

CHAPTER X

THE VENGEANCE OF BELTIS

SO IT came about that this queen, whose name I learned was Elisheba among her own people, the Hebrews, Beltis being a title given to her in Sidon, and I dwelt together in the palace of Tenes. Leave me she dared not, nor would I suffer it who knew that then certainly she would be murdered, while with me she was safe because Tenes dared not touch one whom I sheltered, being afraid of me; one, moreover, over whom I had placed the veil of Isis. For the rest she was glad to stay with me whom soon she learned to love, especially after she had heard how I pleaded for her son's life.

I, too, was glad that she should do so, both because she was a companion to my loneliness and a protection, since Tenes could not persecute me with his passion in her presence, and because she had those who loved her in Sidon, certain Hebrews through whom we learned much. Yet we were in a strange case, the queen who reigned and the queen to whom her place was promised, dwelling together like sisters, and both sworn to destroy him who was her husband and who desired to be mine.

For we made a pact together, she swearing by Jehovah and I by Isis, that we would neither rest nor stay till we saw Tenes dead and his Sidonians with him. Oh! if I hated him and these, she, the robbed mother, hated them worse, so deeply indeed

that if only she might come by vengeance she cared nothing for her life. She was a fierce-natured woman, such as those of the Hebrews often are, and all her heart's love had been given to this boy, her only child, whom Tenes butchered at the bidding of the priests and because of his superstitions.

From the beginning this Beltis or Elisheba had hated the Sidonians and Tenes, to whom she was given in a marriage of policy by the rulers of Jerusalem because of her beauty and her royal blood, and now to her they were but as wild beasts and snakes to be destroyed. Yet she was clever also and played her part well, feigning sorrow for the wild words she spoke in the hour of her agony and with it obedience to the wishes of the King. She even told him in my presence that when the time came she would be willing that I should take her crown and she but a second place, or if it pleased him better, that she would return to her own people. This, however, he did not desire, since he feared lest the disgrace of so great a lady should bring the wrath of Jerusalem upon him, or even cause the Hebrews to join his enemies.

So well did she play that part, indeed, making it appear that her spirit was crushed and that she was one from whom there was nothing to fear, that soon Tenes came to believe that this was so, and in order to please me he suffered her to dwell on there in peace.

Now I have to tell of the war and of the end of Sidon. First I should say, however, that before he sailed for Egypt, after the *Ilapi* had been fitted with a new mast of cedar, I caused Philo to be summoned to the palace by the help of those Jews who were the friends of Beltis. He was brought to my pres-

ence with two merchants, disguised as one of their company, and, while Beltis made pretence to chaffer with them for their costly goods, I spoke with him apart.

I told him to get him to Memphis as quickly as he might, and there make all ready as we had agreed, awaiting my message. How this would reach him, or Noot, or both of them, I did not know. It might be by writing, or by messenger who would bear certain tokens, or it might be otherwise. At least when it came he must sail at once, and arriving off the port of Sidon, every night after the setting of the sun and before its rising, must light a flare of green fire at his masthead, causing it to burn for the fourth part of an hour, so that I might be sure that the ship which signalled was his and no other. Then in this way or in that I would find means to come aboard that vessel, and the rest was in the hands of the gods.

These things he vowed to do and departed safely with the merchants, nor did Tenes ever learn that Philo had visited the palace.

Meanwhile Tenes was making mighty preparations for the war. He dug a triple ditch about Sidon and heightened its walls. He hired ten thousand Grecian mercenaries and armed the citizens. By help of the Greeks he drove the Persian vanguard out of Phœnicia, and for a while all went well for him and Egypt. At length came the news that the vast army of Ochus was rolling down on Sidon, together with three hundred triremes and five hundred transports; such an army as Phœnicia had never seen.

One morning Tenes came to my chamber and told of the march of Ochus, Beltis withdrawing herself. He was in a very evil case, for he trembled

and even forgot to say sweet words or to devour me with his eyes after his fashion. I asked him why his hand shook and his lips were pale, he, who as a warrior king, should be rejoicing at the prospect of battle. He answered because of a dream he had dreamed, in which he seemed to see himself defeated by the Persians and cast down living from the wall of the city. Then he added these words:

"You, Lady, promised to show me how to conquer the world. Do so, I pray you, for I say that my heart is afraid and I know not how I shall stand against Ochus."

