongue, from what land were they? No pause, no stay! Forward rushed the *Astrea*; and, as it went, some sailors ran down, and plugging the cotton balls into the oil tanks, tossed them dripping to comrades at the head of the stairs; fire was to be added to the other horrors of the combat.

Directly the galley keeled over so far that the oarsmen on the uppermost side with difficulty kept their benches. Again it dealt a mighty blow; the rowers in front of the chief's platform, reeled, some of them fell; the ship bounded back, recovered, and rushed on more irresistibly than before. Shriill and high arose the shrieks of men in terror; over the glare of trumpets, and the grid and crash of the collision, they arose; then under his feet, under the keel, pounding, rumbling, breaking to pieces, drowning, Ben Hur felt something overridden. The men about him looked on with other afraid. A shout of triumph from the deck—the bark of the Roman had won! But who were they whom the sea had taken? Of what tongue, from what land were they? No pause, no stay! Forward rushed the *Astrea*; and, as it went, some sailors ran down, and plugging the cotton balls into the oil tanks, tossed them dripping to comrades at the head of the stairs; fire was to be added to the other horrors of the combat.

Smoke lay upon the sea like a transparent fog, through which here and there shone cores of intense brilliancy. A quick intelligence told him they were ships on fire. The battle was yet on; nor could he say who was victor. Within the radius of his vision now and then ships passed, shooting flames about their masts. Out of the dark clouds farther on he caught the crash of other ships colliding. The danger, however, was closer at hand. When the *Astrea* went down, her deck, it will be recollected, held her own crew, and the crew of the two galleys which had attacked her at the same time, all of whom were engulfed. Many of them came to the surface together, and on the same plank or support of whatever kind continued the combat, begun possibly in the vortex fathoms down. Writing and twisting in deadly embrace, sometimes striking with sword or javelin, they kept the sea around them in agitation, one place lanky back, at another slame with fiery reditions. With their struggles he had nothing to do; they were all his enemies; not one of them but would kill him for the plank upon which he floated. He made haste to get away.

About that time he heard ears in quick movement, and beheld a galley coming down upon him. The tall prow seemed doubly tall, and the red light playing upon its gut and carving gave it an appearance of snake-like speed. Its foot the water churned to flying foam.

He struck out, pushing the plank, which was very broad and unmanageable. Seconds were precious—half a second might save or lose him. In the crisis of the effort, up from the sea, within arm's reach, a helmet shot like a gleam of gold. Next came two hands with fingers extended—large hands were they, and strong—then his own feet, might not be loosened. Ben Hur averted from them, appalled. Up rose the helmet and the head it encased—then two arms, which began to beat the water wildly—the head turned back, and gave the face to the light. The month gaping wide; the eyes open, but sightless, and the bloodless pallor of a drowning man—never anything more ghastly! Yet he gave a cry of joy at the sight, and as the face was going under again, he caught the sufferer by the chain which passed from the helmet beneath the chin, and drew him to the plank.

The man was Arrius, the tribune. For a while the water foamed and eddied violently about Ben Hur taxing all his strength to hold to the support and at the same time keep the Roman's head above the surface. The galley had passed, leaving the two barely outside the stroke of its oars. Right through the floating men, over heads helmeted as well as heads bare, she drove, in her wake nothing but the sea sparkling with fire. A muffled crash, succeeded by a great outcry, made the rescuer look again from his charge. A certain savage pleasure touched his heart—the *Astrea* was avenged.

After that the battle moved on. Resistance turned to flight, then to victory; the victors? Ben Hur was sensible how his freedom and the life of the tribune depended upon that event. He pushed the plank under the latter until it floated him, after which all his care was to keep him there. The dawn came slowly. He watched his growing hopefulness, yet sometimes said: "Would it bring the Romans or the pirates? If the pirates, his charge was lost."

At last morning broke in full, the air without a breath. Off to the left he saw the land, too far to think of attempting to make it. Here and there men were

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