

debarred him from the *viva voce* recitation of formulas and prayers. this circumstance, which was deeply lamented by his parents and tutors, was in fact, in the best opinions, an advantage to him; for it often happens that apparent superiority does us damage, and that from apparent defect springs the saving of our life. thus, while the companions of *nebsecht* were employed in declaiming or in singing, he, thanks to his fettered tongue, could give himself up to his inherited and almost passionate love of observing organic life; and his teachers indulged up to a certain point his innate spirit of investigation, and derived benefit from his knowledge of the human and animal structures, and from the dexterity of his handling. his deep aversion for the magical part of his profession would have brought him heavy punishment, nay very likely would have cost him expulsion from the craft, if he had ever given it expression in any form. but *nebsechts* was the silent and reserved nature of the learned man, who free from all desire of external recognition, finds a rich satisfaction in the delights of investigation; and he regarded every demand on him to give proof of his capacity, as a vexatious but unavoidable intrusion on his unassuming but laborious and fruitful investigations. *nebsecht* was dearer and nearer to *pentaur* than any other of his associates. he admired his learning and skill; and when the slightly built surgeon, who was indefatigable in his wanderings, roved through the thickets by the Nile, the desert, or the mountain range, the young poet priest accompanied him with pleasure and with great benefit to himself, for his companion observed a thousand things to which without him he would have remained for ever blind; and the objects around him, which were known to him only by their shapes, derived

approached the altar, was *dion*, the lover who had perilled his life for her sake. her eyes rested intently on his figure, her whole heart yearned towards him and, unable to control herself, she called his name aloud. *charmian* gazed anxiously around the group, but soon uttered a sigh of relief; for the tall man whose arm supported *dion* was *gorgias*, the worthy architect, his best friend, and the other, still taller and stronger, her own brother *archibius*. yonder figure, emerging from the disguise of wraps, was *berenike*, *barines* mother. all trustworthy confidants the only person whom she did not know was the handsome young man standing at her brothers side. *barine*, whose arm she still held, had struggled to escape to rush to her mother and lover; but *archibius* had approached, and in a whisper warned her to be patient and to refrain from any greeting or question, supposing, he added, that you are willing to be married at this altar to *dion*, the son of *eumenes*. *charmian* felt *barines* arm tremble in hers at this suggestion, but the young beauty obeyed her friends directions. she did not know what had befallen her, or whether, in the excess of happiness which overwhelmed her, to shout aloud in her exultant joy, or melt into silent tears of gratitude and emotion. no one spoke. *archibius* took a roll of manuscript from *dions* hand, presented himself before the assembled company as the brides *kyrios*, or guardian, and asked *barine* whether she so recognized him. then he returned to *dion* the marriage contract, whose contents he knew and approved, and informed those present that, in the marriage about to be solemnized, the captain of his legion. this knightly patrician well knew as did every lover of horses the owner of the finest stable in alexandria, and was quite willing to allow *gorgo* and *apuleius* to remain with their patient; at the same time he warned them that a great catastrophe was imminent. *gorgo*, however, persisted in her wish to be by her fathers side, so he left her a guard to protect them. the soldiers were too busy to linger; instead of replacing the door they had torn down, they pushed it out of their way; and *gorgo*, seeing that her father remained in precisely the same condition, drew back the curtain which was all that now divided them from the hypostyle, and looked out over the heads of a double row of soldiers. they were posted close round the lower step of the platform that raised the hypostyle above the nave and the colonnades on each side of it. in the distance *gorgo* could see a vast body of men slowly approaching in detachments, and with long pauses at intervals. they stopped for some time in the outer hall, and before they entered the basilica twenty christian priests came in with strange gestures and a still stranger chant; these were exorcists, come to bann the evil spirits and daemons that must surely haunt this high place of idolatry and abominations. they carried crosses