Now I laughed at him and answered,

"So at last you come to me for counsel, Tenes, who for days have been wondering for how long you would be content to take that of Mentor of Rhodes and of the King of Cyprus. Well, what would you learn?"

"I would learn how I may defeat the Persians, Lady, the Persians who pour upon us like a flood through a broken wall."

"I do not know, Tenes. To me it seems impossible. I think that dream of yours is coming true, Tenes, that is——" And I ceased.

"What, then, must I do, Lady? What is your meaning?"

"I mean that you are mad to fight Ochus."

"But I am fighting Ochus."

"Those who have been enemies may become friends, King Tenes. Have I not told you that you would be safer as the ally of Ochus than as his foe? What is Egypt to you that you should destroy yourself to save Nectanebes?"

"Egypt may be little, Lady, but Sidon is much. The Sidonians are pledged to this war and the hand of Ochus might be heavy on them."

Again I laughed and answered,

"Which is dearer to a man, his own life or those of others? Fight and die if you will, O King; or make peace and perchance let others die if you will, O King. They say that Ochus is generous and knows how to reward those who serve him."

"Do you mean that I should make a pact with him and betray my people?" he asked hoarsely.

"Aye, my words may be so read. Hearken. You have great ambitions. You would win the world—and me. My wisdom tells me that only thus can you win the world—and me. Continue this war, and very soon you will lose me and all that you will command of Earth shall be such small part of it as hides your bones. Now make your choice and trouble me no more, who in truth find little joy in timid hearts that fear to take hold of opportunity. Therefore, follow your counsel or my own, I care not which who would be gone back to Egypt to seek a higher destiny than that of consort to a conquered slave."

"Whatever I may lose, you I cannot lose," he said slowly. "Also your mind is mine. This Persian is too strong for me, and on Egypt I cannot lean too hard lest it break beneath me. These Sidonians, also, are rebellious and murmur against me. I think that they would kill me if they dared, who now call me Child-murderer because I gave my son in sacrifice to please the priests."

"Mayhap, King," I answered carelessly, "since mobs are fickle. I repeat that the wise man and he who would be great does not think of others but of himself."

"I will consult with my General, Mentor the Greek, for he is far-sighted," he said, and left me.

"The poison works," I thought to myself as I watched him go. Then I called Beltis and told her all that had passed between her lord and me. She listened and asked,

"Why do you lead Tenes down this road, Ayesha?"

"Because of the pit at the end of it," I answered. "Have not your spies told us that this Ochus is implacable? He will make a pact with Tenes and then he will destroy him. Such at least is the counsel that comes to me from Heaven, which he has angered, as I think."

"Then I pray that Tenes may follow it, Ayesha, so long as it hurls him down to hell, and the Sidonians with him."

As it chanced he did, for it was of a sort that his false heart loved. The rest may be told in few words. Tenes sent his minister, Thessalion, another crafty fellow, to make a treaty with Ochus. These were the terms of this treaty: That he, Tenes, should surrender Sidon and in payment receive the royalty of Egypt after it had been conquered, and of all Phœnicia also, and with it that of Cyprus. Ochus swore these gifts to him and continued his advance. When he reached a certain spot, he halted. Then Tenes, as he had undertaken to do, led out a hundred of the chief citizens of Sidon to a Council of the States of Phœnicia, or so he said.

Howbeit, presently they found themselves in the camp of Ochus who butchered them to the last man, all save Tenes himself, who returned to Sidon with a tale of an ambush from which he had escaped.

Then it was I saw that the end drew near, and in a ship, which not Tenes, but the captains of the Sidonians sent to Nectanebes at Memphis to pray for more aid, I caused a faithful Jew to sail, one

sworn to the service of Beltis, who carried with him hidden in the hollow sole of his sandal a letter addressed to Noot and to Philo, praying that Philo would sail at once and do all those things that had been agreed upon between us. Also night by night I sent out my spirit, or rather my thought, to seek the spirit of Noot, as he had taught me to do, and it seemed to me that answers came from Noot telling me that he read my thought and would do those things which I desired.

The chief men of the Sidonians held a council in the great hall of the palace. Hidden behind curtains in a gallery of the hall, Beltis and I saw and heard all that passed at this council, over which Tenes presided as King. Bitter was the talk of those lords, for doubts were abroad. They thought it very strange that Tenes alone should have escaped from that ambush. Yet like the liar that he was, he cozened them with false tales, showing them also that the gods of the Sidonians had preserved his life, that he in his turn might preserve theirs. Yes, he said this and other things, he the knave and traitor, who already plotted to destroy them all.

