

though to interrupt the proceedings. He lifted his staff, crying "Woe, woe to the city of Tyre! Melcarth saved Mazib, for Melcarth is a god, the strong, the bountiful. But who shall save Melcarth? For Melcarth goeth down into the grave!" With that he cast his staff upon the ground; he tore his blue robes from his shoulders; he unbuckled his golden armor, and let it clang upon the marble. Appearing only in a loose robe of black without any ornament, he cast dust upon his head from a box presented by the priest who acted as master of the ceremonies, and uttered a long lament, full of terrible predictions as to what would happen to the city when Melcarth was dead, ending every phrase with the woeful question "Who shall save Melcarth? Who shall save the city of Tyre?"

Presently all present began to join in this refrain; it spread without the temple, all down the city streets through the ranks of the assembled people. All tore their robes, all threw dust upon their heads, all beat their foreheads. But now the youngest of all the priests came forward. He alone had not joined in the lamentations; he had stood silent before the fire of the altar as if lost in meditation, from time to time reaching his hand out over the fire, or leaning his head towards it. He was dressed, differently to the other priests, in a short tunic of purple with a skirt to the knee, and a golden cord bound seven times about his waist. On his head he wore a conical cap of carved ivory, ornamented with horns like a bull's. He bore a bow and seven small blunt arrows. Standing before the king he shot the arrows one by one into the air, while all stood silent. Then he spoke.

"An oracle of the god, O King!

"The word of Melcarth to the City of Tyre!

"Melcarth must die, but he must live again!"

The king answered with the old phrase: "Who shall save Melcarth? Who shall save the City of Tyre?"

The young man answered: "An oracle of the god, O King! A man that is a stranger shall save the City of Tyre!"

The king lifted his voice, as if appealing to the people: "Is there any stranger in the City of Tyre?"

Immediately confusion arose, every man pretending to examine his neighbor. After a few moments the king repeated his question, and again the pretended search was made. For the third time the king asked: "Is there any stranger in the City of Tyre?" and this time the answer rolled back, a dirge of utter woe, from every part of the whole city, and even from the suburbs and the surrounding fields and hills, where men had been specially stationed for this part of the ritual, the idea being to include the whole dominion in the sacred formula. With one voice the priests and the people cried aloud: "There is no stranger in the City of Tyre!" At that the entire population gave themselves up to frenzies of affected woe, dispersing gradually to their homes, where they were to abstain from food and from the kindling of any fire, until the morrow. Cleon and Dodeh, profoundly moved by the significance of this strange rite, returned to their villa, and sat, as the ritual prescribed, by the dead ashes of the hearth, lamenting till the dawn.

The critical moment for Cleon was to arrive on the third day of the feast, for no women might accompany the men, so his wife said. Every man must wear a particular disguise, and she had been at pains to prepare one and conceal it in the house of a friend who lived in the great street which led to the center of the city. Cleon would thus have only about half a mile to

walk to see the burning of the effigy of Melcarth, and there would be little chance of detection. So a little before noon they reached the house appointed. The street was already lined with guards for the ceremony, but Dodeh giving a sign to the officer, she was allowed to enter with Cleon. Here she removed his slave's dress, which she had made him wear to explain his presence with her, and proceeded to adorn him for the ceremony. She produced a jar of some sticky substance like resin, stained purple with the famous dye, and covered him from head to foot with it. Over this she threw a lion's skin, and in his hand she put a club. "We must wait till the procession comes," she said, "then you can glide out of the house and mingle with it; no one will notice you. Walk up to the great square with them, but do not speak to any one. Your accent—though it's delightful, heart of my heart!—would give you away at once, and it would be terribly dangerous for you to be recognized as a stranger. We don't like our mysteries spied on; only, I love you!"

Minutes passed by; Cleon began to find this costume extremely hot and the sacred paint peculiarly irritating; but it was worth it. Presently a noise of chanting down the street told them that the procession was near; Cleon, trying hard not to scratch, slipped out of the door. The street was now full of people, many of them in fantastic attire. The sun blazed down upon the scene, and Cleon felt hotter and more uncomfortable than ever. But he was full of strange excitement; the fierce atmosphere of the festival seemed to have communicated itself to him.

In a few moments the head of the procession appeared. It was formed by priests, all wearing the masks of various wild beasts and bearing flaming torches. As he turned to look, the street suddenly cleared; the people had all moved to the side behind the steel-clad line of guards. He realized that he was alone; but instead of retiring among the others, he felt that that was the one thing he could not do. He felt a kind of madness surging in his brain, and at the same moment he realized that the procession was no longer chanting, but roaring and howling in imitation of the wild beasts whose masks they wore, and that they were charging him. He bounded madly up the street toward the square; the crowd joined in at his heels, and above the cries he heard the jubilant call of the people: "Melcarth shall live again! Tyre shall be saved!"

He reached the square; it was full of men and women with flaming torches on every side. His blood boiled with the frenzy of excitement; he knew that he was shouting in mad glee mingled with horror. Suddenly a flash of sanity came to him; he saw that he was in danger. He dashed at an opening of the square, but the flaming torches closed upon him. The agony of the poisoned paint was now insufferable; he bounded to and fro, raving he knew not what. Ever the torches seemed to hem him in.

And then the darkness fell from his eyes; a great illumination seized him; he must take refuge with Melcarth, with Melcarth who must die and live again. In an ecstasy he bounded upon the pyre; he climbed over the great logs; he caught the stirrup of the god, and hoisted himself on to the shoulders of the sea-horse. As he did so a thousand torches were plunged into the straw, and the flames roared up to heaven. But through them he saw one thing with the last flash of sanity and life; it was Dodeh, in her harlot's dress, lying back in the arms of Ramman, laughing and clapping her hands.