

Phyllis retraced her steps mechanically.

When she arrived at the grove of trees at the promontory that overlooks the wide-sweeping bay, she stopped an instant to review the scene before it was hidden to her sight by the foliage.

"The weight of some unknown event oppresses me to-night, Dione. Oh! shall I ever recall with sorrow this peaceful evening, and my restless thoughts, glad if I could have them in exchange for more bitter ones? Remind me of this eve, should that day ever arise."

"May it never dawn, O queen!"

The fair beauty sighed again. "Perchance it might be better if it did. Time will reveal."

Next morn the queen's predictions were verified. The wind was blowing fiercely from across the broad ocean, and the waves were lashed to fury. Their angry thunder as they broke upon the shore fell upon the queen's ear, and made her shiver with dread. "Ah! Dione, how fearful it would be if any one were exposed to the water's rage and lost among these pitiless breakers. Do you not hear cries of distress? I thought some caught my ear."

"It was the roar of the wind, O queen, and the sighing of the trees."

The women were silent for some time: Dione absorbed in her weaving; the young queen, listless and thoughtful, lying on her couch playing with her unbound hair.

"Yet again, Dione, I thought to hear it. Go forth, I pray, and spy if any bark be struggling with this boiling sea."

"It cannot be, no vessel could live in such a storm; yet I obey."

"And you saw nothing?" demanded Phyllis, when Dione once more raised the heavy curtain that overhung the doorway and entered the chamber.

"Nothing save sea and cloud, my queen, Say, shall I divert your thoughts by song?"

"Ay, do."

The gentle handmaiden pushed aside her loom, and drawing a stool to her mistress' feet, seated herself thereon, and sang a soft lulling melody to the strains of the lyre.

Phyllis listened, first carelessly, then with attention. But ere the song had ended, she broke forth:

"Dione, there it is again, that cry of anguish. I command you, tell the watchers to look out: some mortal is in distress, I know it."

Dione obeyed, amazed at the queen's strange manner.

She returned in a few minutes breathlessly.

"O queen, you heard aright: a bark

has stranded upon our shore, and the watchers are bringing a stranger in to thee. They found him weeping and lamenting his sad fate, asking if he were cast among barbarians, or among a nation who honoured the eternal gods."

Hardly had she done speaking than the unknown himself entered. Flinging himself down on the ground, he embraced the young queen's knees, and besought her protection.

"I am a wanderer," he said, "shipwrecked upon my journey home to Attica; take pity on me, fair queen, and grant me the rights of hospitality."

"You are welcome, stranger; rise. Among a god-fearing people you need dread no ill. Go, prepare a bath and fresh raiment for our visitor; let a feast be spread and the wine be mixed. Then, when he has rested and refreshed himself, perchance he will tell us his name, country, and adventures."

The handmaidens did as they were bid, and Phyllis, once more alone with Dione, told her to fetch forth her richest garments, "for I must deck me in my best," she said, "to show honour to this handsome stranger. How stalwart he is, Dione; how tall and manly, and yet withal, how fair and gentle! Methinks he must have sprung from gods; I have not seen such beauty in mortals ere now."

Some time later Phyllis entered the banquetting hall, there to join her guest. She was looking more beautiful than ever. Her long hair was enwreathed with sweet scented flowers; the odour of delicious perfume was wafted from the drapery that enfolded her. Golden bracelets beset with precious stones glittered on her slender arms, and on her snow-white neck shone a band of gold.

These charms were not unperceived by the shipwrecked man. Neither did he lose by the change he had undergone; and Phyllis, as she compared him to the warriors that sat around the board, once more acknowledged to herself that there was none among them that would bear comparison with him.

When the meal was ended, and a libation had been offered to Zeus, as the patron of hospitality, the queen turned to her guest, who was seated at her right.

"Stranger, I pray thee tell us how thou camest to be stranded alone and friendless upon our shores."

"Mighty Phyllis," he answered, "I am Demophoon, the son of Theseus. Attica, that land of olive and honey, is my country. But I have been long absent, for I come from the siege of Troy, that proud city which the Hellenes have levelled to the dust for the crime of its son Paris, who broke the sacred