At this council the Sidonians took a desperate road. Day by day many were escaping from the city by sea and otherwise. Already nigh a third of the people had gone, and among them some thousands of the best soldiers, so that the captains saw that soon the great city would be left with few to defend her. Therefore they came to this resolve—to burn all their ships so that no more could flee upon them, and to set watches at the gates and round the walls with orders to slay any who might attempt flight by land.

Fearing for his life, Tenes consented to these

deeds, swearing that he desired but one thing, to conquer or to die with the citizens of Sidon.

So it came about that soon the darkness was made as light as day by the flames which sprang from over a hundred vessels of war besides a multitude of smaller ships, while the Sidonians, watching them burn from the roofs of their houses, beat their breasts and moaned. For now they knew they were cut off and must conquer or perish.

The ships of Ochus watched the port of Sidon, though somewhat carelessly because it was known to him that its harbours were empty, and the vast army of Ochus rolled down in countless hosts upon its walls.

Hour by hour spies came in with terrible reports, causing the hearts of the Sidonians to melt with fear. For now they understood that all hope of victory was gone and that they were doomed, though as yet they did not know that it was their king who had betrayed them.

Another council was held, at which Beltis and I watched as before, and there it was agreed that the city should throw itself upon the mercy of Ochus. Tenes affected to protest and at last to allow himself to be overruled, as I, to whom he came day by day for guidance, put it into his black heart to do. Heralds were sent to the camp of Ochus, offering to surrender upon honourable terms, and while they were absent bloody sacrifices of children and others were made to Dagon and his company in the Holy Place before the temple, till its pavements ran red with blood. For thus these cruel folk hoped to propitiate Heaven and to win mercy from Ochus.

The heralds returned bearing the word of Ochus. He said that if five hundred of the chief citizens came out unarmed and made submission to him, he

would grant their prayer and spare Sidon; but if they did not, that he would pull it stone from stone and slaughter all who lived within its walls. Also one of the Persian ambassadors who accompanied them brought a secret letter for Tenes. This letter Tenes, who by now did nothing without my counsel, read to me.

It was brief. This was its substance:

If he would put Sidon into his hands, Ochus swore to Tenes by his most solemn Persian oaths advancement greater than he had ever dreamed; and to Mentor the Rhodian and the general of the Grecian and Egyptian Mercenaries, he swore a vast sum in gold and one of the first commands in the Persian army. If Tenes would not do this, then Ochus proposed to make peace with Sidon for a while but afterward to destroy it. To Tenes himself, however, he promised death at the hands of the Sidonians themselves, to whom all his treachery should be revealed. Lastly an answer was demanded without delay.

"What shall I say to Ochus, Lady?" asked Tenes of me.

"I know not," I answered. "Honour would seem to demand that you should lay down your life and save Sidon and her citizens, if only for a while. Yet, O King, what is honour? How will honour help you when you have been torn to pieces by the maddened mob upon yonder Holy Place, and your spirit has gone to Baal, or wherever the spirits of those sacrificed to Moloch may go. Will this empty honour give you that great advancement of which the Persian speaks, which doubtless will carry with it the rule of Phœnicia and of Egypt, and perchance also that of the East? For Ochus being mortal, Tenes, once you have brought him to his death, as

I can show you how to do, who is fitter than yourself to fill his throne? Lastly, will death with honour bring me whom you desire to your side, King Tenes? I have spoken, now judge," and lifting my veil, I sat and smiled at him.

"It is not safe," he said. "All hangs on Mentor and the Greeks. Unless they join in the plot the Sidonians will fight to the last with their aid, and when they discover my traffic with Ochus they will slay me. And if I fly to Ochus and the Sidonians fight, then mayhap he will slay me as one who has helped him nothing. But if Mentor joins us, then we can open the gates to the Persians and ourselves go out safe to reap our reward."

"There speaks a great man," I said, "one who is fore-sighted, one not tied by petty scruples; there speaks such a one as I would take to be my lord. Aye, there speaks a man fit to rule the world, to whom the great advancement the Persian promises is but the first rung in the ladder of glorious triumph—that ladder which reaches to the very stars. Already these Sidonians hate you, Tenes. I saw them mutter when you passed among them yesterday; aye, and one laid his hand upon his dagger, but another checked him, having a look in his eyes that seemed to say—'Not yet.' If once they learn the truth, Tenes, perchance soon you also will lie on the altar of sacrifice and be cast living into the fiery jaws of Dagon, where your son went before you, Tenes. Why do you not send for Mentor and search his mind?"

So Mentor was sent for, and meanwhile I gave Tenes my hand to kiss. Yes, I even suffered this that I might fix him the more firmly on my hook.

Mentor came. He was a burly Greek, a great soldier with a keen brain behind his laughing eyes;

one who loved gold and wine and women, and for these and high place and generalship was ready to sell his sword to whoever bid the most.

Tenes set out the matter to him very craftily and showed him the writing of Ochus. He listened, then asked,

“And what does this veiled Daughter of Isis think? I remember hearing in Egypt where she was held the first of Oracles and named Child of Wisdom, that her prophecies never fail to fulfil themselves.”

“The Daughter of Isis thinks that among the Persians Mentor will grow tall, but that here among the Sidonians he will be felled like a forest tree and go to feed a mighty fire, such a fire as consumed the fleets of Sidon awhile ago.”

Thus I answered, and when Mentor heard my words, he laughed and said that he was of the same mind, which without doubt was true, for afterward I learned that already he had been in treaty with Ochus.

So he and Tenes struck hands upon their bargain, the most infamous perhaps that was ever made by men, since it gave to slaughter forty thousand or more who trusted to them.

Thus was signed the doom of an accursed people, that doom which I was destined to bring upon their heads, and thus was Tenes sent down the road to hell. Only Mentor prospered greatly for a while in the service of the Persians, and what was the end of him I do not know. After all, he was but one of many who flit from master to master as advantage leads them. Doubtless long ago the world has forgotten him, his Grecian cunning, his generalship, and his treachery.

The five hundred went out to the Persian camp to

plead with Ochus, bearing palm branches in their hands; yea, they went with light hearts, for Tenes had told them that certainly their prayer would be granted and that he knew this from the lips of Ochus himself. Led by the priesthoods of the various gods—oh! how it rejoiced me to see those vile and cruel priests in that company!—they went, but not one of them returned again, for Ochus received them with mockeries and reviling, and to make sport for himself and his soldiers, told them to run back to Sidon. Then he loosed his horsemen on them and slew them with swords and javelins and set their heads on stakes around the walls.

When the Sidonians knew and saw, they went mad with rage and terror. They gathered themselves by thousands in the Holy Place and had it not been for Mentor and his Greeks, would have stormed the palace, for now they were sure that Tenes had betrayed them. Indeed Beltis had made the truth of this treachery known through the Hebrews who served her. Also they clamoured that I, Ayesha, should be led forth and sacrificed, saying that it was the presence of a priestess of Isis in the city which had caused their gods to desert them. For a little while I was afraid, who remembered what had chanced upon the ship *Hapi* when Tenes would have suffered me to be thrown to the deep to satisfy the superstitions of the sailors. Therefore thinking it best to be bold, I sent for Tenes and said to him,

“If by evil chance I should be slain, O King, then know that I have it from the goddess whom I serve that you with whose lot mine is intertwined will die within an hour. I, Tenes, am the bright star of your fortunes, and if I set, farewell to them and you.”

“I know it,” he answered, “as I know that without

you I can never rise to be king of the world. Therefore I will defend you to the last; also, beautiful one, I desire you for my wife. Yet," he added, "some might think that this star of your wisdom has hitherto led my feet into dark and evil places," and he looked at me doubtfully.

"Fear nothing," I answered. "'Tis ever darkest before the dawn and out of evil arises good. Great glory awaits you, Tenes, or rather great glory awaits both of us. History will embalm your name, Tenes." But to myself I thought that it was the Persians who would embalm his body, unless indeed they cast it to the dogs!

Now every evening after sundown it was my custom to walk upon the flat roof of the palace and look out over the ocean which, also for reasons my own, rising early, I did before the dawn. That night while I walked I put up my prayers to Heaven, for though I played so bold a game, its odds seemed to be gathering against me. Doubtless, as it deserved, this hateful Sidon would fall, but when its walls were crashing down, with what should I protect my head? I did not know. Yet it is true that never did I lose faith. Always I knew that I was the instrument of that Strength which directs the fate of men and nations, that what I did was because I was driven and commanded so to do for reasons that were dark to me; moreover, that I was not an instrument to be broken and thrown aside. Nay, however strait the path and however great the perils that beset it, I was sure that I should walk it with safety, because it was fated that I should do so, though whither it would lead me I could not tell in those days when I was but as other women are. Still I put up my prayer to Heaven and scanned the horizon with my eyes.

Lol far away beyond the lights of the watching triremes of Ochus, so far that it seemed almost set upon the surface of the sea, burned a faint green fire. For the fourth part of an hour it burned, and went out. Then I knew that my words had reached Egypt, whether in the writing or by the swift path of the spirit; and that Noot or Philo had come to save me.

Before the dawn once more I climbed to the roof of the palace, and behold! far away again the green fire burned upon the bosom of the deep, telling me that out yonder the great trireme waited for my coming. Aye, but how was I to come?

Tenes the vile and Mentor the venal played their parts well. They opened the gates of the outmost wall which the Greeks held, and let in the Persians whom these Greeks greeted as brothers, having at times served under them in the past. The Sidonians saw and knew that the dice had fallen against them; knew too that they were loaded dice.

They gathered in the Holy Place and raved for the blood of Tenes who cowered behind a curtain and hearkened to them. Beltis and I, playing our parts, came to comfort him,

"Be brave!" I said gently. "The road to the kingship of the world is steep and difficult. Yet when the peak is gained, how glorious, O Conqueror, will be the prospect spread out before your eyes."

"It is steep and difficult indeed," he muttered, wiping his brow with the fringe of his brodered robe.

Had he but seen the look which Beltis cast upon him, standing behind him with folded arms and humble air, perchance he would have thought it steeper, still.

"Let us talk," I said, "for the end draws near. What is your plan? How will you and we, your queens, escape from this city?"

"All is prepared," he answered. "At the King's wharf, to which a covered way runs from the palace, in the house where the royal boats are moored, is my own barge that, being thus secured, escaped burning with the ships. In this barge, which is manned with Greeks to whom a great reward is promised and who wait in the boathouse day and night, we will row from the harbour for a hidden bay three leagues down the coast where we will land and be escorted thence to the encampment of the Great King. Yet perchance it may be wiser that I should be with Mentor to welcome Ochus when he enters to take peaceful possession of the city. If so, Daughter of Isis, you will do well to leave it by yourself, or with the lady Beltis if she wishes to accompany you, and to meet me in the camp of Ochus."

"Perhaps that would be better," I answered, "since it might not be thought seemly that the great King Tenes should slip away to his ally by night. Nay, let him rather march out as a monarch should. Only then we must have authority to act as occasion may direct."

"Aye, Lady, take this ring," and slipping the royal signet from his finger he gave it to me. "It will be obeyed by all who see it; moreover, I will issue certain orders. So long as we meet again at last, we whose fates are intertwined, it matters not by what separate roads we travel."

"It matters not at all, my lord Tenes," I answered as swiftly I hid away the signet.

It was just then, at the hour of sunset, that Mentor entered the chamber. No longer was he gay

and light-hearted; indeed his brows were bent and his eyes full of trouble.

"By Zeus!" he said, "a dreadful thing has happened. In their despair these Sidonians of yours, King Tenes, have taken counsel together. They have determined that rather than fall into the hands of Ochus, they will burn the city and with it themselves and their wives and children. Yes, uttering the curse of all the gods upon you, thus they have determined. Look, the fires begin!"

We went to the window-places and gazing from them, saw desperate men rushing to and fro with lighted torches of cedar wood in their hands, while other men drove mobs of screaming women and children into the houses, yes, and into the temples, and shut the doors upon them. Here and there, too, from the roofs of these houses rose wisps of smoke that soon were mingled with flame. East and west and north and south, through the great city of Sidon arose that smoke and flame. Everywhere also mobs of the people whose courage failed them and who did not desire to die thus were rushing toward the gates and into the camp of the Greeks. In this fashion, I believe, that from ten to twenty thousand of the inhabitants of Sidon escaped, though afterward Ochus the cruel slew many of them and enslaved the rest.

I looked, I saw, and my heart melted within me. Hateful as were these insolent, bloodstained folk, I grieved that I should have had any hand in bringing their reward upon them. After all, they were brave and would have fought to the end, who now made expiation by a great self-sacrifice, which was also brave. Oh! if I could I would have lifted that doom from off them. Then I remembered that it was not I who did these things, but Fate which made

of me its instrument; remembered also that only thus could I escape the foul hands of Tenes.

I turned to look upon that traitor. He trembled, and trembling tried to seem brave; he laughed, and in the midst of his laughter burst into tears.

"Behold the fate of those who would have slain their king! Truly the gods are just," he said. "Now let us fly to the great Ochus and receive from him his royal welcome and reward. Truly the gods are just!"

He turned about seeking for Mentor, but Mentor had gone. There remained in that chamber only Beltis the Queen, he, and I, Ayesha. Beltis glided to the door and made it fast. Then she came to Tenes and before he guessed her purpose, snatched the gold-hilted sword from his belt. She stood before him with fierce white face and blazing eyes.

"Truly the gods are just," she repeated in a low and terrible voice. "Fool, do you not know what welcome Ochus will give you yonder and what rewards? Harken! That false Greek, Mentor, told me of these but now, or pitying my lot, he offered me his love and to take me to safety. After I had refused him, he went his way while you stared from the window-place."

"What words are these, Woman?" gasped Tenes. "Ochus is my ally; Ochus will greet me well who have served him well. Let us be going."

"Ochus will greet you thus, O Tenes; I have it from the mouth of Mentor who has it from Ochus himself. Slowly he will cause you, a king, to be beaten to death with rods, which is the fate the Persians give to slaves and traitors. Then he will stuff your body with spices and tie it to the mast-head of his ship, that when presently he sails for

Egypt it may be a warning to Nectanebes the Pharaoh whom also you have betrayed."

"It is a lie, it is a lie!" shouted Tenes. "Daughter of Isis, tell this mad woman that it is a lie."

I stood still, answering nothing, and Beltis went on, "Tenes, Fate is upon you. Will you meet it less bravely than the meanest of the thousands of this people whom you have given to doom? Take my last counsel and leap from yonder window, that you who have lived a coward and a traitor may at least die a man."

He gnashed his teeth, he stared about him. He even went to the window-place and looked out as though he would brave the deed.

"I dare not," he muttered, "I dare not. The gods are just; they will save me who sacrificed my son to them."

Then he knelt down in the window-place and began to pray to Moloch whose brazen image showed redly in the gathering gloom.

"Take your sword, Tenes, if you dare not leap, and make an end," said the cold voice of the fierce-faced Hebrew lady who stood behind him, whilst I, Ayesha, watched all this play as a spirit might that is afar from the affairs of earth, wondering how it would end.

But Tenes only answered,

"Nay, sharp steel is worse than steep air. I would live, not die. The gods are just, the gods are just!"

Then he went on praying to Moloch.

Queen Beltis grasped the handle of the short sword with both her hands and with all her strength drove it down between the broad shoulders of Tenes.

"Aye, dog of a Sidonian," she cried, "the gods

are very just, or at the least my God is just, and here—child-slayer—is the justice!”

Tenes screamed aloud, then struggled to his feet and stood striking at the air, the short sword still fixed in his back, a dreadful sight to behold.

“Would you murder me, Jewess?” he babbled, and staggered after her, still beating at the air with his clenched fist.

“Nay,” she answered, ever retreating before him, “I would but give you your due, or some of it. Go, garner the rest in Gehenna’s deep, O butcher of children and traitor blacker than the world has ever seen. Die, hound! Die, lurking jackal who would have mumbled the bones of greatness left by the full-fed Persian lion. Die, slaughterer of the son that sprang from us, and go meet his spirit in the world below, telling him that Elisheba his mother, a woman of the royal house of Israel, the Queen whom you had rejected, sent you thither. Die, while the city, the great City of the Seas, burns with the fires that your treachery has lighted and the cries of its tortured citizens ring in your ears. Pass with them to Gehenna and there strike your account, having their fire-shrivelled souls for witnesses and Moloch and Baal and Ashtoreth for judges and for company. Die, dog, die! and while your brain darkens, remember to the last that it was Elisheba, the robbed mother, who gave you to drink of the cup of death.”

So she reviled, ever flitting before him, while he staggered slowly after her round the great chamber. At length he could no more and fell at my feet, grasping my robe,

“Daughter of Isis,” he babbled, “whom I desired and would have made my queen, save me! Is this the great advancement that you swore to me?”

"Aye, mighty Tenes," I answered, "since death is the greatest of all advancements. In death be king of Phœnicia, of Egypt and of the East, since surely there you will stand above all thrones, powers, and dominions. In death all things will be yours, O traitor Tenes, who would have done violence to the daughter of Isis, everything save Ayesha's self, who here bids you farewell, vile Tenes."

Then, wailing and moaning, he died, and thus robbed Ochus of his vengeance upon a tool of which he had no further need.

